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## Editorial.

### THE STATE AS PARENT.

As our national sense of civic responsibility increases we are beginning to appreciate the claim made on the State by that dependent section of the community, the children in the elementary schools. We have come to realise the futility of expecting good educational results from the instruction given in those schools if the scholars are hungry, ill-clothed, or in need of medical attention, and so there has been enacted the Provision of Meals Act, 1906, in connection with which over 700 voluntary Children's Care Committees are at work in London, responsible to a Sub-Committee of the Education Committee, and the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907, under which the London County Council is bound by statute to provide for the medical inspection of school children.

In a recent issue of the *Morning Post* an interesting reference is made to the method by which the city of Paris has been dealing with the problem of feeding necessitous school children through "Cantines Scolaires," and in greater detail to the "Caisse des Ecoles"—answering to our Children's Care Committee—in each Arrondissement of the city, which is the municipal organisation for dealing with all questions relating to the welfare of school children. These include children's country holidays, skilled apprenticeship, savings banks and crèches, the provision of boots and clothes in large quantities, and the supply of medicines ordered by the school doctors. The Mayor is the President of the Committee and the meetings are held every two months at the mayoralty. The Municipal Councillors of the Arrondissement, the Deputy Mayors and the school inspectors are *ex-officio* members of the Committee, and the rest are mostly

voluntary. There is a great meeting of subscribers annually, when some fifteen to thirty men are elected to serve on the Committee and twenty or thirty women are co-opted with power to vote. The "Dames Patronesses" have also a right to attend.

The report and financial statement presented to the annual meeting are printed and circulated amongst the subscribers, and it is very interesting as evidence of the responsibility felt by Parisians for the welfare of the school children to note how numerous these are. Thus, in an Arrondissement with a population about the size of the borough of Shoreditch there are 1,142 of 5s. a year, several of £1, and some of £4. Subscribers of the latter sum have the right to sit on the Committee without election. In a rather smaller Arrondissement there are 900 subscribers, 100 of whom subscribe £4 a year. The names, occupations and addresses of the subscribers are published in the report, which shows that they belong to professions and trades of all sorts. The subscribers, in addition to their regular subscriptions, often send gifts in kind for the children in the elementary schools and crèches in their neighbourhood.

The account of the organisation of the school dinners is very interesting. The cooks are appointed and dismissed by the Mayor as President of the Committee of the Arrondissement, and the meals are served for the most part in the school halls. No outside hall is ever rented as in London, where the teachers are opposed to the use of the London County Council schools for this purpose.

The Care Committee also selects the children sent to the country or the sea, to empty schools and houses in charge of masters and mistresses. It is easy to understand how mutually useful to one another these Committees and school nurses could become.

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