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EDITORIAL.

NATIONAL KITCHENS.

The war is bringing about many changes in our National habits, and one of much importance is likely to take place in the near future, nothing less than the introduction of national kitchens, the scheme for which was explained on Monday at Grosvenor House, by Alderman C. F. Spencer, of Halifax, who has been appointed Director of National Kitchens, by Lord Rhondda, who considers them a vital necessity. It is proposed to give wide powers to local authorities, who are to be entrusted with their ownership and operation. They are to be controlled by municipal experts, and business men, on business lines, and the order empowering them to be started, which will presumably be issued, will be optional.

To meet the capital outlay it is proposed to make a Treasury grant of 25 per cent. for the initial outlay, and a further loan of 25 per cent., the remaining 50 per cent. to be raised by the local authority who will be empowered to charge any necessary expenses on the rates.

The following are some of the advantages which Alderman Spencer anticipates from the establishment of these kitchens. They will—

Secure economy in food and in the use of fuel; considerably reduce waste of foods, and secure economy in soap, towels, crockery, and other kitchen necessities.

Secure a reasonably adequate supply of food at comparatively low prices; place within the reach of the working classes wholesome food instead of "makeshift" meals; and obviate many of the difficulties of buying, with its attendant waiting and disappointment.

Release many women from the arduous-

ness of domestic life, and perhaps enable some of them to take up war employment.

Free the shops of many customers whose demands are unorganized, thus creating distributing difficulties.

Afford equal opportunities for all classes to obtain nutritious food prepared on modern hygienic principles.

Afford opportunities for reducing staffs of retailers, refreshment house proprietors, &c., and reduce consumption of paper, &c., used in parcel distributions; and

Allay discontent in munition areas.

Alderman Spencer points out that individual cooking is waste of labour, health, material and energy, and it is essentially wasteful to keep thousands of gas and coal fires burning in thousands of homes.

In regard to transport of food, which is likely to prove a difficulty in isolated districts, it is proposed to meet this by using electric kitchens on the trams, and also gas-bag motors and travelling kitchens, and there will be special contrivances for keeping warm small quantities of food bought by individuals.

It looks, indeed, as if some of the worst difficulties of the housewife in these troublous times will be relieved, both in regard to shopping, and to the preparation of food, and that hot and wholesome food will be available for husband and children without the hard-worked mother having to prepare it. Higher in the social scale the difficulties due to shortage of service will also be met, and harrassed heads of nursing homes and nursing institutions may be able to give their undivided attention to the care of the patients, or the administration of the institution, knowing that appetizing meals will arrive on time. Let us hope also that there are good times in store for the school nurse, the district nurse, and the midwife.

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