

less prolonged some of the children are taken by the Guardians, and in place of the whole family dragging out a miserable existence the children taken by the Guardians are well maintained and those remaining with their mothers are receiving adequate nourishment; in each of the cases described the only result of the gift of meals was to prolong a hopeless struggle at the expense of the children.

Now in such cases as these the Charity Organisation Society would first ascertain whether there was any possibility of securing that the earning power of the mother could be made equal to the adequate support of her children, and failing this she would be advised to apply to the Guardians to take one or more of her children, leaving her with those only which she could properly maintain, assistance being refused in the event of her declining to make the application.

However deeply one may sympathise with the mother, it is surely mistaken kindness to assist her to prolong a hopeless struggle at the expense of her children, and yet this was all that was accomplished by the provision of meals!

Thirdly.—Would such a scheme be dangerous to the social well-being of the community?

The proposal involves acceptance of the principle that, apart from the poor-law, it is the duty of the State to provide for the feeding of school children neglected by those responsible for their maintenance.

When once this principle is admitted, it is difficult to see what limit can be placed on its extension. The suggestion made by the Physical Deterioration Committee and adopted by Mr. Barrow assumes that if the State would supply the buildings, appliances, and service, private charity would supply the food, but voluntary contribution would soon cease when it became known that public funds were being used, and before long the State would certainly find it necessary to supply the food as well as the means of preparing it. The fact that meals were being thus provided for the children supposed to require them would rapidly become known, and