

perly constructed sealed bottles, which would insure cleanliness despite the distributor's carelessness and the buyer's apathy. The local authority, as has been done in many places in Britain and the Continent, could arrange for the preparation and sale of the so-called humanised milk, especially suitable for those children who are dependent upon cows' milk instead of that best of all food, the milk of their mother.

It is hopeless to leave this to private enterprise—at least, for the present. There are many reasons for this, not the least of them being the apathy of the parent. Poverty, or more often want of interest, prevents them from inquiring into the skill or care of the seller, and the result is that, even where private companies have put a good pasteurised milk on the market, consumers have declined either to pay the little extra cost or to take the trouble to discriminate between those who endeavour to supply a pure article and those who do not. Were a common channel provided, as would be the case if my scheme were adopted, milk could be retailed as cheaply as it is now, and every one could rest assured that it was of the best.

The value of a pure milk-supply cannot be overestimated in its influence upon infantile mortality. Milk forms, or ought to form, the staple article of diet until at least the age of five years has been reached. One city, I am pleased to say, is carefully considering a scheme of this nature, and it would well become Christchurch to lead in this as she has done in other matters which make for the better control of insanitary questions. Under the ægis of the Hon. Mr. Wigram, she grasped the greater-city question, and successfully. If she should be successful in her projected experiment she will have established greater claims to the gratitude of New Zealand generally than even her great exhibition can offer. The Council's scheme, as I understand it, goes further than the one suggested by me. It includes the collection of the milk from the cow-keeper. My only objection to this extension is the greater initial capital that would be necessary; but to this there can be no complaint from a sanitary point of view. Last year, infantile diarrhoea, enteritis, and marasmus carried off 538 of our children under one year. These ailments are, in many instances, only synonyms for impure milk and bad feeding.

There are those who argue—and, I admit, with much show of reason—that the pasteurisation of milk destroys some vital principle in the milk, that it diminishes its food-value, and its constant use by children may have deleterious results. I am convinced, however, that, until the growing of milk—if I may be permitted the use of the word—is made more profitable, some treatment of it must be made in order to checkmate the power of the organisms introduced through carelessness, apathy, and ignorance on the part of the milker, carrier, and buyer. If authorities need be cited I can call to my side one of the greatest of bacteriologists, Elie Metschnikoff, Director of the Pasteur Institute, who asserts that while proper pasteurisation of milk destroys or inhibits the growth of organisms its food-value is not in any way lessened.

It seems strange in these humanitarian times to suggest a monetary reward for the care of the young, but the experiment has been tried in Huddersfield and found to yield results which, while good as regards the children, suggest heartsearching on the part of parents. Mr. Broadbent made it known that he would present the mother of every child born during his term of office which was healthy on its first birthday with £1. The results have been excellent. To justify a following in Mr. Broadbent's footsteps it is not necessary to argue callousness or mercenary motives on the score of the mothers or fathers. Let us leave the analysis to whomsoever will, the result is what I am concerned with.

Doubtless—nay, I am certain—there will rise up many who will offer objection to this scheme of municipalisation. Some will say, "Where is this socialistic undertaking of work hitherto left in the hands of the individual to cease?" I am not concerned to argue out the general principle of what should and what should not be undertaken by the State in contradistinction to the people. A colony which owns railways, telephones, and coal-mines, which carries on successfully a far-reaching system of life and fire insurance, which has passed an old-age-pension scheme, the admiration of all who have taken the trouble to carefully consider it, needs no justification for extending the same care which it exercises over those who have borne the brunt and stress of life to those who are just beginning. We may or we may not be able to legislate so as to influence the birth-rate, but assuredly we can do much to lessen the yearly toll which impure milk and improper feeding exacts from those just entering upon their citizenship.

I am not optimistic enough to imagine that, even when all these precautions have been taken to secure that this most important article of diet has been handed to the parent or consumer, no contamination will take place. Effort will have to be made to educate the householder as to how and when it should be stored. The dirty bottle and unclean tube must be preached against, and the awful consequences which such maltreatment entails must be pointed out not once but many times ere their full value is realised; but something, and a very important something, will have been done when the reforms advocated have been brought about.

The experiment has been tried in several places of supplying milk properly adjusted as to purity and constitution for children of all ages. Bottles containing such milk are sent out of such size as to