

The responsibility rests with the board, the legislature and the governor. As a creature of the legislature and of a vicious system designed in the interest of political parties rather than the public good, the board is of the so-called bipartisan type. The statute also provides that certain professions must be represented on the board. Consequently, if the veterinary member goes off the state must be searched for a successor who shall be not only a veterinarian, but also a Republican or a Democrat, as the case may be. A greater potential evil lies in the fact that in the exercise of its most important function, the choice of a director, the so-called bipartisan feature may become null, since in case of a tie the governor of the state casts the deciding vote. This makes for divided responsibility, political favoritism, and general inefficiency. Either the board or the governor alone should appoint the director. Were the board eliminated or restricted to advisory functions, appointment would lie with the governor and responsibility be undivided. For the personnel of the board the successive governors are responsible.

To save time for a discussion of these and related pressing questions, I shall bring my remarks to a close. I trust I have said enough to arouse the earnest thought and fruitful discussion which the subject deserves, without going into details which would divert attention from the main point, which is that our state department of health needs to be reformed, to the end that it may be a leader in these critical times, doing not alone such direct work as belongs to it, but serving also to point the way in local health administration—which, after all, is the vital thing,—leading where local departments need leadership, compelling where without compulsion the public health will not be protected.

MUNICIPAL SCHOOL FEEDING

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New York City

THE approval of an item of \$50,000 by the board of estimate and apportionment of New York city for school lunches marks the successful culmination of a year's agitation for municipal school feeding. The appropriation of this sum indicates that the city of New York now recognizes its responsibility toward the underfed school child. While the board of education has not yet indicated exactly how this money is to be spent, it undoubtedly intends to use it as an initial step in a broad program of municipal school feeding. The money was available January 1, 1919, and it is likely that the first move of the board of education will be to take over the school lunches now being operated under private auspices and to extend the service to other schools where it is needed, as long as the funds are available.

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The action of New York city will undoubtedly draw attention to the school feeding movement and to the effect which it is likely to have on the functions of municipal government. In spite of the fact that school feeding has been carried on successfully and extensively for a generation in various European countries and is now being done in 85 per cent of the progressive cities of this country, the American public is still largely ignorant both of the extent of the movement and of the social philosophy underlying it.

HISTORY OF MOVEMENT

School feeding had its earliest beginnings in Germany, for as early as 1790 municipal soup kitchens were established in Munich, to which underfed school children were sent for an adequate meal. The movement gradually spread throughout Germany until in 1909, the work was being carried on in 189 cities. In 78 of these cities the meals were provided entirely by volunteer societies; in 68 cities, by volunteer societies assisted by government subsidies, while in the remaining 43 cities, the meals were conducted entirely by the municipality.

The development in England and France, however, is of more interest to us, since the social ideals and institutions of these countries are more in accord with our own. The English education act of 1870 which enforced school attendance was largely responsible for the initiation of the movement in England. The corralling of the childhood of the nation in the public school brought to notice thousands of sickly, emaciated children who otherwise would have remained hidden in the slums of great cities. A large number of volunteer societies sprang into existence to meet this need and in 1905 it was stated on good authority that there were 355 separate organizations for school feeding in 146 towns and cities in England.

ENGLISH EXPERIENCE

The work, however, was far from satisfactory and the investigation into the causes of the physical impairment of children which followed the public clamor at the time of the wholesale rejection of military recruits for the Boer War, resulted in a strong popular demand for the transfer of this work from private to public control. The result was that in 1906 Parliament passed the provision of meals act. This act permits local authorities to provide meals for school children at cost for those who can afford to pay and gratis for necessitous children. The authorities are permitted to draw on the public funds for this work, but are limited in the amount they may spend to what would be produced by a tax rate of a halfpenny to the pound.

The offer of public subsidy naturally led many authorities to undertake the work. While in 1907, the first year after the adoption of the act only 2,751,326 school meals were served by local authorities, in 1911

29,568,316 meals were served. Since 1915, however, the number of meals served has fallen off considerably, due to the "war prosperity" which has reduced the number of children applying for free meals.

The act is administered by canteen or care committees composed either entirely or chiefly of members of the local education authority. The canteen committee usually makes all arrangements for the feeding centers such as the hiring of the help, purchase of the food, serving of the meals and selecting of necessitous children.

In spite of the fact that the provision of meals act was adopted as an educational measure for the purpose of making school children physically fit to receive the education which is offered them, the system so far has been little more than an instrument of charitable relief. More than 90 per cent of the children are served free. Although the act provides that undernourished children whose parents can afford to pay for the meals must be charged for them, the parents usually retaliate by withdrawing the children from the meals thus defeating the very purpose of the provision.

FRENCH EXPERIENCE

School lunches in France were an outgrowth of *Caisses des Ecole* or school funds established by the residents of various districts to encourage indigent children to attend school by providing them with clothing, food, medical aid, etc. Although the school funds were started by voluntary effort they were gradually assisted by public subsidies and in 1882 their establishment in each *arrondissement* was made compulsory. School meals in France are thus an outgrowth of community life and to that fortunate circumstance must be attributed their remarkable success. The patronizing, "poor law" atmosphere is entirely lacking in spite of the fact that ordinarily two-thirds of the meals are served free. There is a growing demand to make the meals universally free, *i. e.*, maintained by the municipality out of the public treasury as an educational measure. By 1909 the work had grown until meals were being provided in 1,400 *arrondissements* for 187,000 children and in the same year, nearly eight million meals were served in Paris.

THE AMERICAN MOVEMENT

The movement in America is of a much more recent origin and is greatly in need of development and extension. The first school lunch was established in Philadelphia in 1898. The beginning was made in New York in 1908, when the New York school lunch committee was permitted to install a service in two public schools. Under private auspices the work was gradually developed, until last year 57 elementary school lunches were being maintained in the various boroughs by the New York and Brooklyn school lunch committees.

Under the present arrangement, the committees assume all responsibility for the conduct of the various lunch rooms. The board of education, however, provides the necessary space for the kitchen and lunch rooms and usually equips them.

The American public has always been opposed to free feeding. The ideal has been to make a self-supporting school lunch available for all children who for various reasons are unable to secure an adequate lunch at home. Such children, it is pointed out, are now given pennies with which to purchase buns, pickles and other unnutritious and harmful foods from pushcarts and candy stores. With the pennies they now spend for such trash, they could purchase from a properly equipped school luncheon an adequate and nutritious lunch. Such a lunch would, therefore, be nearly, if not quite self-supporting, and would have the advantage of giving the child a practical and much needed lesson in food economy.

No adequate census has ever been taken of the extent of school feeding in America, but a recent survey of the bureau of municipal research gives us a fair idea of the growth of the movement. The bureau sent a questionnaire to 131 cities of 50,000 population or over; replies were received from 86 of them. Of these 86 cities, 72 were operating school lunches. In 46 of them, however, the service was available in both high and elementary schools, while in two cities, it was restricted to elementary schools. In five cities, the service was provided only for special classes. The growth of the work in various cities during the past four or five years is clearly shown in the following table.

GROWTH OF SCHOOL LUNCH SERVICE IN CERTAIN CITIES WITH 300,000 POPULATION AND OVER

(Prepared by the Bureau of Municipal Research)

<i>City</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Growth</i>
New York City, Manhattan	1911-1916	Elementary— 9 schools to 49 schools
New York City, Brooklyn	1912-1916	Elementary— 4 schools to 16 schools
Chicago	1912-1916	{ Elementary—10 schools to 28 schools High — 0 schools to 31 schools
Philadelphia	1913-1917	Elementary— 0 schools to 16 schools
St. Louis	1913-1916	Elementary— 1 school to 5 schools
Boston	1911-1917	High —18 schools to 18 schools
Pittsburg	1914-1917	High — 3 schools to 7 schools
Los Angeles	1914-1917	{ Elementary— 7 schools to 10 schools High —13 schools to 16 schools
San Francisco	1912-1916	High — 1 school to 3 schools
New Orleans	1911-1916	{ Elementary— 2 schools to 10 schools High — 3 schools to 3 schools
Minneapolis	1911-1916	{ Elementary— 2 schools to 7 schools High — 5 schools to 6 schools

New York city is by no means a pioneer in municipal school feeding; for in 68 of the 72 cities, the work is entirely in the hands of the local city government. Chicago, Philadelphia and Cleveland are among the large

cities which have led New York in this important step. The task confronting New York city, however, in organizing this work is, of course, larger than in other communities, for if the board of education is to take over the existing services in both the high and elementary schools, it will operate over one hundred luncheon centers.

There seems to be fair unanimity of opinion among the workers in this field that the receipts from the luncheons in elementary schools ought to cover at least the cost of the food. While in a few instances, notably in Brooklyn, the elementary school lunches have been made entirely self-supporting, most cities have been able to do little more than meet the cost of the food and about half of the labor cost. Philadelphia has made its elementary school system pay by adopting the expedient of applying the profits of the high school lunches to the deficit of the elementary schools.

The problem of the administration of school lunches under municipal control is greatly simplified if the two aspects of the work, the administrative and the educational, are kept separate. The business of operating one hundred lunch centers throughout the school year effectively and economically is a task calling for executive and administrative ability of the highest order. It would be a mistake, therefore, for New York city to follow the example of some of the smaller cities in placing the school lunch work under the domestic science department. The experience of all large cities seems to indicate that a separate bureau of school feeding should be established for this work with an executive manager at its head who is responsible directly to the city superintendent of schools. The co-operation of the domestic science staff, however, should be secured in such matters as the selection of the menus, the preparation of certain dishes in the cooking classes to be sold at the lunch counter and in stimulating an interest among those who attend the lunch in food economy.