

H. Quelch (Social Democratic Party) was of opinion that everybody in the gathering would agree with almost everything that had been said by Mr. Lansbury in condemnation of the present Poor Law administration. The real question to consider was what steps were to be taken to remedy the existing state of affairs. The proposals, so far as they went, proposed the abolition of destitution, but you did not abolish destitution by curing disease. There was no reason why you should not cure disease, which was of course a very good thing to do, but you must not suppose that by curing disease you would cure distress or abolish destitution. The cause of destitution was poverty, and the cause of poverty was the robbery of the poor, and therefore you could not abolish destitution until you stopped the robbery of the poor. Another point was that they must remember that out of all their proposals the portions that would be adopted by the Government would not be the best but the worse.

A. R. Turner (Scottish Trades Union Congress Parliamentary Committee) gave some details of the work of the Glasgow Health Council. One point he thought was being overlooked was that if you gave five guineas a week outdoor relief in some cases it would effect no improvement. Relief was often given without the necessary knowledge of what was required.

Dr. M. D. Eder (Committee for Promoting the Physical Welfare of Children) said they had to consider very carefully whether the proposals that were now being made would be any improvement on the old methods. He saw no reason at all for assuming that the different bodies it was proposed to create were going to be any better than Boards of Guardians. When it was seen how Liberal and Tory members of Parliament tumbled over one another in their endorsement of the Minority Report Bill he asked the Conference to consider very seriously whether this measure was worthy of support.

J. W. Taylor (Anchor Boot and Shoe Productive Society, Leicester) said that all of what Mr. Lansbury had told the Conference was true to the letter throughout nearly all England and Wales to-day. In Leicester great improvement had been effected since the advent of 15 Labour men and women to the Board of Guardians. Whatever authorities there were, the most important thing of all was to insure that labour was adequately represented upon them.

W. R. Jackson (Edmonton Co-operative Society) agreed with the proposal to remove the care of destitute sick persons from Boards of Guardians to Public Health Authorities, but it was no good Boards of Guardians being abolished unless they realised that it was necessary, whatever authorities were set up, that these authorities should be adequately manned by representatives from the working class.