

George Lansbury, replying on the discussion, said they had been told by several speakers that everybody was agreed as to all he had said in condemnation of the Poor Law. If that was so, then he thought the Labour movement ought to be ashamed of itself for not being more concerned about it. The medical inspection of school children had been criticised, but he felt proud to think that a child was not allowed to be dirty in school, and that it would get the medical treatment it required if necessary, notwithstanding the objections of the parent. Parents used to say they had the right to send the child into the factories and mines at ten years of age. He hoped we were going to say later on that children should not go to work at all until they were fourteen or fifteen years old. In regard to the point raised that the new authorities might be no better than the old, as a matter of fact it was not proposed to create any new authority. It was proposed to transfer the care of the whole of the public health of a district to the Public Health Authority for that district, whether it was the Town Council or anything else. If any better method of electing a Town Council could be suggested he did not mind. He knew quite well that you could not get rid of all destitution by curing disease, but you could get rid of all that very considerable proportion of destitution that was directly due to disease. He knew that neither Parliament nor anybody else was going to help the workers unless the workers first helped themselves, and he hoped they would all go away from that Conference, back to their various districts, determined to wage eternal war against poverty and destitution.

The Chairman then expressed the pleasure he felt at having had the opportunity of presiding over the opening session of the Conference, and the morning sitting terminated.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON SESSION.

At 2 o'clock on Friday afternoon the Conference resumed its deliberations, the chair being taken by George N. Barnes, M.P. (Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party).

Mr. Barnes said that the Chairman of the previous session had delivered an excellent address, and had dealt fully and completely with the subject. There remained, therefore, but very little for he himself to do except to occupy the chair that afternoon, look as wise as he could, and call upon the speakers in due order. The Conference had been convened by the Independent Labour Party, and its scope was contained within the four corners of the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission. That Report considered the whole problem of poverty, presented the problem more or less as a whole, traced each part of it to its source, and put forward a remedy. He knew of no record in the history of the country of any official document which had so soon touched the conscience of the nation, and reached the mind of the average politician. There