

issue now, so long as the Poor Law system lasts, is the amount of assistance those in need should receive from it. The Labour Movement claims "adequate maintenance," and, alas, even the Poplar scale falls far short of that.

As a whole-hearted supporter of the pernicious principles of the Poor Law Report of 1834, Mr. Cooper holds that "the amount of relief under the Poor Law should, of necessity, be calculated on a lower scale than the earnings of an independent labourer who maintains himself by his labour." But why, because a sweated worker and his family starve slowly in the employ of a greedy profit-monger, should they starve more quickly under the care of the Guardians of the Poor? Poverty is not a crime, and degrading and severely deterrent conditions of relief are an insult to the poor. The sole duty of the Guardians is to relieve the destitute. In doing this they exercise a discretion vested in them by statute, and in its exercise the Poplar Board will allow no outside arbitrary interference. The Ministry of Health tried to enforce the rule that no applicant for relief, no matter how large his family, should receive more than an amount which was 10/- less than the minimum wage of the lowest paid manual worker. The Poplar Guardians held that this was in clear conflict with their duty to relieve destitution, and have consistently and successfully withstood the Ministry in their unjustifiable demand.

What is held to be one of the strongest points made against the administration of the Poplar Board is that it failed to take into account, to the extent it should, the earnings of the children of dependent, able-bodied applicants. "Only a small portion of children's earnings, when such earnings exceed 15/- per week, is calculated as the income of the family, and children's earnings up to 15/- per week are ignored," says Mr. Cooper. This is true, for the Poplar Board hold it to be unjust to put upon children the burden of maintaining an able-bodied father, mother, and the younger members of the family. Working children are entitled to be set free from demands which, if they endeavoured to meet them, must inevitably result in dragging them still further into the morass of destitution. After a week's work, they should, if their wages are such as to allow of it, be afforded an opportunity to find recreation at theatre or picture-palace, in the country, or by the sea. Many of these young people are looking forward to starting a home of their own, and when they have worked to earn the money necessary to provide that home, they have a right to expect that they will not be robbed of it in order to save expenditure on the part of a callous and indifferent community, that has neglected to tackle the problems of its own social disorganisation. Moreover, it has always to be remembered that where the attempt to enforce such regulations is made, the children have only to leave home and live in lodgings elsewhere and they are free from all obligation to