

prevent our milk being handed in at seven in the morning by a pale little boy or girl who will be at school later in the day, with lessons to be done in the evening. But if the distribution of milk or groceries were done from municipal centres men would be employed, early closing would be the rule, and the children would be at home in bed both at 7 a.m. and long before 11.30 p.m. A public department would be ashamed to live on the labour of children; but not so the miserable little man, carrying on a miserable little business in a miserable shop behind a miserable little counter, who is the essential type of the Individualism which Messrs Wedgwood, Fels, and Outhwaite admire and seek to preserve.

The Only Way.

There is only one satisfactory way with the land, and that is the way of public ownership secured by purchase. That way the Government is already finding, on a large scale in Ireland, as it has already found it on a small scale in Britain. It seeks a solution on the lines, not of peasant proprietorship, as was done by the Wyndham Act, but on the lines of ownership by the State and security of tenure on the part of the cultivator, who will neither be penalised for his improvements by an increase of rent, nor be liable to ejection at the caprice of a landlord. The State thus far solves, or is about to solve, the problem by becoming the landlord. Rent very naturally and properly varies with the fertility of the land, its proximity to markets, and other causes which contribute to its value. This rent belongs in equity to the community, and under State ownership will, of course, go to the nation.

But this, after all, means only the nationalization of the rent, not of the land itself. That would require the supersession of the capitalist farmer by the community, the socialization of his profits as well as the landlord's rent, and it would mean, as a most important incident, the proper cultivation of the soil. Farming would be carried on upon the big scale, gangs of workers going forth to their cheerful, sociable labour in the fields, and the work going on, as Burns says, "wi' sangs and clatter." Thus and thus only can the community get the full and proper benefit of its own land, which can no more be farmed out with advantage than the taxes were. And only by making field-work sociable can it be divested of its loneliness and dulness—the loneliness and dulness that have so much to do with driving the rural population into the towns. One has seen a quite good-natured ploughman of a lively temperament curse at his horses all day, pull the reins viciously,