

Miriam Lord- Source 2



DAY NURSERIES IN TIME OF WAR
THEIR RELATION TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF
WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.

The fact that a very considerable increase in the number of women employed in industry will undoubtedly occur as the war proceeds is generally accepted. It would seem unlikely that there will be a sufficient number of single women to meet the demand, as many of these are already in employment or enrolling for war work in the A.T.S. and similar services. Older women, if not already in employment, are often not sufficiently adaptable, so that, much as it may be regretted, it will be inevitable that large numbers of young married women with small children will be called upon to enter industrial life.

It is essential for women with children under school age, i.e. 5 years, to make provision for their care while they are out at work. Experience has shown that where a day nursery is provided for the accommodation of these children a woman loses less time and is able to concentrate more freely on her work. Freed from anxiety as to the welfare of her children, she is naturally a more competent worker. The necessity for day nurseries in war time was made evident by the fact that during the last war a large number were subsidised by the Ministry of Munitions.

The present Day Nursery facilities are quite inadequate to meet the needs of a large increase in the number of married women workers - possibly some 500,000 to 750,000.

The National Society of Day Nurseries therefore submits that the provision of nurseries should be considered when new factories are being set up and new housing estates planned, or an influx of women anticipated into any given industry.

The custom, much practised in the North of England, of the mother boarding out her child with a neighbour or an elderly relative is one which is regarded askance by social workers. Moreover, in these days of rationing and air raid perils it is likely to be looked on with disfavour by the mother herself. For the child the benefit of an ordered life in a nursery, compared to the care it receives from an overworked neighbour, often in an already overcrowded house, is indisputable. The present falling birth rate would make it seem of the utmost importance to protect the rising generation from any evil effects that might ensue from the war work demanded of the mothers.

Many industries provide their employees with social services, such as canteens, first aid units, sports grounds, etc., and the provision of Day Nursery accommodation would be merely an extension of such services. They would naturally operate in close association with the Welfare Authority of the district.

Where women are required in several industries in one locality it would seem that the local Welfare Authority

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