

MOUNTAIN MOTHERS

Emeth Tuttle, Former Director of Mothers' Aid in North Carolina

When the North Carolina plan of public welfare had begun to make itself felt in the central part of the state, the coastal and mountain counties had, for the most part, not yet sensed the first tremor of the state's social awakening. This was not so much because of lack of interest as because of bad roads and the lack of money for a new county officer, a superintendent of public welfare. As the net-



Receiving "Mothers' Aid."

work of concrete roads has grown, the schools have improved, more and better teachers have come in, and greater effort has been made to connect the child-in-school with the child-in-the-home. Making that connection, however, is largely the work of the superintendent of public welfare, and only a few counties have yet realized that they cannot afford to be without such an officer.

In 1923 when the Mothers' Aid bill was passed with its appropriation of \$50,000 per year—to be divided among the counties on a population basis and met dollar for dollar by them—Buncombe was the only mountain county with a whole time superintendent of welfare. This superintendent was supported by a strong county board of welfare, all of whom were interested in Mothers' Aid work. In a few months their monthly quota was being used and they wanted more money to help more of the many mothers in their county who were trying to rear their families right. These county workers understood

that Mother's Aid work was, in broad terms, an attempt to save the home that was worth the effort, when the father for some reason had dropped out, and yet preserve the family pride. They understood that saving a home meant being a friend to that mother and those children—putting them in touch with means to help themselves, perhaps moving them from one farm or neighborhood to another, discussing family problems, helping with business difficulties, finding work for certain members of the family, finding markets for home products, persuading them to risk the terrors of doctors and dentists for a future good. These workers knew that "the gift without the giver is bare," and they gave freely.

In the counties to the north and west and even in the "near east" the story was different. These smaller counties were without superintendents of welfare, and the superintendents of schools on whom the work fell were already carrying a heavy load and did not



Does "Mothers' Aid" Pay?

have time for work. They either sent in application blanks imperfectly filled out because they did not know the facts, or they took no interest in the work because the county quotas were so small, the number of women needing help so great, and they did not know how to discriminate. Instead of helping one mother adequately, some of the county commissioners wanted to spread the money among