THE UNEMPLOYABLE AND UNEMPLOYED

BY

ALDEN & HAYWARD

SOCIAL SERVICE SERIES No 4

EDITED BY PERCY ALDEN, M.P.

ONE SHILLING NET

SOCIAL SERVICE HANDBOOKS

No. 4.

THE UNEMPLOYABLE AND UNEMPLOYED

BY

PERCY ALDEN, M.P.

AND

EDWARD E. HAYWARD, M.A.

SECOND EDITION REVISED.

1909

[1908]

London

HEADLEY BROTHERS

BISHOPSGATE STREET WITHOUT, E.C.

CONTENTS.

PREFACE.

It is not all who have access to the Government and other Reports recently issued, dealing with the Vagrant, the Young Criminal, the Physically and Mentally Defective and the Unemployed. It is hoped that this little book will supply the main facts and figures, and make easier the study of these two closely connected problems: the Unemployable and the Unemployed.

I am greatly indebted to Mr. E. E. Hayward, of the British Institute of Social Service, for much valuable help, especially for the preparation of the Bibliography.

PERCY ALDEN.

Mansfield,
Loughton,
October, 1908.

NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.

The passing of the Labour Exchanges Bill has rendered slight revision necessary, and a few pages have been added dealing with that measure. The forecast of the Unemployment Insurance Bill by Mr. Churchill has also been included.

October, 1909.

THE UNEMPLOYABLE AND UNEMPLOYED.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

"He did not say that he had any patent or certain remedy for the terrible evils which beset us on all sides, but he did say that it was time they turned all the wisdom and energy Parliament could combine together, in order to remedy the sufferings under which so many of their countrymen laboured."

—The late LORD SALISBURY.

FOR many years the problem of Unemployment has occupied the attention of social reformers and statesmen in all the Western nations, or at least in such as are highly industrialised. It is a noteworthy fact that the problem to-day is quite as acute in countries where a protective tariff exists, *e.g.*, in Germany and the United States, as in free trade England. Though in our own country this question, as a specific social evil, dates back a comparatively few years, yet it actually emerged as early as in the sixteenth century. Thus in More's *Utopia*—unique in its

insight into the social condition of Tudor England —we find a picture of the peasants whom sheep-farming and the wholesale enclosure of lands had driven out of their ordinary employment. "By which means," says Sir Thomas, "those miserable people, both men and women, married and unmarried, old and young, with their poor but numerous families (since country business requires many hands), are all forced to change their seats, not knowing whither to go. . . . What is left for them to do, but either to steal and go to be hanged (God knows how justly!) or to go about and beg? And if they do this, they are put in prison as idle vagabonds; while they would willingly work, but can find none that will hire them, for there is no more occasion for country labour, to which they have been bred, when there is no arable ground left."

This only too well describes the condition of the masses of the people during the time immediately following the period which has been known as the "Golden Age" of the English labourer, when owing to the terrible visitation of the Black Death, wages were high and labour much in demand. But all this began to be changed during the earlier reigns of the Tudor monarchs, and an Act of Parliament in 1534 tells us of "the wilful waste of houses within this realm and laying to pasture lands, which customably have been used for tillage—whereby husbandrie, which is one of the greatest commodities of this realm, is greatly decayed." This Act, therefore, provides that "whosoever decayeth any town, hamlet or house of husbandrie, or shall convert tillage into pasturage, shall forfeit

half the profits thereof until the offence be removed." Some mitigation of this state of affairs was obtained during the more prosperous reign of "Good Queen Bess," but the enclosing of common lands and the compounding of many small holdings into large sheep farms continued to increase. During the Commonwealth, the Levellers, led by John Lilburne, suffered death for espousing the cause of the peasants, and it has been estimated that from 1727 to 1845 there were no less than 1,385 separate Acts of Parliament to authorise enclosures. We are hardly surprised to learn that the Royal Commission on Agriculture records that during this time a third part of the whole of the cultivated land of our country was thus enclosed.

The Elizabethan Poor Law.

It can readily be understood that the enormous amount of unemployment resulting from such causes produced distress and poverty amongst the people hitherto unparalleled. The Poor Law system of Elizabeth's reign with the famous Act of 1601 "for setting to work all such persons, married or unmarried, having no means to maintain them, and using no ordinary or daily trade of life to get their living by" did not sensibly lessen the evil. This Poor Law, after the passing of Gilbert's Act (1782) authorised the parish to supply work to all unable to find it elsewhere. "Its effect was not to curtail pauperism, but to create it, and the 'unemployed,' under regulations which practically supplemented wages out of the rates, multiplied alarmingly."*

* "A Reproach to Civilisation." E. F. G. Hatch, M.P., p. 3.

Thus Poor Law Relief, though undoubtedly well intentioned, and at first offering some solution to the problem of wholesale distress, became in the end a bye-word amongst all classes of society. This was the actual state of affairs during the great distress which followed the French War of the early nineteenth century, and again during "the Hungry Forties." It was then demonstrated, that "the primary effect of war is to drain the country of capital, and that in consequence, trade is adversely affected, and the channels of employment thereby dried up; and . . . that the use of public funds to supply work for the workless may be a very dangerous source of demoralisation."*

The Act of 1834.

The passing of the Poor Law Act of 1834 somewhat improved matters, but there had already been introduced a new and most important factor into the problem, or rather a series of factors which can best be summed up in the term "the Industrial Revolution." The absolute change introduced into our commercial and social life signified by this phrase, has had lasting effects upon the problem of unemployment. About seventy-five per cent. of our population now live in urban sanitary districts, and agriculture has lost at least half its workers in consequence. This has meant the decay and depopulation of our rural districts and a glut of labour in our towns and industrial centres. The introduction, on an enormous scale, of labour-saving machinery, the presence of large numbers of women and

* "Reproach to Civilisation," p. 17.

young children in the factories and workshops all over the country very seriously complicated the problem. Competition, both amongst employers and workpeople, became increasingly severe with serious results to the health and prosperity of the working classes. The series of regulative measures known as the Factory Acts has only partially controlled these evils which to-day seem so insistent that, in the opinion of many thoughtful social students only a radical change in our whole industrial and social system can really eradicate them.

Two new factors have in more recent years also added to the difficulties of the situation. (1) The enormous growth in the extent of the market, and the consequent increase of competition due to foreign labour. (2) The decay in the system of apprenticeship and the proportionate decrease in skilled labour. Labour statistics show that a large proportion of our workers are casually employed, a problem in itself almost as serious as unemployment. Undoubtedly the increased specialisation of modern industries has caused some of this multiplication of casual labourers, but the root cause is the fact that so many of our children enter the labour market too early in life to allow of their acquiring special knowledge in any one industry. "It is a moot point whether this failure of the system of craft training, coupled with the neglect of technical education in the past, is not one of the most potent forces in producing the industrial demoralisation which is so much deplored."* To some extent the regulative Factory Acts, Workmen's Compensation and Employers' Liability Acts,

* Hatch, p. 22.

in themselves both good and necessary, may tend to increase the number of casual or unemployed labourers because they curtail, from the employer's point of view, the period of efficiency of the worker.

Definitions of Unemployment.

Before proceeding to discuss the recent history and developments of Unemployment, it would be well to state the modern definition of this evil.

Official returns show that from two per cent. of the skilled workers (for which alone we have trustworthy figures) during times of good trade to nine per cent. in times of bad trade, are unable to find employment. Seasons of commercial depression, "trade cycles," as they are called, seem to recur regularly about every decade. Any special time of distress, *e.g.*, exhausting war, intensifies the evil. Thus during the year (1858) following the Crimean War, the unemployed in the shipbuilding and kindred trades reached as high a figure as 12.2 per cent., whilst unemployment in all skilled trades rose to 11.9 per cent.* These figures might, of course, be supplemented in a great variety of directions. Mr. Charles Booth's statement, "The total number of the superfluous is the true measure of the unemployed" does not give us much assistance. The official view of unemployment, if it could be expressed in figures, would show what a vast army of men and women are included in the category. It runs as follows:—

"Those members of various trades who are economically superfluous because there is not

* Cf. Hatch, p. 21.

enough work in those trades to furnish a fair amount to all who try to earn a livelihood at them. Those who cannot get work because they are below the standard of efficiency usual in their trades, or because their personal defects are such that no one will employ them." *

This definition we must further extend to cover unemployment owing to sudden dislocations of trade, the death of an industry, the "seasonal" unemployment which, though for a portion of the year constant and regular, works much havoc in the ranks of the labourers, together with all enforced idleness during illness, accident or other misfortune. Mr. J. A. Hobson admits that "Unemployment is perhaps the most elusive term which confronts the student of modern industrial society," and points to all these cases as being undoubted examples of "waste of labour-power regarded from the social point of view." Thus, even of seasonal unemployment, he observes that "no true economy of human forces is able to compensate for a winter's idleness by excessive work in the spring and summer months. This 'waste' may be due to inherent irregularities of trade, but it is not the less waste."†

Recent History.

This fact of the wastage of labour, and the constant pressure of the unemployed upon Government, has in modern times compelled the State to seek for remedies for this national disease. The first official notice of such a policy was a circular issued in 1886 by the Local Government

* "Unemployed Report." (1893).

† "The Problem of the Unemployed," pp. 1 and 5

Board, then under the presidency of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, on "Pauperism and Distress." Exceptional unemployment and consequent distress had been experienced during the winter of 1885-6, and a Mansion House Fund had been raised which did little more than distribute small doles of indiscriminate charity. Mr. Chamberlain's circular recognised that any general extension of out-door relief to meet such distress would not only be inadequate but absolutely prejudicial to that "spirit of independence which leads so many of the working classes to make great personal sacrifices rather than incur the stigma of pauperism." The guardians were urged, therefore, to "confer with the local authorities and endeavour to arrange with the latter for the execution of works on which unskilled labour may be immediately employed." Several forms of such labour are instanced, with the remark that "spade labour is a class of work which has special advantages in the case of able-bodied persons out of employment." The circular promised the help of Government loans on easy terms, stipulating "that the wages should be something less than the wages ordinarily paid for similar work, in order to prevent imposture and to leave the strongest temptation to those who avail themselves of this opportunity to return as soon as possible to their previous occupations."

In 1887, distress was again very acute, and another Mansion House Fund was initiated. This provided funds which enabled 394 men to be engaged on relief works at a cost of £5,303. In their report, the Committee observe that very few of these men were trade unionists, a fact which seems to be characteristic of charitable

relief works. This was followed, in 1892, by a similar experiment, when at Abbey Mills (Stratford) £1,315 were spent on employing 865 men. This was the year of the now famous Labour Commission, and public interest in the question of unemployment became very considerable. The following year (1893) the Government reflected this interest by issuing a valuable report, edited by Mr. Llewellyn Smith, dealing with all aspects of the question. About the same time Sir Henry Fowler, then President of the Local Government Board, gave his official opinion that under Section 12 of 59 George III., c. 12, "Boards of Guardians have power to purchase or rent land not exceeding fifty acres for any parish, and to open workshops for setting destitute able-bodied persons to work, and to pay such persons reasonable wages for their labours."

Committee on Unemployment.

In the early months of 1895, the House of Commons appointed a Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, to inquire into the practicability of instituting works to relieve immediate distress. The Local Government Board sent letters to Mayors and Chairmen of District Councils, asking for information on the extent of the distress prevalent in their localities, and how far voluntary agencies were already seeking to relieve such distress. An "unemployed register" was also suggested for any district in which distress prevailed. The result of this inquiry was an important report issued in the summer of 1896. The experimental stage at which the whole question was still halting is well shown

by the concluding remarks of the members of this Committee. "Whilst unable to recommend any general or far-reaching changes in the present working of the Poor Laws, your committee would desire to see a continuation of experimental efforts to deal with the problem in various localities and under various conditions, and your committee consider that the progress of such experiments should be carefully watched, and as far as possible assisted by the Local Government Board under its existing powers, and that the results should be carefully noted for future guidance."

The Guildhall Conference.

The intervening period until 1903 comprised years of good trade, and there was consequently little distress from exceptional unemployment. But the termination of the Transvaal War brought the whole question prominently before the public once more. A very representative "National Conference on the Unemployed" met at the Guildhall (February, 1903), the most important resolution adopted being one which urged "upon the Government the necessity of appointing a Minister of Labour with a seat in the Cabinet." One result of this Conference was the appointment, by the London County Council, almost immediately afterwards, of a special Committee, with Mr. John Burns as Chairman, to inquire into unemployment, particularly as regards London. The report of this Committee recomended relief works, both local and national, for times of exceptional distress, and the carrying out of necessary public works so far as practicable at such seasons of unemployment. The Committee

also asked the Government for an inquiry into the functions of the Board of Trade and other Departments, with a view to the interests of Labour being more adequately represented.

Mr. Walter Long's Scheme.

In October of the same year we have Mr. Walter Long's scheme which is important as having been the practical basis of the Act of 1905. This "Scheme" instituted Joint Committees in each metropolitan borough to "receive applications for work or relief, examine into the cases, and divide them into two classes: (1) those who are respectable men temporarily distressed owing to inability to obtain employment; (2) those who should be regarded as ordinary applicants for Poor Law relief." The applicants of the first-class only were to be the care of these Joint Committees, who were to find work for them. If this were impracticable these cases were to be sent on to the Central Committee, which was formed partly for this object and partly for the purpose of centralising the work of these Committees, each of which appointed its representatives to sit on the Central Body. Provisions were also laid down as to preference to be given to certain applicants and the sort of relief to be administered. These have been repeated in the Act of 1905. The result of Mr. Long's scheme was that some thousands of genuine unemployed were given work at Hadleigh Farm Colony, Long Grove (Epsom), the Garden City and in various London parks, etc., during the winter and spring of 1904-5. A more important administrative result was the establishment of a Central Labour Exchange in London.

Unemployed Workmen Act.

This was but paving the way for what, with all its imperfections, is the only legislation that we have as yet on unemployment. In October, 1905, Mr. Walter Long secured the passage of his Unemployed Workmen Act which primarily deals with London, but which can be, and has been, extended to other boroughs beside London having a population of over 50,000 people. The organisation for the relief of unemployment in London under this Act is as follows:—(1) The appointment of Distress Committees in every borough, consisting of members of the Boards of Guardians and of the Borough Councils and to which others experienced in relief work may be co-opted. The number of such members is limited to forty, but it does not exceed twenty-five in actual practice.

(2) The appointment of a central authority, called "The Central (Unemployed) Body for London," on which representatives from the various Distress Committees sit. This organisation is perpetual and corporate, having its common seal. The duties of the Distress Committees are defined very carefully.* They are to receive applicants for relief, entering full details as to character, former employment, reasons for present unemployment, condition of family, etc., upon a "Record Paper." No applicant is to be considered who has received pauper relief during the twelve previous months or who has been employed on relief work "in two successive periods of twelve months immediately preceding the date of application." Moreover, he must have resided in some

* Cf. "The Organisation (Unemployed Workmen) Establishment Order," 1905.

London borough for at least one year previously. Preference is to be given to such applicants as have been living continuously in the area in which the Committee is acting, are thrifty, of good conduct and capable of manual work. Men with families have the precedence of single men. Authorised visits must be made to the homes of all applicants in order to verify the particulars given by them.

These Distress Committees have no power to provide or pay for the provision of work to such applicants as have satisfied them of being worthy of relief. If the Committees cannot obtain work for applicants, through the co-operation of employers of labour in their area they must forward their record papers to the Central Body. Their chief duty is to collect all information possible as to the local conditions of trade, and to keep an employment register, thus fulfilling the function of local labour exchanges.

The Central Body, on the other hand, is to co-ordinate and strengthen the work of the Distress Committees by "establishing, taking over, or assisting labour exchanges or employment registers and by the collection of information and otherwise as they think fit."* The work that is to be provided and all relief that is given comes from the Central Body and for this purpose a Central Fund is to be raised partly from voluntary contributions and partly from the rates of the various boroughs. The Central Body may, from this fund, open relief works, purchase land for this purpose, help in the emigration of unemployed workmen, and generally administer the working

* Section I. (4) of the Act.

of the Act, *but it may not use the product of the rate for the payment of wages.*

Distress Committees elsewhere than in the Metropolis have wider powers, combining the functions of the Central Body and the Distress Committees in London. But for the holding of land the Borough or District Council will have to be the authority, as such Distress Committees have not corporate existence. These Committees, therefore, are themselves to provide, or pay for the provision of, work for such applicants as they are satisfied are fit to receive help. They may also assist in emigrating unemployed workmen. The funds necessary for this work are to be raised, as in London, both from voluntary subscriptions and also from the rates which, however are not to exceed ½d. in the £ for this purpose, except with the consent of the Local Government Board.

In any county borough of a population less that 50,000 the Borough Council is to appoint a Special Committee which is to do the same work in the collection of information as to labour, and discrimination of applicants for unemployed relief, but the Borough Council is to be the executive authority for carrying out what this Committee recommends.

These, then, are the main conditions of this Act, which would have expired on 11th August, 1908, had not Parliament determined to extend the Act, pending fresh legislation and the Report of of the Poor Law Commission. The present Government, on coming into power in the spring of 1906, voted £200,000 for the carrying out of this Act, and from two-thirds to three-fourths has been expended each year in grants to various local authorities for wages.

Results of the Act.

That this has been helpful legislation in some ways few will dispute, and we have to remember one important point in connection with it. Until this Act came into force there was "no legal way by which assistance of any kind could be given out of public funds to any person in distress unless the Poor Law machinery was set in motion and an application was made to the Guardians for relief."* The 1905 Act was the first enactment to remove the stigma of pauperism from the genuine unemployed, and this was a real step in the right direction.

Again, this Act has undoubtedly been of great use from an experimental point of view. During the three winters that it has been working in London and in the country, it has collected reliable data (*a*) as to the amount of distress actually present in various areas and also as to how much distress may be expected during times of trade depression in such areas; (*b*) also as to the exact class or classes upon which this distress has fallen, or is likely, in the future, to fall. A huge mass of reliable and therefore really useful detail has been scientifically recorded and this is a great gain. We may illustrate this from the return issued in November, 1907, by the Local Government Board as to the work of the Central (Unemployed) Body and the various Distress Committees throughout London and the country. There have been, out of a total of eighty-nine, three provincial committees which have had no need to take action since the Act came into being; viz., Coventry, Rhondda and

* "The Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905." W. A. Casson. Introduction, p. xvi.

West Hartlepool; ten other of these Committees either did not re-open the registers they had formed the previous year or received no applications for registration. All the twenty-nine London Distress Committees were in full working during the year. The following table gives at a glance the results of the winter's work :—*

	Number of Committees taking proceedings under the Act. 1.	Estimated population (middle of 1906). 2.	Number of applications received up to 31st March, 1907. 3.	Number of applications entertained. Applicants. 4.	Dependents. 5.	Percentage of total of columns 4 and 5 to population. 6.
Distress Committees in London -	29	4,721,217	28,181	13,070	37,656	1.1
Provincial Distress Committees	76	10,528,850	58,820	47,346	115,145	1.5
Total -	105	15,250,067†	87,001	60,415	152,801	1.4

This total number of applicants (87,001) is a reduction by 20 per cent. on that of the previous

* These figures may be supplemented by those given by the Rt. Hon. John Burns, speaking in the House of Commons on July 29th, 1908 :—"In England and Wales there were 98 distress committees, 30 of whom had received grants from the Local Government Board. The grants had amounted to £124,000, of which £104,000 had gone to London and district. The number of men registered was 50,000, and of women 3,000. Of 54,000 men who were qualified, 37,000 received work. About 6,000 people were emigrated through the agency of the local authorities, and a new form of relief—perhaps in some ways the best—was the migration of some 700 men from one part of the country to another."

† The total (estimated) population of all areas for which Distress Committees were appointed was, in 1906, 16,341,533.

winter, and includes 4,188 *women*; it is noteworthy that fully five-sixths of the applicants gave their age as between twenty and fifty. Applicants registered as casual amounted to as many as 52.2 per cent. of the whole, whilst the unemployed from the building trade accounted for 17.7 per cent. So that we have here proof of the startling fact mentioned by Dr. Macnamara in the recent (January 30th, 1908) debate on Unemployment in the House of Commons that "nearly three-fourths of the applications entertained in the last two years were from general or casual labourers or from men connected with the building trades."

Of these applications 60,416 were "entertained" by the various Committees and work found for 36,280, being 60.1 per cent. of the total. Of the provincial Distress Committees, however, twenty-seven could find no work at all for those whom they had registered. A few of these committees purchased or rented land on which they employed those applying for registration, *e.g.*, Southampton (forty-seven acres), Leicester (eighteen acres) and Oldham (four acres), but the Farm Colony of the West Ham Committee at Ockenden was the only large undertaking of this description. Here, during the winter, 448 men were employed and the total expenditure was £10,135. The Central (Unemployed) Body still maintained their institution at Hollesley Bay, the amount expended on it during the year being £24,115, and to it 1,063 men were sent. It also continued the relief work started at Fambridge, but brought to an end the works at Osea Island and Garden City. As many as 4,532 persons were enabled to emigrate at a total cost of nearly £32,000. The expenditure on

all the work in connection with the unemployed amounted to £227,745, to which the rates contributed £90,088, Parliamentary Grants £87,795, and the Queen's Fund and other voluntary subscriptions £36,202.

Defects of the Act.

But whilst all interested in this problem must be grateful for what the Act has done, it is at best, as many of its most ardent supporters readily admit, only a temporary palliative of the evil we are discussing. It has certainly been, as we have seen, of educational value, but how far it has really been at all remedial it is difficult to say. We may leave out of the question one or two administrative difficulties in the Act, *e.g.*, that Boards of Guardians have already very largely the powers which this Act puts into the hands of the Distress Committees; also the difficulty as to recoupment from the *general* rate levied upon the rateable value of urban districts, where only the *poor* rate is levied in such a way and not the general rate at all.* We may ignore also the fact (and it is still an observable fact) that many of the best of the unemployed, especially skilled trade unionists, shun the Distress Committees for one reason or another, but when we come to the opinions of those who have had, after all, most to do with administering the Act we find no great agreement either as to its inherent usefulness or as to the degree in which it has succeeded. There were sharp differences of opinion during the autumn gathering of the Association of Municipal Corporations last year on both these points. The chief objections to the measure

* Cf. Casson. Introduction, p. xxviii.

seem to us to be first, the lack of sufficient regular work for those unemployed who were not only "entertained as eligible" by the Distress Committees, but even "preferred" for employment. There were no adequate alternative schemes on the part of the Government which might have remuneratively employed the men for whom the local authorities could make no provision. The Central Body has been hindered on every hand by the fact that there has not been half the amount of work available on which to employ even their most deserving men. Relief works are in the opinion of some a doubtful economic expedient, but if such are adopted, they should at least be able to employ the large proportion of the most deserving men who have been recommended to them. Last year (1906-7) only 231 Bermondsey men received work; yet there were 361 "preferred" and "eligible" cases, while 677 were not investigated at all, because no more work was forthcoming. Something far more effective than such a method is needed before we can be said even to have palliated the evil of unemployment.

Another objection we must urge against the Act is the way in which funds are raised for this relief work. It is surely not a satisfactory settlement to have the finances supplied coming from the rates *and* from voluntary sources. Useful as the Queen's Fund has been both for the amount of money it has raised, and still more for the exhibition it has given of real sympathy with the workless, yet such a method of meeting so great a national evil as unemployment cannot be permanently beneficial. "The voluntary contributions on which the framers of the Act chiefly relied have proved ludicrously insufficient to

meet the demands made on the Central Body, and the help received from the Treasury through the Local Government Board has also by no means made good the deficiency, chiefly because of the limitations imposed regarding the character of the work provided."* If we are to have a national treatment of this question, we must surely face the financial situation from a national point of view. Anything less will be merely tinkering with the matter. *Any* moneys from the Treasury would surely be wisely spent were they in any effective way to remedy so serious a danger to the whole community. It is true that relief works, as we shall see, are ruinously expensive, but this fact should point us rather to better organisation and to larger *remedial* schemes in the place of small and expensive works.

(3) Our last objection to this Act would be that some of the machinery it has set up is too rigid to be of practical assistance to those who not only are sorely in need of work, but really deserve it, *e.g.*, there is the stipulation that no work is to be offered to men who have received any Poor Law aid during the previous twelve months. This as a general rule would probably be an effective bar to mere relief "hangers-on," but there have been, in the experience of many of the Distress Committees, numerous instances where the rule has been a real hindrance to the relief of thoroughly deserving cases. A perfectly genuine workman may for a week or two during the previous winter have been driven to seek out-door relief, and that this should entirely disqualify him a year afterwards from being set to work by the local authority, in another season of distress, seems arbitrary and

* Ibid.

unnecessary. Surely it should be left to the Distress Committees to discriminate as they think expedient in each individual case. And the same might be said with regard to the regulation that the workman who has been employed on relief works "in two successive periods of twelve months immediately preceding the date of the application" is not to be "entertained" by the Distress Committees. Many of the men engaged in season trades, *e.g.* painters unable to find work during the winter, are just those cut out by this regulation. Here again discretionary powers should be left to the Committees to deal with each case on its own merits.

But after all has been said, the Act of 1905 was a useful attempt at dealing with a great national evil, and will undoubtedly lead us on to a sounder and better policy in the future.

The Unemployed Workmen Bill.

Of the Bills which have been brought into the House of Commons since Mr. Long's Act we need say little. The most recent and advanced of these is Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's "Unemployed Workmen Bill," which was introduced on July 9th, 1907, and reintroduced by Mr. P. Whitwell Wilson, M.P., on March 13th, 1908, when a second reading was refused by a large majority. The main points of the Bill* are as follows:—(1) Every County, Borough, Urban District and Parish Council is to be the registration authority. (2) Every County Council and every Borough Council, of boroughs exceeding 20,000 population, is to be the local unemployment authority. (3) Provision of work

* Cf. Ramsay Macdonald's "Unemployed Workman Bill." I.L.P. Pamphlet. 1d.

to those who have duly registered as unemployed is obligatory upon such local unemployment authorities or, failing such employment, "maintenance . . . for that person and for those depending on that person for the necessaries of life." (4) "Unemployment Commissioners" are to be appointed by the Local Government Board to advise the Central Unemployment Committee as to the carrying out of the scheme. (5) Any convicted of "habitual disinclination to work" may be compulsorily detained "for a period not exceeding six months, which period must be passed in the performance of reasonable work under the supervision or control of the local unemployment authority." (6) Such authorities are not to supply "blacklegs" to firms during trade disputes. The Act would, no doubt, require considerable amendment, but the principle of the "right to work" or the duty of the community to find work for its able-bodied unemployed is, after all, the main point of the Bill —this principle the House of Commons has not conceded. The latest stage of the movement to help the unemployed is the Labour Exchanges Act, 1909, which will do something at least to reduce the irregular and uncertain element in the employment of labour by minimising the interval between different jobs. We cannot abolish industrial fluctuations, but we can obviate the worst hardships. The Act furnished the Board of Trade with power to establish labour exchanges in every district, to collect and furnish information as to employers requiring workpeople, and workpeople seeking employment. It is possible under the Act for the Board of Trade to make regulations for advances by way of loan to workpeople

travelling from place to place, and the Exchange itself is a place where every advice and assistance can be obtained in the endeavour to obtain employment. It is hoped that by means of the Exchange casual labour may be seriously reduced, although further legislation is needed if pressure is to be put upon employers in this respect.

Summary.

These, then, are the main outlines of the unemployed problem as it presents itself to-day—an immense waste of productive labour, a waste which inflicts untold suffering upon the manual workers of this country, and serious economic loss on the community at large. It is apparent at once that no system of charity, however well intentioned or scientificially administered, will really touch the root of the evil. We may safely go further and say that no system of Poor Law Relief, however elaborately constructed and faithfully administered, will be an effective solution of this problem. There is a growing feeling in the public mind that neither unhindered competition on the one hand nor elaborate charity on the other can supply the solution of this question of Unemployment. There is much real sympathy abroad for the large numbers of unfortunate "out-of-works," but in many cases this sympathy never takes practical shape because of the growing complexity of the problem. The difficulty of discriminating between the "work-shy" and genuine workless is so great, even when a suitable test is provided, that some despair of ever being able to find an effectual remedy for the evil. Others are so obsessed by the fear that the *character* of the worker may be weakened

by ineffectual charity, that they, too, stand aloof from the help they might give. They point to the general appearance of the "unemployed" who make up our street processions, and to the fact that many of these are unwilling to work when work is offered them. For the municipality to give such men and even better men than these work, is, it is considered, to put a premium on improvidence and thriftlessness; it is but to encourage with public funds the wilful wastrel and vicious vagabond. While this may freely be admitted, it does not absolve both the Government and local authorities from attacking the problem of the genuine unemployed. No one will now venture to assert that all the workless are necessarily the "work-shy." The experience gained by the 1905 Act has disproved this for ever. "It has been the fashion in the past," say the West Ham Distress Committee, "to treat Unemployment either as evidence of unworthiness on the part of the sufferer, or as being merely a problem of the most suitable treatment advisable to a crowd of 'loafers' and general 'hangers-on.' If this Committee is qualified to testify to anything in this matter, it is to the falseness of this conclusion to more than a fraction of the total of men on its lists."*

In 1906 a committee of workers, provided by the Charity Organisation Society, investigated the 4,000 cases on the West Ham works, and the "won't-works" were found to be only 8.9 per cent. These figures may not, and probably would not hold good of wealthy suburbs, or of university and cathedral towns, but they apply in the main to all industrial and working-class centres.

What we have to do at the outset, in seeking

* "First Annual Report" (June, 1906), p. 25.

to grapple with this problem, is to learn the absolute importance of a true classification so that the deserving may be helped to get work, and the useless and the hopeless set aside for other treatment. We may not be able to arrange for separate islands, isolated and autonomous, for each class of undesirables, as Mr. H. G. Wells tells us* "the all-reaching state of Utopia" will certainly provide for its outcasts, but we must have places where the work-shy, the weak-minded, the invalid, and all other unemployables must be separately treated. And we must do this quickly if irreparable harm is to be avoided to the genuine unemployed. "We have passed the point when we can make mistakes with impunity, and to mix up all these classes of unemployed in one great body and mete out to them a rigid measure of assistance will be but to court disastrous failure."† *Organisation, classification, discrimination,* these are the points that must be borne in mind, and it is only upon some such basis of method that any attempt to deal with the problem can hope to be successful.

The classification which we shall use for our present purpose is as follows:—

I. The Unemployable.
   1. The Vagrant.
   2. The Incapable.
      (*a*) "Inefficients."
      (*b*) The physically unfit.
      (*c*) The mentally deficient.

II. The Under-employed.

III. The Unemployed.
   1. Lower types.
   2. Higher types.

* Cf. "A Modern Utopia," p. 144. † Hatch, p. 63.

CHAPTER II.

THE VAGRANT.

"Were it not for the indiscriminate dole-giving which prevails—idle vagrancy, ceasing to be a profitable profession, would come to an end."

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON VAGRANCY.

WE deal, first of all, then, with the Vagrant. At first sight it may seem that this is a term which is inclusive of many of the unemployed and of all the unemployables. But a little consideration will convince us that the vagrant constitutes a class distinct enough to be separately considered. It is true that the Departmental Committee, which last year reported to Parliament on Vagrancy, discovered four types of vagrants: (1) The *bonâ fide* working man travelling in search of employment; (2) "the men who are willing to undertake casual labour for a short time, but object to or are unfit for, any continued work"; (3) "the habitual vagrant, the man who may be professedly in search of work, but who certainly has no desire to find it"; and (4) "old and infirm persons who wander about to their own hurt." But as to the first type, after a great deal of evidence had been presented to them, the Committee came to the conclusion "that, as a rule, the vagrant who is

bonâ fide in search of work is extremely rare." Expert witnesses, in fact, put the number of these at somewhere between one and three per cent. only of the total number of vagrants. So that, for present purposes, we may neglect this first type. The fourth type we shall have to deal with more especially in our next chapter. The remaining types (the second and third) are those of the usual vagrant. As to the second, the Committee remark: "The vagrant of this class is usually a man who has been unable to keep his employment from idleness, want of skill, drinking habits, or general incapacity, or perhaps from physical disability. As time goes on, he succumbs to the influence of his demoralising mode of life, and falls into the ranks of the habitual vagrant.* The bulk, then, of our vagrant class may certainly be included under the term unemployable rather than under that of the unemployed. Hence we are dealing with them first of all. "This is the class," as the Committee remind us,† "who swarm to any place where a new public charity is started; they are the first to avail themselves of free shelters or free meals, and to a large extent oust the genuine unemployed from the benefits intended for them. As witnesses say, the existence of this class gives rise to the greatest difficulty when any attempt is made to deal with the question of the unemployed. They include in their number many loafers who do not wander much, but stay in one town and are a constant trouble to the police, the Poor Law, and the prison authorities."

* Chapter III. Report on Vagrancy.

† Ibid § 83.

Another official Report has put the matter very pointedly as follows:—"The common characteristic of almost the whole tramp class is inefficiency, physical, mental, technical or moral."*

History of the Vagrant.

To understand this class of unemployables we shall have to briefly glance at its origin and history, and also at the legislation which has been instituted to deal with it. Mrs. Higgs, in her essay on Vagrancy† has pointed out that Vagrancy, although now a crime, is yet common to all low forms of society; it is, in fact, a survival from the past of nomadic instincts and, she thinks, should be treated as such by our legislators. Whilst this is true generally of the wandering instinct, our present class of vagrants took rise on the break-up of feudal ties which bound all labourers as serfs to the soil. In the Historical Summary drawn up by the Committee above quoted, reference is made to the three centuries' legislation which has attempted to deal with Vagrancy. The Act of 1495 is mentioned as the first of many cruel and repressive measures against "such as wake on the night and sleep on the day, and haunt customable taverns and alehouses and routs about, and no man wot

* P. 7 Lincoln Report. Cf. L.C.C. Report, p. 3. Much of this inefficiency is due to the general displacement which society suffered during the Industrial Revolution, when the factory system with its specialisation of industry replaced for once and for all agriculture in this country. New facilities of transit also undoubtedly helped forward this disintegration of society and so far increased the opportunities for vagrancy.

† Cf. "Glimpses into the Abyss," Chap. I.

from whence they come ne whither they go." These Acts inflicted the pillory, branding, mutilation, and even hanging for wandering not only on beggars and such-like, but even upon pedlars, minstrels and play-actors who fail to give a good account of themselves. The Committee do not think that from these Acts the conclusion can be deduced that vagrancy in Tudor times was so serious an evil as some have supposed, but rather that Parliament in this period was attempting to get local authorities to repress that general tendency to movement which was then beginning to affect the rural population.

This was the sort of legislation, then, that with but few amendments, remained in force until 1824, which is the year of the well-known Vagrancy Act. This Act was due to the recommendation of a Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed in 1821. The offences with which this important Act deal are those to which vagrants are addicted, *e.g.*, "sleeping out," misdemeanours in the casual ward, and especially *begging*. Offenders are to be put under three classes according to the number of times they have been convicted, *e.g.*, an "idle and disorderly person" on first conviction; a "rogue and vagabond" on second; whilst on third conviction the offender may be classed as an "incorrigible rogue," for which the punishment is imprisonment with hard labour until next Quarter Sessons, when he may be sentenced to twelve months' hard labour.

After this Act which, with its various amendments, is the existing "law" on the question, came the Poor Law System of 1834, and, as a consequence, though not at first provided for by

the Act, the Casual Ward, as we still know it. The Poor Law Board of 1848 defined more clearly this law in respect to vagrancy, and there was in consequence a considerable decrease in the number of vagrants. In 1857 this Board advocated the establishment in London of "district asylums," in which the many vagrants of the metropolis should be uniformly treated. This excellent system was not adopted, but in 1864 and 1865 there were passed the Houseless Poor Acts which established casual wards in every union in London under the supervision of the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund. The Poor Law Board was in 1871 superseded by the Local Government Board and it has appointed ever since this time four officers to supervise the casual wards, and report quarterly upon them.

Here, therefore, there is a certain amount of uniformity of treatment, but undoubtedly this has been the weakness in all our treatment of Vagrancy, viz., lack of a uniform system all over the country. This was especially complained of as early as 1865, when the Inspectors of the Poor Law Board reported to Parliament that out of a total number of 619 unions, eighty-six had no casual wards at all, many others were quite wanting in proper accommodation, and in 195 no work was required in return for food and shelter. Though Guardians had the right of refusing relief, this right was very little used. As to the general character of those who used the casual wards, this was the report: 'The casual ward, so far from being the temporary refuge of deserving poor, is a place of rendezvous for thieves and prostitutes, and other vagabonds of the lowest class, gangs of whom work allotted

districts, and make their circuits with as much regularity as the judges."*

The only other important periods in Vagrancy legislation are 1871 and 1882. In the former year the Pauper Inmates Discharge and Regulation Act was passed, providing for the rules for detention, diet, etc., of those who inhabit casual wards. These rules have been further amended to their present form by the Casual Poor Act of 1882, together with a General Order of the Local Government Board of the same year. As is well-known, admission to the casual ward by the present system is only by order of a relieving officer, except in case of urgent necessity—this admission must be after 4 p.m. in winter and 6 p.m. in summer; those admitted are to be searched, bathed, have their clothes disinfected, and full details as to name, age, calling, previous sleeping place, etc., taken. Discharge cannot be given before 9 a.m. on the second day following admission. If the vagrant has been admitted to any casual ward *of the same union* (all the casual wards of London are deemed to be in one union) once during the previous month, the workhouse officials have a right of detention until the *fourth* day after admission. This latter provision, however, can be dispensed with in particular cases, and it is here, as also in the alternative form of diet prescribed, that the great obstacle to uniformity of administration lies. This is an extremely important point when we consider the fact that the number of vagrants is increasing.

Committee on Vagrancy.

What are the figures then in respect to this class? In an interesting chapter on "Statistics

* Cf. § 35, Vagrancy Report.

of Vagrancy," the Committee assure us that "there are no trustworthy statistics of vagrancy in general. . . . The vagrant is to be found in many places: on the road, in casual wards, common lodging-houses,* public or charitable shelters, and prisons—any figure, therefore, which is given as the total number of vagrants must be accepted as a mere estimate." This "estimate" of the Committee is between 20,000 and 30,000 as "an irreducible minimum." Perhaps we should not be far wrong if we allowed one out of every 1,000 for the vagrant class. From this estimate are omitted licensed hawkers, pedlars, etc., also gipsies. Three important points are raised here by the Committee, viz., the number of (a) discharged soldiers, (b) women and (c) children which may be found "on the road." As to the first point we are told that a census was made in 1896, and again in 1897, and from these figures it was found that only 5 per cent. of the vagrants in the casual wards at those times could substantiate the claim, made very commonly by tramps, of having belonged to the Army or still being "reserves." As to (b), another census revealed the fact that in January, 1905, only 9 per cent. of the inmates of the casual wards were women. The Committee hold, therefore that "the number of female vagrants is comparatively small." (c) The most important point of all these figures is, as the Committee realise, the question of how many children there are who spend their lives as vagrants. We are glad to learn that "the number of vagrant children has been greatly exaggerated; the mistaken idea on this point has, no doubt, arisen from the fact

* Cf. § 324, Vagrancy Report.

of the same children being counted over and over again." The Committee think that children do not account for more than three out of every hundred of our tramps. And yet this is a serious matter for here is one source of the supply of vagrants. "Once on the road, always on the road," is, we are assured, a true maxim. It is doubly important, therefore, to seek to stop the supply. How is the child to be rescued from the road? How does the respectable lad become the professional vagrant? These are questions which must be answered if we are to attempt to rid ourselves of the evil of vagrancy. Of the steady growth of this evil the Committee, unfortunately, have no doubt. "Abundant proof has come before us," they say, "of the recent increase in vagrancy."*

As regards inmates of casual wards, the statistics of the Local Government Board show a continuous rise from 1900 to 1905,† while the returns which were received from the chief constables of counties show that a similar increase has taken place among vagrants generally."

Failure of the Poor Law.

We leave to a later chapter what we have to suggest in way of remedy for this increasing evil, but we must notice here what the Committee are compelled to record, viz., that the law in its present state is unable, seemingly, to cure the evil. The members of this Committee go so far as to assert that "Between the Poor Law

* § 75.

† The total number of casual paupers on Jan. 1, 1908, was 10,436, an increase of 25 per cent. on that of Jan. 1, 1907. (Blue Book No. 130).

and the police the vagrant has flourished. It has been well said that the police authorities treat the vagrant as a criminal but do not punish him, while the Poor Law authorities treat him as a pauper but do not relieve him."*

They point out that this weakness on the part of the law is attributable to two main causes: (1) the utter lack of uniformity in our present Poor Law, and (2) the fact that there is practically no *reformatory* principle in dealing with the vagrant under the present system. Nothing could be plainer than their words as to the importance of such treatment. "The whole history of vagrancy," they declare,† "in this and every other country indicates that the vagrant cannot be suppressed, but must be specially treated for his mode of life and his disinclination to do honest work. To apply this treatment it is essential that the habitual vagrant should be detained under reformatory influences for long periods."

That this whole question of Vagrancy is a very real evil from which society is at present suffering will become apparent when thought is given to the matter. That a class of this kind, at the lowest estimate 30,000 in number, should be free to roam the country at will is, in the first place, thoroughly demoralising to Society at large. How often is the temporarily unemployed or even in some cases, the casually employed labourer tempted "on to the road" by the representations of these vagrants? The spectacle of life under such conditions, when work is already felt, as it is by many, to be a questionable boon, is sure to demoralise those who would otherwise remain respectable citizens. The genuine unem-

* § 431. † § 434.

ployed are only too apt to drift into this form of life while it is flaunted so constantly before them. Police-Superintendent Cole, of Holborn, when giving evidence before the Committee to which we have frequently referred, used these significant words of the distribution of free food to the vagrants of his division: "I am afraid some of the genuine working men go there and they find that they can get food cheap, and then they mix with these habitual vagrants, and so they drift into their ranks."* But Vagrancy demoralises the public in another way. Whilst there is the tramp there will be the beggar with his distressing but deceitful story. While there are these beggars, there will always be the foolish people who are tempted to give. Here is the vicious circle, the street beggar creates the dole-giving public, and the dole-giving public continues the supply of the street beggar! Nothing could be worse for both parties considered. And, more important still, it is this class of idle vagrants which still further depresses the really destitute and genuine unemployed. These cannot be helped whilst the idleness, inefficiency and deceitfulness of the professional vagrant bar the way to what might, in many cases, be useful assistance.

But, not only is this vagrant class *demoralising* to the working classes in particular and the public in general, but it is equally *dangerous* to society at large. It is dangerous from the fact that this class is always dirty and often diseased, and thus carries up and down the country not only vermin of every description, but the germs of infectious diseases. The Report of the Departmental Committee has a separate chapter on this subject,

* § 344.

and if any facts are wanted to convince readers they can easily be gathered here. Such a class, too, is dangerous to society in the fact that petty crimes of all sorts are attributable to these men. Larcenies and robberies of a smaller kind are the perpetual worry of the magistrate, and a very large number of these are traced to the vagabond class. We hear sometimes, too, of intentional misdemeanour so that there may be a change from casual-ward to prison fare! When we add to all this the fact that this vagrant class is a very costly one to the ratepayers we have, it would seem, established a sufficiently heavy charge against it.*

The Homeless Poor.

A final word as to a class which is distinguishable from the vagrant class, although at first sight it might appear a part of it. There is, in the metropolis at any rate, a class which seems to be the residuum of our tramps if we may so express it, viz., the *Homeless Poor*. The ordinary vagrant, as we have seen, usually lives in the common lodging house, casual ward or prison. The class below this is that *which always "sleeps out."*

* An interesting estimate was made by a Lincolnshire Vagrancy Committee in 1903 as to the relative cost of our prisoners and paupers and the inhabitants of the Belgian Labour Colony at Merxplas. "Under our English prison system the annual net cost per head, after deducting the value of work done is £22 11s. in local, and £28 in convict prisons, *exclusive* of all charges for buildings. At the Lincoln workhouse on the same basis, the cost of indoor maintenance per head is about £16 a year. At Merxplas for the able-bodied it is under £10, *including* the entire cost of the buildings and of the farm improvements, and nearly half of even this small sum is paid in wages to the colonists."

Though there is sufficient accommodation at from 2d. to 6d. per night in London for all comers, there is certainly a large number who cannot or will not afford even such cheap sleeping places. On the night of February 9th, 1907, a L.C.C. census discovered 1,998 men, 402 women, and four children sleeping on seats in parks, under railway arches, on tenement staircases, etc.* Of course, "sleeping out" is a punishable offence, but it is necessary to prove that the offender is "without visible means of subsistence," and it is this fact which accounts for the almost dead letter of the law in this respect, as far as London and many of our other large cities are concerned. Consequently this sad army of homeless ones is left unmolested to pass their lives under terribly demoralising conditions. These are the dregs of the class of which we have been speaking in this chapter, and we must find some way of dealing with them also, as with the more professional vagrant.

* On this same night in question the accommodation in London was officially returned as follows:—

In Common Lodging Houses,	20,438	beds for *men.*
,, ,, ,,	1,598	,, ,, *women.*
In Rowton Houses	207	,, ,, *couples.*
,, ,,	4,263	,, ,, *men.*
In Bruce House (L.C.C.)	642	,, ,, *men.*

There were 1,137 Vagrants in the London *Casual Wards* that night, and 745 *vacancies.*

CHAPTER III.

OTHER UNEMPLOYABLES.

"The worthless are what they are because the society of to-day has wrecked them; what then is society doing, or willing to do, to redeem and save the worthless? None are so bad that there is not still a hope."—CARDINAL MANNING.

WE have spoken in the last chapter of the professional vagrant or tramp. We have now to deal with other types of the unemployable, *i.e.*, those whom, in one classification, we have termed "Incapable," and sub-divided as follows:—(1) those whom we may call "inefficients," (2) the physically weak, the aged, lame, blind, etc., and (3) the mentally deficient, epileptics, etc.

I. Inefficients.

It is certainly true that a sufficient supply of employment alone would not help a large number of the unemployed of our land. At least thirty per cent. of these are unemployables, that is, men who could not or would not do regular work if supplied. In the Preliminary Report which the Central (Unemployed) Body for London issued, we find it stated that the labour of the unemployed workmen which this Committee was able to employ was in value equal to "about

three-fifths of that of an ordinary navvy" (cf. p. 39). We are not surprised to find the following comment:—"This represents for unemployed labour a fairly high average." In fact, we read elsewhere in the Report: "It is estimated, as the result of constant observation, that perhaps about 20 per cent. of the men unemployed may at one time have been efficient workmen." It is to be feared that the great majority of the remaining 80 per cent. were really unemployables. We may compare these figures with those of the Distress Committee of 1906 in West Ham. This Committee investigated 4,199 cases of those who were unemployed, and the following was the result:—

	per cent.	
Class I.—Regular artisans	1.2	Eligible.
Class II.—Casual artisans and regular labourers	15.5	
Class III.—Casual labourers	39.5	
Class IV.—Men "who do not, cannot, or will not work"	43.8	Ineligible.

It is reassuring to be told that of this last class only 8·9 per cent. belonged to the class of "won't-works," but nevertheless it must be admitted that some 30 per cent. of those who are called the Unemployed are really "inefficients," and this fact calls for further consideration.

Causes:—(1.) Poverty Conditions.—What then are the causes of this state of affairs? They are many and are deep-rooted in the present conditions of our social life, and also in the characters of the men themselves. In the first place

there are those social and economic conditions of to-day which make for, as it has been well expressed, "inefficiency in social habit." No one can study the general conditions which prevail under our industrial system, *e.g.* insanitary or inadequate housing, or the degrading accompaniment of "poverty," without soon realising that we are yearly "manufacturing" a large number of these inefficients, men and women too, who can work very indifferently and, if left long unemployed, will soon be unable to work at all.

Bad housing,* insufficient food, intemperance or sheer misfortune due to our competitive system soon do their evil work, and crowds of inefficients, in our large centres especially, are the result. We are constantly creating a class of unemployables by reason of our lack, as a community, of organising ability. Speaking of these unfortunates a writer has well said, "It is a class which is a creation of the cities, which collects together in stagnant pools and marshes as far as possible from disturbance and the sight of man."† And, if we are to believe those who have made a study of this type of man, our charities seem to be increasing rather than diminishing the supply."‡

(2.) **Unemployment.** Another cause which helps to produce this class of unemployables is unemployment. Nothing is more demoralising than lack of work. Testimony to this fact seems to be universal and most insistent. "Unemployment, where there is no good

* 68.7 per cent. of the men, in a large number of cases examined by the Central (Unemployed) Body, came from homes of one or two rooms (cf. Preliminary Report, p 58.)

† Cf. "Towards a Social Policy," Chap. xii.

‡ Cf. "Vagrancy Report," §§338-360.

social habit, acts fatally, quickly producing degradation," is the evidence of Mr. C. S. Loch.* Rev. C. W. Alington, writing of the recent distress in West Ham, says, "It is impossible to estimate the peril to character and efficiency which arises among even the best and morally strongest workmen owing to failure to obtain employment; and it is a peril which embraces not only the man himself, but succeeding generations as well, and at last leaves its mark on the community itself."† This sort of testimony might be almost indefinitely multiplied. Every one knows the enormous value, physically, mentally and morally, of sufficient regular labour and how, if this be withdrawn, deterioration soon sets in.

(3.) **Sweated Labour.**—There is another cause which, while we are speaking of lack of employment, ought to be mentioned—that is the employment of those who ought not to be employed. Whilst a large number of boys and girls, and "sweated" women especially, are employed in all forms of cheap labour the numbers of the unemployable are sure to be increased. Our industrial life to-day seems fearfully efficient in producing "ineffectives." "The present system tends also to continually recruit the ranks of the inefficient from the class above them. Their wages being so low leaves them no margin from which to make provision for sickness, unemployment, or old age."‡ On the first advance then of any misfortunes the genuine worker is apt

* *C.O.S. Rev.*, November, 1906.

† *Econ. Review*, January, 1906.

‡ "Sweating." Social Service Series, Cadbury and Shann.

to drift into the unemployables. "Sweating" especially in the matter of women's labour is largely responsible for this, as is the fluctuating and unsatisfactory employment of large numbers of our children as messengers, office boys, telegraph boys, etc. These begin work at altogether too early an age, and just when regular employment should be given them are discharged to seek other work. Without apprenticeship of any sort, many of them having already acquired wandering habits, they easily sink into precarious and casual trades, or even become street loafers. During these early working years they have kept out older "unemployed" workers who have become unemployables, and, after these years have been spent, they are apt to become unemployable themselves.

The causes we have so far detailed of our large class of "inefficients" are those which are inherent in our present social system. But there are other causes which spring from the character of the men and women who form this class. Those who are unemployable for the former reasons we might describe as "unblameable," whilst those who are unemployable for these latter as "blameable."* But here we must remember how almost impossible it is with justice to apportion responsibility, to condemn or acquit, in a society where evil environment does so much to destroy the moral sense before it becomes conscious of itself.

"It is very difficult to determine at what moment the able-bodied working man can be blamed for lapsing into the army of casual labourers and acquiring the evil habits that result from casual employment; and it is, again, a difficult task to

* "The Unemployables." Edmund Kelly, Chap. I.

state at what moment a man is to be blamed for the malady of the will which brings him to a point where he prefers vagabondage and mendicity to performing any useful work at all."*

(4.) **Drink.**—Still, roughly speaking, we are entitled to consider those who become unemployable from any of the following causes as, to some degree at least, blameworthy. The first of these causes is drunkenness. The relation between poverty in general and drinking is, of course, far too large a subject to enter into here, but no social student has any doubt as to the vital connection between the two. Dr. Ralph H. Crowley, in a paper entitled "Alcoholism and Pauperism," refers to an inquiry by Rt. Hon. Chas. Booth, where out of the total number of cases of destitution examined, 25 per cent were *directly* due to drink, and to other inquiries where 51 per cent. and 44 per cent. respectively of the cases were due to the same cause. His opinion is that "*Industrial* drinking (as contrasted with *convivial* drinking), fostered by all the many depressing influences of city life, is the form that by predisposing to disease, and by making the individual hopelessly inefficient in every way, leads directly to pauperism."† He rightly observes, "But no helpful ideas as to the prevention of pauperism due to this cause can be possible unless careful consideration be given to the question, 'Why do men drink?'" The

* "The Unemployables," p. 7.

* "cf. The Drink Problem." T. N. Kelynack, M.D., Chap. XI. Dr. Claude Taylor, during a recent inquiry, only found one abstainer out of 1,600 workhouse inmates, and from 75 to 99 per cent. were there through drink.

answer to this question would reveal to us the interaction of all those forces which make up the great problem of poverty and its connection with this particular question of the Unemployable.

The Editor of the *Local Government Journal* (January 14th, 1905), commenting on a large body of evidence presented on this subject by the Poor Law and Public Health Officers, asserted that the evil effects of drink "are overwhelmingly apparent in the ranks of the unemployable. . . So long as drink is responsible for half the crimes, three-fourths of the pauperism, and at least a quarter of the lunacy of this country, it is the business of the ratepayer, and of the guardians of the ratepayer's purse, to do all that is humanly possible to strike at the root of the evil." We shall have to speak of ways by which it is proposed to deal with inebriates a little later. It is sufficient here to point out the fact that drunkenness is the undoubted cause of large numbers of "inefficients" to-day, a cause which is more or less chargeable to the men themselves.

(5.) **Lack of Adaptability.**—Yet another of these causes is the unwillingness on the part of many of these men to adapt themselves to any new forms of labour. Not a small number of our "inefficients," even when not quite unemployable, refuse to do any sort of work except the merest casual labour. Mr. Kelly, in the exhaustive classification already referred to, puts these in a separate class as:—"Able-bodied unemployed accustomed to casual labour and willing only to work on odd jobs," and classifies them as one class of the "Not Blameless" unemployed. Whether an individual of this class is "blameable" or not, largely, of course, depends

upon the sort of training he has received. It is probable that we shall have to put amongst this number those many slum youths whose parents have given no sort of start in life, and who, just at the most important years of life (from thirteen to seventeen) are doing only "odd jobs," and thus picking up usually with very undesirable companions. These are the ranks from which our vagrants, inefficients and unemployables are recruited. In fact, many of these, owing to the evil conditions from which they have come, are really unemployable even before they begin adult life. Dr. J. B. Paton has described them thus: "They have been born and bred in the slums of our cities; they have suffered from the curse of an evil heredity—children, it may be, of weak and drunken parents. What a doom seemed to be upon them from their birth! Living in shockingly unsanitary homes, they are stunted in growth, and seem old and outworn in their very youth. They have not strength enough for ordinary unskilled labour, and they have not the physical or mental capacity for skilled work, even if they had the opportunity of learning it." Until these conditions are materially altered we shall never finally be able to solve the problem of the unemployable.

(6.) **Laziness.**—Lastly, amongst the causes which produce our "inefficients" we must put that sheer laziness, which is the outstanding characteristic of, it is to be hoped, a comparatively small class. There is no doubt that many of our unemployables suffer from the common complaint which is colloquially known as "being born tired." A real hatred of any form of continuous exertion is

abundantly testified to by all who have dealings with this class of the unemployable. Mr. Bramwell Booth tells of a man who came to one of the Salvation Army Colonies, and in reply to questions put to him frankly confessed, "I don't feel any obligation to work, as long as I can live by other means." Another man replied, "Work? I have done no work for the last five years, and I am going to do no more." Mr. Booth remarks, "These men are types of a class—a small class, it is true, but an element of constant danger to the decent worker."* The "work-shy" and the "won't-works" have to be reckoned with amongst the unemployables.

It is such a type as this which so much complicates the whole question. How far such laziness is the effect, rather than the cause, of the present unhappy condition of many of these "inefficients," it is indeed difficult to determine. We shall discover when we come to speak of remedies that this fact is one of the most powerful reasons for advocating some sort of compulsory detention. It is not until a man has been given work, and *watched in the doing of it for some considerable time*, that any correct judgment can be formed of the degree to which he is either blamelessly incapable or merely idle.

II. The physically weak, aged, lame, blind, etc.

But we must say something about each of the other two classes of "unemployables" which we have enumerated. The second of these includes those who are mainly unemployable, or largely

* "The Vagrant and the Unemployable." A proposal by General Booth, p. 26.

unemployable, through no fault of their own, viz., those who have had the misfortune to receive some serious handicap in the race of life. Many of our last class would be included with the physically weak, and that illustrates one of the most important points of the whole problem, the fact that each class of unemployed tends to be gradually degraded to the class below as long as no employment is forthcoming to arrest the downward tendency. The temporarily "unfit" sink into the class of the permanently weak whom, as is recognised by all, the State must do something towards relieving.

In this class, of course, we must include such unfortunates as those who are blind or crippled, who have weak hearts, or who are afflicted with some other incurable and incapacitating disease. The aged and infirm make up a large number of this class, those "old and infirm persons who," in the words of the members of the Departmental Committee, "wander about to their own hurt: they are 'unemployable,' and crawl from vagrant ward to vagrant ward, only entering the workhouse infirmaries when they are compelled to do so; many of them are crazy, all of them live by begging, and they give much trouble to police and magistrates." This is a sad class, and in seeking to remedy its troubles we shall have to acknowledge the undoubted claims which it has upon the whole body of more fortunate citizens. It is to this class that not a few hitherto healthy and even prosperous workmen are sometimes reduced by accident or illness which perhaps leave behind some fatal weakness. "Others are thrown by repeated sickness out of regular employment; they are reduced to pick up odd jobs for a living; they become casuals; their leisure is necessarily spent

in public-houses where they, like their richer brothers, have to kill time, and do it at the expense of their morals and of their self-respect; they become less and less fitted for regular work, and gradually become converted into vagabonds."*

III. The mentally deficient, epileptics, etc.

Our last class of "unemployables" are those who are most unemployable but at the same time most to be pitied, because they are not responsible, or only semi-responsible, for their actions. All are agreed that suitable provision must be made for these unfortunates, provision that shall guard the interests of society at large, and at the same time be merciful to those who suffer in this way. And the worst of it is that this is a class which if left to itself seems to reproduce itself with terrible rapidity. A member of this class usually becomes the parent of children who inherit from him in increased degree feeble-mindedness, criminal proclivities and disease. It is almost unnecessary to to state that the present method of dealing with this class in Reformatories, Penitentiaries, Workhouses and Prisons is not only inadequate but extremely expensive. "It was calculated that a case of a man of feeble intellect wandering, as they frequently do, from workhouse to prison and back again, must have cost the country in all at least £1,200, and without effecting any lasting benefit either to himself or anyone else."† The Report, recently issued, of the Royal Commission on the care and control of the feeble-minded, states:

* Kelly, p. 53.

† "A Plea for the Mentally Defective." Miss A. H. P. Kirby, Secretary of the National Association for the Feeble-minded. Vide *C.O.S. Review*, March, 1907.

"Of the gravity of the present state of things there is no doubt. The mass of facts that we have collected, the statements of our witnesses, and our own personal visits and investigations, compel the conclusion that there are numbers of mentally defective persons whose training is neglected, over whom no sufficient control is exercised, and whose wayward and irresponsible lives are productive of crime and misery, of much injury and mischief to themselves and to others, and of much continuous expenditure wasteful to the community and to individual families. We find large numbers of persons who are committed to prison for repeated offences, which, being the manifestations of a permanent defect of mind, there is no hope of repressing, much less of stopping, by short punitive sentences."

It is rather outside the scope of this work to describe in detail the recommendations of the Commission, and the functions of the suggested Central Board of Control, since we are dealing more especially with the worker, but special State protection, and authority to segregate mentally defective persons afford the basis upon which all future legislation must rest.

CHAPTER IV.

UNEMPLOYABLES—SUGGESTED REMEDIES.

"The Public Good ought to be the object of the legislator; general utility ought to be the foundation of his reasonings. To know the true good of the community is what constitutes the science of legislation; the art consists in finding the means to realise that good."—J. BENTHAM.

WE have now given some description of the various types of those who must be called unemployable. We have found that the professional vagrant is the most numerous of these types and that he is unemployable more or less through his own fault. But there are many others who are in this unfortunate case through no fault of their own and these, too, as we have seen, present a difficult problem. Now what are the remedies which are being proposed for the different types of this body of unemployables? We ought, perhaps, to begin with indirect remedies and point out the many ways which are being advocated to improve our present social system, but for the present we will confine ourselves to direct methods. "It is quite useless in this connection to inveigh against existing industrial conditions; they may be revolutionised some day; but now, at this moment, they are producing paupers, vagrants

and criminals faster than we are relieving or punishing them; and the insistent problem before us is how best to handle these unhappy people, not only in mercy to them but in justice to ourselves."*

The Prison no Remedy.

Taking the Vagrants first, one thing is clear and that is that the penalty of imprisonment has done very little towards remedying the evil of vagrancy. The Prison Commissioners were quite emphatic on this point: "The large increase in the number of offences by vagrants must furnish material for grave reflection whether successive commitments to prison for short sentences, not as a rule exceeding fourteen days, is a proper or even a reasonable remedy for the grave social malady which this continuous increase of commitment for offences against the vagrancy law connotes."†

The Departmental Committee on Vagrancy is equally outspoken in the matter. It points out, in the first place, that in the large majority of the cases of punishment for this offence the imprisonment is for very short periods (fourteen days or under). Short sentences, as is well known, are very costly and have practically no reformatory value. Moreover there is the additional difficulty in the case of the short sentence that it is often deliberately sought for by the vagrant. "Innumerable cases are reported," we are told, "where the object is to get a few days' rest in prison. It must be remembered that prison is not distasteful to the vagrant; often he is only too glad to get the warmth and comfort of the prison cell after

* "The Unemployables," p. 52.

† of Commissioners' Report, March, 1905.

some days on the road."* This reflects either far from well upon our present casual ward system or too well upon the treatment of short sentence prisoners. However that may be, the Committee is strongly adverse to the prison "remedy." "We are so fully convinced of the futility and needless expense of the short sentence that we consider it necessary to urge that in any case where the magistrate deems it expedient to give a sentence of less than fourteen days for a vagrancy offence the sentence should be for one day only."† Even if there were uniformity of treatment (the lack of which is one of the greatest drawbacks of our present system of dealing with vagrancy) and longer sentences were to be inflicted, the Committee is convinced that very little good would be done. Not only is the prison dietary more plentiful than that commonly given in our casual wards, but the enforced labour for short sentences is less irksome than most of the tasks imposed on vagrants in those wards. It is clear that under these circumstances we must raise the standard of diet and work of the casual ward to that of the prison. This is the conclusion to which the Prison Commissioners came in their Report for 1903. "The only opinion that we can form after careful consideration of the matter, is that a remedy for the above preference of prison to workhouse treatment on the part of that large class of wastrels and ne'er-do-wells, who hover on the borderland between the two, is by the adoption, by the workhouse authorities, of a uniform scale of dietary and task, which shall not be less favourable than the standard adopted, after full inquiry, for persons

* Report, §191.

† Report, §196.

convicted of crime."* Some other way must be found of dealing with the *criminally* vagrant, it is clear, and the concluding words of the Committee on this question are very significant. "We are . . strongly of opinion that the labour colony, and not the prison, is the proper place of detention for these persons."† With the labour colony we shall deal in the next chapter.

(1.) **Reform of the Casual Ward.**—For the present let us take this as the first suggested remedy for vagrancy—abolition or, at least, considerable reform of the casual ward. That our present Poor Law System is in urgent need of reform no one can doubt. The Chief Secretary of the Church Army recently said: "The principle of our Poor Law is good, the sums spent on its administration are very ample, and its administrators are, generally speaking, able and humane, yet that there is something wrong is a fact beyond the necessity of demonstration, and the Government has recognised the fact by the appointment of a Royal Commission to report upon amendments desirable in the Poor Law."‡ He asserts that the Casual Ward, in particular, has certainly not been able to prevent "the manufacture of beggars and tramps through the foolish and inveterate habit of giving indiscriminate doles." Mrs. Higgs, after considerable personal experience, summarises her objections to the Casual Ward under the following six counts:—

1. It makes no attempt to classify.

* Quoted in Vagrancy Report, §213.

† Report, §222.

‡ "The Continental Outcast," p. 124.

2. It pauperises without relieving distress.
3. It is unequally and often unjustly or defectively administered.
4. It provides for destitution a worse treatment than that of prison for crime.
5. It therefore exerts pressure towards vagrancy and crime, instead of acting as a true deterrent.
6. Its existence blinds the public to the fact of *the absence of public provision for migrating*, and the evils of sleeping out and unsanitary lodging-houses accumulate.*

The Departmental Committee, after a careful study of the system in the country at large and especially in London, says, "It is clear to us that the present system neither repels nor reforms the vagrant. It is agreed that the essential condition of success is uniformity of administration, but the evidence is overwhelming to the effect that this object is not attained. . . The evidence also shows the practical impossibility of obtaining uniformity under the present system."†

The Committee tell us that some witnesses have urged that casual wards should be abolished, but that they cannot concur in this suggestion. It is doubtful whether Mrs. Higgs would go to this length, although she outlines "a universal system" which would practically abolish the present casual ward. She says: "These, for instance, are some of the reforms necessary:—

"(1) To arrange definite *national* routes of travel, and settle the migration stations along these routes, including ration stations.

"(2) To close *unnecessary* tramp wards, and publicly notify the available routes. . . .

* "Glimpses into the Aybss." p. 53.

† Report, §§113, 115.

"(6) To secure sufficient sanitary accommodation in every large centre and on national routes, both for the destitute and for the *bonâ fide* working man.

"(7) To make uniform the supply of rations, the accommodation, and the task of work, and see that the latter is on a proper business footing. . .

"(9) To provide detention colonies for the confirmed idler, vagrant, and habitual drunkard, if committed by the magistrate."*

The Committee fully recognise that a radical reform of the casual ward system is necessary, especially in the case of women vagrants. "At present the treatment that female casuals receive is often unsatisfactory, and the complaints that Mrs. Higgs made of her experience in certain wards cannot be disregarded."† The reform suggested is one that has been made for a long time past by workhouse masters and others who have studied this subject, viz., that vagrants should be under the care of the police, who should be responsible for the casual wards.‡ They think that this change would be a right one in principle, for the police have always been considered the proper authority to deal with houseless persons, petty criminals, etc.; also that it would be most beneficial for administrative purposes, the county would become "the area of chargeability," and thus some amount of uniformity would be possible; moreover that acquaintance with the roads, which the patrol duty of the police gives them, would prove most useful in dealing with vagrants.

* "Glimpses into the Abyss," pp. 75, 76.

† Report, §405.

‡ Report, §125.

To effect this change, the Committee do not think that a great deal of new machinery in the form of staff, or special buildings, would be necessary. The workhouse masters would remain as the chief ward-officials responsible to the police, and most of the present buildings could be either purchased or rented, by the police, of the Guardians. In some cases, at any rate in times of emergency, ordinary police-stations might be utilised. In London, where the Home Secretary is the chief police authority, a little difficulty might be experienced in the exchange, but the gain to the metropolis, where vagrants naturally tend to congregate, would be very great. The Home Secretary would, by this arrangement, become the authority for making regulations in respect of vagrancy and not, as now, the Local Government Board. It is suggested that the granting of the "certificate of efficiency" by him, to each county Police Authority, should be conditional on the proper management of vagrants in the county. As to the nature of the casual ward, the Committee are of opinion that "a task of work should be enforced in every case where the man is capable of performing it," and that its duration should be not less than nine hours. We are reminded by the Report that this question does not apply to Scotland, where there is no system of casual wards, nor to Ireland where the vagrant is admitted to the ordinary workhouse as an "urgent" pauper.

These are the reforms advocated by the Committee on vagrancy, but they would of course take considerable time to effect. Mrs. Higgs recognises this, and suggests some "reforms *immediately* possible." These "include changes

in administration of the tramps' ward, such as the provision of a diet equal to the lowest prison fare, suitable drink, and a mid-day ration, a proper bed or hammock, absolute prevention of overcrowding, clean water for the bath, and thorough carrying out of Local Government Board precautions for cleanliness."* These and other reforms of our casual ward system are necessary, and, if carried out, they would doubtless lessen some of the evils of Vagrancy.

(2.) **Papers of Identification.**—But (2) there is another reform which has been suggested, viz., some system of *Papers of Identification* such as is in use in several continental countries. In many of the cantons of Switzerland, every man who is able to prove that he has worked for any employer not earlier than three months previously, may obtain a relief book of "wanderscheine" or way-tickets. These tickets enable the wayfarer to roam over the whole country, receiving lodging at night, and three meals a day, at the various relief stations. But the same traveller may only receive shelter and food once in six months at the same station. The "wanderschein" acts as a Paper of Identification, and thus the genuine worker, seeking for employment, is readily distinguished from the idle vagrant. In Germany a similar system is in operation, except for the fact that a task of work is imposed at the relief station, and other papers of identification beside the "wanderschein" have to be shown by the wayfarer. In many parts of Germany voluntary lodging houses take the place of the official relief stations. The maintenance of the

* "Glimpses into the Abyss," p. 79.

system in Switzerland, too, is half charitable and half official.

Such a system, although in its German form hardly applicable to England, is certainly to be recommended as a most useful form of classification of those who are tramping the country. All who could not produce such evidence of *bonâ fide* employment could be treated in a much severer way than would be justifiable in the case of the whole body of vagrants. Nor is the idea new to this country, for there is still existing in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire a "way ticket" system, which has been found to be useful in discriminating between the unemployed workman and the professional tramp. By this system the relieving officer gives, to any vagrant who applies to him, a ticket on which are inscribed full details of the man's appearance, the place he has come from, and the place to which he professes to be going. On it are also written a full list of relief stations, at which the man can, by presenting this ticket at the *next station in order of rank*, obtain a mid-day meal or, if it be a casual ward, one night's shelter, for which only a small task of work need be done. If the man follow the proper route marked on his ticket, he is a "good-ticket" man, and can obtain his mid-day meal and one night's shelter. If however, he be found to deviate from the route or arrive without a ticket, he is held a "bad-ticket" man, and cannot receive a mid-day meal, and is detained two nights in the casual ward, with the usual task of work to be performed. The weak point of this system is the fact that a new ticket can be got far too easily, viz., after two nights detention in any of the casual wards of the county.

Some such system as this the Departmental Committee strongly advocates, although they are "not prepared to recommend that every wayfarer in this country should be required to carry papers. A compulsory system of this character needs some penalty for non-compliance; and we feel strong objections to making the non-production of a way-ticket a punishable offence." It is difficult to see why this should not be done, at any rate in the case of all who had been convicted of offences against the Vagrancy Acts. If the papers of such men could be properly kept, as in Germany, we should not have men wandering over the country, presenting an effectual barrier to any right treatment of the genuinely unemployed.

The Committee, however, recommend a ticket-book, limited to about a month's duration, which should contain way-tickets with full details (including the finger print) of the traveller who can give evidence of *bona fides* to the authorities. Each of these tickets should entitle the holder to supper, bed and breakfast at a casual ward. A two hours task of light work should be imposed, after which the man should be able to leave the ward whenever he liked. If he left in the morning a ration of bread and cheese should be given him to serve as a mid-day meal on his way to the next relief station. He should be better accommodated than the ordinary tramp, from whom, as far as possible, he should be separated whilst in the casual ward. Whatever be the precise nature of the system adopted, it is necessary that it should be *universal*, and have some system of labour bureaux in connection with it, so that the genuine unemployed may find the work he is seeking.

(3.) **Lodgings for Travellers.**—This brings us, in conclusion, to other reforms which have been suggested in dealing with Vagrancy, viz., the provision of forms of lodging for travellers, other than the casual ward. There is no doubt that there is, in England, a real lack of good, clean lodging for the traveller at a price t hat can be called at all moderate. Mrs. Higgs makes serious complaints against the accommodation possible for poor, but respectable, workers in London and other of our large towns. She describes very graphically her experiences of the common lodging-house, where as much as 4d. or 6d. has to be paid for, oftentimes, the dirtiest accommodation.* Undoubtedly, both the Church Army and the Salvation Army have attempted to supply this need, and excellent accommodation can be obtained for a small cost at the Rowton Houses. Glasgow has not only lodging houses, but has set the example in the direction of a Municipal Family Home where workers who are widowers may lodge cheaply, in a thoroughly comfortable way, and can leave their children, whilst themselves at work, in the care of nurses provided for the purpose. London, and many other cities have good municipal lodging houses, which have been found to meet all urgent requirements. If more cannot be done at present in this direction, the Government or the municipalities should give grants-in-aid, on strict conditions, to such institutions as those mentioned above to supply the want. Some of these institutions impose a light task of work in exchange for board and lodging, and this has been found to be very useful. In Manchester, the Central Mission gives board

* "Glimpses into the Abyss," Chaps. V., VI. and VII.

and lodging thus to as many as a hundred men a day, who are able to spend all the morning looking for work. This particular workmen's " home " is self-supporting.

The Departmental Committee are justly sceptical of the good which free shelter or free food distribution do.* But whilst the accommodation in the common lodging house is so expensive and, at the same time, so doubtful in quality it is not to be expected that charitable institutions will lessen their efforts in this direction.

We need not deal here with such Relief Stations as have been instituted in Germany (the " verpflegungs-stationen "), for we shall have to describe them later, in connection with Labour Bureaux for the genuine unemployed. For the present we are only concerned with the vagrant class as a whole, a large percentage of whom, as we have seen, are really unemployable. For these latter no temporary provision, in the way of nightly shelter or daily food and work, seems at all adequate. Some other and much more drastic method, must, therefore, be found of dealing with them, and to this subject we now turn.

* Cf. Report, §338.

CHAPTER V

LABOUR COLONIES FOR THE UNEMPLOYABLE.

"The man without moral stamina is, perhaps, the most disappointing of all the denizens of darkest England. Without force of character, power of will, or tenacity of purpose, he floats helplessly down with the tide."—BRAMWELL BOOTH.

THE original idea of a Labour Colony was certainly that of helping the unemployed, and the first attempt was made in Holland over eighty years ago, when General Van den Bosch founded the colony at Frederiksoord with the motto "Help the people and improve the land"; but, notwithstanding this fact, most of the colonies that have been established have, *ipso facto*, dealt with a class of unemployed not far removed from the unemployable. It is, therefore, difficult to draw a very clear distinction between the two types, and while we attempt to make this distinction, it must be understood that certain of the colonies, and perhaps the majority of them, deal, at one time, with the genuine unemployed, and at another time with men who are almost, if not quite, unemployable, using the word in the sense of inefficient and ineffective.

It is, perhaps, for the unemployable proper that the labour colony, as distinct from the agricultural

training colony, is most adapted, and we propose to deal with that class, about which there can be little doubt, and following our former classification, we shall begin with those who are physically or mentally incapable of ordinary industrial employment in the town.

I. Physically and Mentally Defective.

Generally speaking, men who are unemployable in the ordinary sense owing to physical causes, and yet might be employed on the land with good results to themselves, are the epileptic and the feeble-minded. It is one of the blots upon the escutcheon of modern society, that until recently so little attention has been given to men, women, and children suffering from such diseases. A great change, however, has come over the country in this respect, and the question has now received a large amount of attention, owing to the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded.

The adult epileptic, however, is still in a sad plight as compared with many other classes of the community who have suffered from misfortune or sickness. Some of them, a large number, are to be found in our workhouses, where they receive a treatment which cannot be said to be either scientific or humane. The majority of them are to be found living in the homes of the very poor, a grievous burden to the family itself, and somewhat of a trial to all the neighbours. Many of these epileptics, gradually becoming feeble-minded, suffer ill-usage from rough and foolish lads, and in any case little or nothing is done to lighten their sad condition or to make them useful to the community. The medical study of epilepsy has now reached that stage when almost every

epileptic can find some relief from proper treatment even if an absolute cure be impossible. Medical experts are generally agreed that, apart altogether from any treatment by means of drugs, fresh air and the right kind of diet are essential if these sufferers are to be assisted. In many cases they can be employed in healthy outdoor labour such as will interest and occupy them to the required extent, without taxing too much an enfeebled brain or greatly fatiguing the body. Such work can best be found upon the land, and a colony offers employment which is not only conducive to health, but also will allow of an epileptic being employed in a great variety of ways. In such a colony the work would necessarily be under the advice and guidance of a medical man, but in almost any case some proportion of the food required to maintain him could be produced by this necessary and beneficial labour. It is unfortunate that so few of those colonies are in existence. What the Christian Union for Social Service is doing at Lingfield and Starnthwaite for epileptic children ought to be done for adult epileptics in all parts of the country.

The National Society for the Employment of Epileptics has already helped to remove the disgrace which we have incurred by our neglect of the epileptic in the past, and the Chalfont Colony, which, as compared with Bielefeld, is in its infancy, has already completely justified its existence. This colony has gradually increased in efficiency of organisation as well as in size year by year. In 1895, the average number of colonists was 195, the total expenditure £1,719, the cost of maintenance of each colonist being £71 12s. 6d., but in 1907, with an average of 195 colonists, the

cost was £6,423 14s. 7d., the per capita expenditure being reduced to £32 10s. per inmate. On the average in the colony there are about twice as many males as females. The male colonists are principally employed in the building department, carpentering, plumbing, painting, bricklaying, and smiths' work; the remainder are chiefly occupied in farm and garden work, while about half a dozen are engaged in basket making. They take it in turn to give their services in the home as required. Of the female colonists, nearly half are employed in the laundry, the remainder chiefly occupied by the housework and needlework, but a good deal of stress is laid on the necessity of plenty of fresh air daily. Bielefeld, in Germany, is by far the most important colony of its sort in the world. Over two thousand epileptics are there cared for, and, although many of them are children, a large number of adults are being treated, and some permanent cures effected. Of late years greater care in diagnosis and in the use of bromide have resulted in a larger percentage of cures, while the open air work on the land, both in the neighbourhood of Bielefeld and at the Wilhelmsdorf Colony, have very greatly contributed to the success with which adult patients have been treated.

What has been said with regard to epileptics applies with equal force to the *feeble-minded*, who are a constant responsibility in our workhouses and our county asylums, where the treatment is costly, when under the conditions which special colonies offer, the best of them might contribute something to the cost of their maintenance by labour, while their mental faculties might be trained in various ways. So far as the children are concerned, all that need be said is

that epileptic and feeble-minded children become unemployable in later years, so that the colonies for them which have already been established are fulfilling a very real and pressing need.

The same treatment might also be meted out to the inebriate, who is far more likely to recover under the healthy and normal influences which he or she finds in a country colony. Granted the right kind of management, there is no reason in the world why such colonies should not be the most potent means in restoring to the ranks of the employed those who have rendered themselves unemployable by habits of intemperance.

II. Criminal and Vagrant.

But, as we have seen, the largest section of the unemployable is the vagrant class to be found in all parts of the country, both men and women, who are quite capable of working, but who have degenerated and become demoralised, it may be by lack of work, possibly by lack of training, or by evil conditions in their youth. What sort of Labour Colony can be suggested for these? All who have studied this subject are agreed that whatever be the type finally selected for this class of unemployable, it must possess a real power of compulsory detention. Belgium is the country that has most fully developed this principle, and the great penal colony of Merxplas, near Antwerp, is the outcome of it.

Merxplas is the Belgian Government's attempt to stamp out mendicity. In Belgium vagrancy is not, strictly speaking, a penal offence, but it is regarded as so much of a social danger as to require special treatment, and by Article 13 of the law of 1891, the Juge de Paix has authority to

order the removal of a vagrant convicted of begging to what is known as a "Depôt de Mendicité." The methods employed appear to be much more strictly repressive than redemptive. M. Stroobant, who is at the head of this colony, stated emphatically that the object of Merxplas was repressive. To quote his own words: "It taught men to work and to work regularly; it saved them from their own vices—the vices that had brought them there—but it did not seem to prevent them from going back over and over again." The colony compels men to work at agriculture, manufactures, forestry, and household employment. Soldiers conduct the agriculturists to their various fields, although it is not very difficult for colonists to escape. This seems to cause no anxiety to the director, who says that if they can get work and are willing to do it, all the better, and that if they are unwilling to work they are sure to fall into the hands of the police and be returned again to the colony. Merxplas is practically self-supporting, and, as the report of the Vagrancy Committee points out,* there is no comparison so far as cost is concerned between the Belgian system and the casual ward system of England. Including the small wages that are paid to the colonists—and the wage system ought certainly to be adopted in England at a compulsory labour colony—and taking even the aged and infirm into account, the entire cost is under £10 per head per annum, and the small wages will account for, at least, half of this.

In addition to the colony at Merxplas with 4,500 men, there is one at Wortel and another at Hoogstraeten, the three colonies between them possessing about 3,000 acres of land. The two latter colonies

* Cf. Vagrancy Report, §§ 118, 235, and 321.

form one establishment, and are known as a "Maison de Refuge." They are not penal in the strict sense, and are tending to become rather the resort of the aged and the infirm. The number of colonists is greatly increased by severe weather. Hoogstraeten would have about 800 in summer and about 1,500 in winter; Wortel 450 in summer, and perhaps three times that number in winter. Very few of the colonists are young men, and the conclusion to which we are forced—and with this conclusion both M. Leroy, the "Director Principal," and M. Stroobant, the director at Merxplas, agree—is that the genuine unemployed man is relieved outside the colony, and that almost the only men who are sent to the colony are professional beggars or habitual drunkards.

A similar system, not so thoroughly carried out, prevails in Holland, where there are three Government colonies which may be described as penal for beggars and tramps, Veenhuizen and Hoorn being for men, and the national workhouse at Leiden for women. The former is for vagabondage proper, while at the two latter habitual drunkards are also admitted. The present population of Veenhuizen is about 3,600, divided into three sections, and the work consists chiefly of forestry, agriculture, gardening, and various handicrafts, such as weaving, carpentering, masonry, smith's work, and the manufacture of furniture, boots and clothing. The colonist prisoners enjoy a certain amount of freedom within the colony, and have a very small allowance for wages.

What is proposed is that power to detain in colonies shall be given to magistrates in England, with due precautions and under all possible safeguards, and that for this purpose, within County

Council areas, we shall establish colonies which will offer the opportunity of useful and honourable work on the land to a class of men which, at present, is a tax on the community and a real danger to its citizen life.

The Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy recommends this treatment for the habitual vagrant :—" We propose that a class of habitual vagrants should be defined by statute, and that this class should include any person who has been three or more times convicted during a period of say twelve months on certain offences now coming under the Vagrancy Act." The committee was strongly of opinion that the prison is a wrong place of detention for such vagrants and recommend " committal to a labour colony for a term not exceeding three years."*

The great advantage that a farm colony would have over the casual ward system lies in the fact that the whole environment of this class of man is absolutely changed. In the first place, he is no longer allowed his freedom after a few hours' work. He would enter the colony for a certain definite period, and his future would depend upon his conduct during that period. In the second place the work is useful and humanising, whether it be in spade labour on the land, in forestry, in the tending of horses, cattle and pigs for the best and most skilled of the men, or in the manufacture of those things which are essential to the conduct of a colony on a large scale. It should always be possible to provide a reasonable amount of recreation for these men. They might have their own band, and their own library, and the nominal wage system would enable them to purchase such

* Vol. I. §§ 221 and 222.

small luxuries as tobacco, and thus offer an additional incentive to men to do their best. Many of them are men of weak character, easily swayed and led by the baser kind. They need not be permanently unemployable, and it might be left to the discretion of the director, when real improvement is visible, to pass on such men to a free colony, with the possibility before them of rising to independence and citizenship.

This is the distinctive feature of a compulsory labour colony at Witzwyl in the canton of Berne. A number of small free colonies are provided for those who have completed their term of detention at Witzwyl, and the men may, if they choose, volunteer to continue in one of these colonies under the improved conditions therein afforded. The great success which has attended these colonies, is attributed by the Manager, M. Otto Kellerhals, to the fact that they are small, and that intimate relationship is established between the men and the manager. The manager makes it his business to befriend those who are striving to better their life and their conditions, and since small wages can be earned, a way is made easy for some, at least, to resume the position of ordinary citizens. Personal influence, it is clear, counts for much in this type of colony.

III. The Casual.

Midway between the strictly unemployable and genuine unemployed is a large class of casual labourers who are chronically unemployed, and they, for that reason, become, to some extent, physically or morally incompetent. One important cause of inefficiency is unemployment, and the longer the unemployment, the

greater the inefficiency. Finally, resort is had to the Poor Law authorities, and as the able-bodied, either within or without the workhouse, they become a burden to themselves and the community.

What is wanted for this class of man is a colony which will utilise his services to the fullest possible extent; and meanwhile, by this inducement to regular work, so increase his physical powers and capabilities that he may be able once again, if necessary, to obtain a situation in the regular ranks of industry. There can be no harm done in trying to restore hope and strength to the thousands of men who, owing to lack of work, enterprise, or character, have become hopeless and demoralised. Colony work has many advantages as compared with what is offered by the Poor Law Guardians. It is true that some kind of occupation is given to them in the workhouse itself, but, as a rule, that occupation is neither continuous nor useful, and the result is that they tend to become habitual idlers, with that apathetic look which always seems to belong to the workhouse inmate.

The Poplar Board of Guardians attempted by means of its colony at Laindon in Essex to overcome the difficulty which obviously attaches to the provision of work in the town. The Laindon Colony was established in June, 1904, largely as a result of an offer made by Mr. Joseph Fels, who purchased the land and the buildings and handed them over to Poplar for three years rent free. There is very much that might be said by way of criticism of such a colony as Laindon, but it is an undoubted fact that much useful work has been accomplished both in morale and physique. The men were greatly improved and better fitted

for work either in the country or in the town than was the case previous to this experience. At the same time it is difficult to find sufficient work in a colony of comparatively small size, and perhaps almost the greatest achievement of such a system would be to establish these men after a course of preliminary training either in the country, where situations had been found for them, or in some one of our dependencies, as for example, Canada.

The French colony of La Chalmelle is situated in the Foret de Traconne, about fifty miles from Paris, the nearest station being Les Essarts-la-Forestiere. The colony was founded in January, 1892, at the instance of M. Georges Berry, and consists of about 370 acres of rather poor quality land. Roughly speaking, the colony, which is a municipal institution, run by the Council of Paris, costs the City Council on the average about £1,800 a year, about £1,000 being received as a result of the sale of produce and in other ways. A special effort is made by the directors of the refuges, through the agency of the colony, to return persons connected with agriculture once more to the soil. Some 74 per cent. of those who enter the colony are connected with agriculture, chiefly country labourers who flock to Paris at the end of the harvest and vintage, and in the course of the winter find themselves stranded. The majority are between twenty and forty, so that both in respect of occupation and of age, La Chalmelle is a much more hopeful experiment.

Scheme for Labour Colonies.

In the "Scheme for Labour Colonies," which the Departmental Committee has drawn up, we have seen that the Committee recommend that

the old and infirm and the feeble-minded should be compulsorily confined in the workhouse and that the casual wards should still be used for the genuine unemployed, who are to be helped on their journey in search of work by the use of the "way-ticket" book. Those vagrants, however, who are unconvicted of being "habituals," will be able still to use the casual ward, although the treatment that they will receive there will be more severe than that of the way-ticket men. The man who has been convicted of being an "habitual vagrant" is to be sentenced to detention at a labour colony for not less than six months and not more than three years. At least one of these labour colonies should be directly under the control of the state, and such a colony should be of a penal type. Other labour colonies should be maintained by local authorities, and the existing philanthropic colonies should be state-aided. The numbers in such institutions should never exceed 500, and sufficient but "cheap and unattractive" food should form the dietary. They consider that £10 per annum should be the limit of expense for each inmate of such colonies, and all that would ensure remunerative labour by the colonists should be done. Forms of healthy recreation should be provided, and every kind of religious influence be brought to bear upon the inmates. The Committee heartily approves of some sort of wage system such as prevails at Merxplas, where it has worked most successfully; also a system of graded colonies and as careful classification as possible in each type of colony. On the important question of making such institutions pay, the Committee express themselves as follows:

"Though we place the training of the 'work-shy' loafer in habits of industry as the most important object to be aimed at, we think that in a well-managed colony a not inconsiderable percentage of the inmates might, after a short period of detention, be made to earn a substantial part of the cost of their maintenance. In considering the question it is necessary to remember that at present the habitual vagrant, whether as beggar or as inmate of casual ward or prison, is a continual source of expense to the community." There can be little doubt that England would do well to make an experiment in this direction, and indeed it seems probable that after the Report of the Poor Law Commission has been issued, steps will be taken to carry out some such project with legislative sanction and financial support.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNDER-EMPLOYED.

"Great as is the evil of complete 'Unemployment,' the evil of irregular and insufficient employment is far greater."—J. A. HOBSON.

WE have now briefly dealt with all classes of the Unemployable. There is a large class bordering on these which must next occupy our attention, a class which may not perhaps inappropriately be called the *Under-employed.* This class is very largely recruited from the ranks of casual labour, but it is really composed of a "sediment of labour" from all the higher ranks of labour as well. It is this class, in fact, which is most conspicuously to the front in all matters relating to Unemployment generally. The unskilled unemployed are, like the poor, always with us.

This is the class which Mr. Charles Booth has described as entirely "superfluous" as far as labour and wages are concerned. "Class B," as he labelled it, was found by his investigation to consist of no less than 100,000 men and women in East London, and amounted to 317,000 in the whole of the metropolis. He considered it to be the crux of the whole social problem, for it is this class which helps to drag down the classes

next above them in the social scale. They are just not paupers, but are the material, he tells us, from which paupers are made. They can rarely be described as totally unemployed, but they are as rarely fully employed; they are never more than partially employed.* As we have said, they may be called the *under-employed.*

The Modern Labour Market.

We shall understand better the nature of this class of workers if we ask ourselves why such a class exists. Mr. J. A. Hobson has carefully gone into this question, and he tells us that the existence of such a class as the under-employed is due in the first place to the altogether unreasonable variation in the modern labour market. The consequence of this variation in the demand for labour on any given day is that there is always, even in times of good trade, a large superfluity of labour. While he fully recognises that a certain amount of superfluity of this kind must exist, owing to seasonal trades and the inevitable uncertainty of some forms of industry, he believes that there is a great deal more of such superfluity of labour than is necessary. That this superfluity could be largely checked, even in such an industry as the building trade, he also believes, and asserts that it would be checked if it became *necessary* to the employers of such labour.† He thinks that it is here that we must look for one significant cause of our seasons of trade depression. "May not," he asks, "the existence under normal conditions

* "Life and Labour of the People," Vol. I., Part I., Chaps. VI. and VII.

† "The Problem of the Unemployed," Chp. I. and III.

of an average margin of 5 per cent. 'unemployed' in the skilled trades, and possibly a larger margin in the 'unskilled' trades be a cause, as it is certainly a condition, of the fluctuations which make this year 'good' and that year 'bad'?"

Seeking for the underlying causes of this variation in the labour market of to-day, this writer finds three: (1) the extraordinary *expansion* of the modern market areas so that, in place of the district, or at most national, market of a century since we have now the *world* market to be supplied. This expansion in the area of the market means, of course, a fiercer and less easily calculated competition. (2) An increase in the *speculative* nature of modern industry so that "a less and less proportion of work is done to supply definite orders, more and more is done for the chance of an unknown sale." And (3) the great increase in trades of fashion and luxury which, depending on the "taste" of society, are essentially variable in output, and consequently in demand for labour.* He does not think that the *transferability* of labour, which some assert is becoming increasingly possible, tends, to any appreciable degree, to check these forces. As a minor cause of this superfluity of labour, Mr. Hobson also refers to "the lamentable and criminal waste of labour represented by the constant flow of soldiers from regular military service into the Army Reserve, which helps to swell the standing hosts of untrained and low-skilled labour."

Another cause for the existence of so large a class of under-employed he calls attention to

* Cf. Report of Committee on Unskilled Labour (Charity Organisation Society), 1908, p. 4.

is, the organisation of labour in all the higher grades of workers. "To some extent, at any rate, the skilled unions have limited the labour market in their trade. The inevitable result of this has been to maintain a continual glut in the low-skilled labour market. This permanent pool of over-supply of low-skilled casual labour is fed by the periodic trade depressions which thrust the weaker members of the skilled trades into the seething mass of low-skilled town workers to struggle for a bare subsistence by irregular labour."*

Types of the Under-Employed.

This, then, is the class that we have to seek to give increased employment to, a class which is typified in the metropolis, as Mr. Charles Booth tells us, in the various forms of labour which it is capable of performing. He thus cites dock-labour, tailoring, boot-making, furniture making, and "sweated" home-work generally as the typical employment of the under-employed. And of these the dockers are certainly the most representative. In the various London docks about 22,000 men compete in keenest rivalry for the chance of a few hours' work. No other qualification is needed than physical fitness and any man, however old a "hand," is liable to be turned off for a new-comer if the latter be apparently a shade stronger. Most of this labour, although described technically as "unskilled," is extremely difficult and there is much inevitable irregularity in the demand for it. A difference of at least 25 per cent. is experienced in this demand in the spring and autumn respectively whilst, on one

* Ibid, p. 20. Cf. also C.O.S. Committee Rep. *passim*.

day in any season the demand may be as high as it may be low on the next. But on an average day it is estimated that no less than 5,000 of these "dockers" are compelled to be idle. Now whilst a good deal may be done to lessen this evil by a better organisation of the labour forces as a result, in London at all events, of the formation of one port authority, it is certain that a large amount of under-employment will always have to be faced in connection with this and many other like industries.

The demoralisation which such lack of full employment is certain to bring even to honest and respectable workers is well-known to all acquainted with the casual labourer. The temptation to spend when wages are uncertain and intermittent, is far stronger than when they are fixed and regular. The fact that no sort of "character" is required for most of the forms of labour open to such workers tends towards further demoralisation. There is thus a constant drift from this class to the class below, *i.e.*, the vagrant and criminal class. And this is especially noticeable during the winter months, when the casual labourer finds it most difficult to get work. Hence we find that the inmates of the labour colonies are always more numerous in the winter than in the summer, a fact which is only partly explained by the increase of vagrancy during the colder season.

Remedies:—

(1.) **Allotment Cultivation.**—What then can be suggested by way of remedying some of this under-employment? In the first place something could be done by the supply, wherever

practicable, of allotments for cultivation during the hours or days of forced idleness, which are the lot of every casual labourer. This is specially useful as a remedy for under-employment in dockyards, as has already been proved in the case of the Victoria and Albert and the East India Docks. In the vicinity of these docks, such allotments have already been a working success. A docker at work on one of these allotments once said, "I shall never be afraid of starvation while I have this little piece of land. It isn't much, but it is just enough to tide me over bad times, and gives me work to do on the days when I know there is no likelihood of a 'call on.'" Mansfield House, the settlement in Canning Town has already made a valuable experiment in this direction,* and a large number of men have been able to fill up their vacant time in growing food for themselves and their families. There is plenty of good available land in Essex which could be used for this purpose. Such allotments, if on a sufficiently large scale, could be kept in constant touch with the docks to which they were attached by telephone. At the shortest notice by such means any number of men could be carried up by train or tram to the docks at a trifling cost. Some such arrangement as this, together with an altogether better organisation of the supplies of dock labour than is at present in vogue, would do a great deal towards remedying those well-known evils of dock life.

* About 25 acres of land in the immediate vicinity belonging to the Gas Light and Coke Co., are being cultivated by nearly 200 men. The land is annually producing food to the value of £40 per acre. It is under the control of the S.W. Ham Unemployed Society.

(2.) **Work on Waste Land, etc.**—For other of the "under-employed" who are not dockers, but who have to face short or, as in many cases, long periods of unemployment regularly recurring at certain seasons, other expedients will have to be sought. For the most inefficient of these some sort of labour colony might well be formed, *e.g.*, by the L.C.C. During seasons of inaction, men could be set to work in connection with a colony on such schemes of labour as are mentioned in the chapters devoted to this subject of colonies. And even if a definite colony were not founded, it should not prove impossible to form regular gangs of such "under-employed" men to work on waste land (a large amount of the street refuse which is now thrown away could be used to great advantage on such land) in the immediate neighbourhood of the city. Although in the case of London one has to travel a considerable distance outside its borders now to find cheap land, still it is not yet impossible to do so, whilst such an enterprise would be comparatively simple in the case of many of our other large cities. Some organised effort to get to work on such lands those who are only seasonally or casually employed, would prove of real service to large numbers of the "under-employed." The more such schemes in the case of the Metropolis could be combined, or in the case of other large towns be co-ordinated, the more effective this service would be likely to prove.

Some good work has been done in this direction in America, where the Vacant Lots Cultivation Association of Philadelphia was formed in 1897 to grapple with this problem. The aim of this

Society is, in the words of one of its directors, as follows :—

"To land-owners the Vacant Lots Cultivation Association, in substance, says: Lend us your idle land (subject to immediate dispossession whenever required) and we will offer ample self-help to all who cannot work in usual employments. We will leave the land (on demand) in better condition than we find it. We will make of it something even better than a park or playground for the poor, or rather we will show them how to make not only parks and playgrounds for themselves but productive gardens as well out of what are now only idle lots and in many cases rubbish heaps. We will help to make the city beautiful while making this idle land and these idle people useful."

That the Association has gone far to realise these ideals its most recent Report seems to prove. Sufficient land is now let out in small plots to the unemployed to give employment to no less than 800 men, with their families, in many cases, entirely dependent upon them. The funds of the society, which last year amounted to $6,616.34 were sufficient to supply these men with the necessary implements for ploughing, etc., seeds and manures. This work in the United States grew out of very small beginnings, but has more than justified the hopes of its originators. A similar effort has recently been made in England with Mr. Joseph Fels, one of the founders of the Philadelphia scheme, as Hon. Secretary.*

(3.) **Relief Works.**—But we cannot leave a remedy of this sort altogether to any private or

* Cf "Progress," p. 121, April, 1908.

philanthropic society like that of the Vacant Lots Cultivation Association. If, at times of special distress, real help is to be given to the under-employed, into whose ranks, as we have seen, some of the higher grade workers are constantly drifting, we must have some system of relief works. And it must be a definite system, whether national or local, so that when these inevitable seasons of distress recur there need be no panic-stricken, and consequently wasteful, attempts to deal with unemployment, but well-planned and well-managed schemes to help workers through such times.

Taking the subject of national relief works first, we remember that there is always a certain amount of useful work on a large scale which it will hardly pay any private landowner or company to promote, but to which the government might profitably put its hand. The reconstruction of canals, the drainage of large areas of land, the reclamation of foreshores,* etc., is work which, for its own benefit, the nation ought to do, but which will not be done on any extensive scale except the Government itself do it. This is not a question of a more or less specialised industry such as afforestation with which we shall deal in the following chapter. It is the kind of work which could be done by just the class of workers we are now considering. There can be no question as to the need of a thorough re-organisation of the 4,000 miles of our canal system. We seem to have forgotten the valuable asset which we have in these useful waterways throughout our country. Such a work is greater than could be properly attempted by private

* Cf. the two recent reports on Coast Erosion and Afforestation Canals and and Waterways.

enterprise. But if the whole system could be nationalised, and put into thorough working order, the gain would be very considerable to the community. And such work would most suitably employ thousands of our semi-skilled "out-of-works" at remunerative wages. Or take the question of the reclamation of waste and derelict lands: it is true, as *The Field* lately remarked, that "artificial drainage is an expensive business, but where natural drainage is insufficient, it is worth doing if the land is of any agricultural value at all." We are told that only 3,000,000 acres of the 20,000,000 acres of clay land in England and Wales are properly drained and that large parts of this water-logged land are consequently "sour." The extent to which production is thus retarded becomes a serious question. If the expenditure of £6 or £7 per acre would, as we are assured, increase the product in most cases by ten to fifteen per cent., here is certainly remunerative work to be done by unskilled labour. Thus too, in reference to our foreshores, Sir John Rennie's scheme of draining the whole basin of the Wash may not be practicable at present, but many smaller schemes certainly are, as witness the work of the Norfolk Estuary Company, the successful experiments at Pitfore, on the Forth, and on the banks of the Tay. Even the foreshores of the Thames might be further reclaimed and converted into useful or recreative land. We do not need to go into details with reference to any one of these schemes, but only to point out that some such national relief work might be made as remunerative to the State as it is imperative on behalf of the workless.

In the coming Utopia, which Mr. H. G. Wells describes, he tells us that "the State will stand

at the back of the economic struggle as the reserve employer of labour. This most excellent idea does, as a matter of fact, underlie the British institution of the workhouse, but it is jumbled up with the relief of old age and infirmity; it is administered parochially and on the supposition that all population is static and localised, whereas every year it becomes more migratory."* This is the principle that we want to see acknowledged in a well regulated system of State relief works, a principle which was practically admitted as far back as the first great cotton famine.

But a word must be said as to municipal relief works. We have, in a previous chapter, referred to the work of the various Distress Committees throughout England and Wales, and these, of course, are supplementary to the municipal relief works which are already being carried out. What is needed is a far-sighted policy in this direction, efficiently carried out on a definite system. It ought to be possible for any municipal authority, which has to reckon with serious distress amongst its workers, to organise such work as the making of roads, the improvement of parks, the painting of public buildings, etc., so that a great deal of surplus labour could be profitably used for the municipality, whilst the self-respect and efficiency of the workers were in no way sacrificed. We are quite aware that all such work, when definitely taken up as relief work has been condemned *in toto*, both because of its alleged prohibitive cost, and of its pauperising tendency. We have been told, for example, that "the value of all that has been done comes to about twenty-five per cent. of the cost of getting it done." Whilst we would

*"A Modern Utopia," p. 139.

admit much force in this objection to the cost of relief works and, to a lesser degree, to the danger of pauperising the labourers at such work, yet the facts of the case are so insistent that we are free to confess that some sort of relief works *must* be provided. Even if it could be proved that all forms of such work are but palliatives of the evil with which we are dealing we should still maintain that we are not yet in a position to be able to dispense with these palliatives.

Whilst indirect methods of solving this great problem are undoubtedly those to be preferred, we cannot ignore, at least for the present, any direct method that gives us useful results. What we must rather do is to seek to regulate relief work so carefully that much of the admitted evil accompanying it shall be eliminated. Some such rules as the following ought to be laid down and most strictly adhered to by every local authority faced with the question of relief work :—

(1) All such work should be really useful.

(2) It should be such that any average man, used to manual work, can do it efficiently.

(3) Only such men should be employed as are ascertained to be industrious and steady.

(4) All work done should be made as remunerative as possible, but should be paid for at proper contract rates.

This may seem to be a counsel of perfection but if it be striven after much good can be done, as witness the results of the relief works at West Ham during last winter. It ought not to be impossible for any progressive local authority to give real relief by, and at the same time to get real benefit from, some of the following forms of work :—the laying out of new streets or open spaces such as recreation

grounds, new cemeteries, etc., the cleansing of streets not ordinarily done by the local authorities, the provision of water works and sewage works, with spade husbandry in the latter."*

Some of these schemes should be continuous in their nature, and others of a more temporary character to which men could be drafted in special seasons of trade depression and unemployment. It follows that such works must be well managed and economically administered. At the present time we make no attempt at discrimination, and it often happens that men who are most unfitted for the work of a navvy are engaged in digging trenches or employed upon the land in some similar capacity. Every attempt should be made to select men with a view to their fitness for the work, for there is no reason why relief works should be managed more unscientifically than any other works. It would be well if some experiment could be made on the lines of the New Zealand Co-operative Gang system. Each gang working on its own responsibility, accepting its own contract from the Government Engineer, and electing its own foreman, will be sure to do the best under all the circumstances of the case. It is a kind of piecework to which no exception can be taken. Some allowance should, of course, be made in the first instance for the physical weakness of men who have been unemployed for long periods of time, and the Government Inspector for the first few weeks would probably take a generous view, but in the end the policy of placing the responsibility on the shoulders of the worker would be found to be successful. The relief works carried out in Tottenham during the winter of 1907-8 were entirely

* Cf. Local Government Board circular, March, 1886.

successful from a financial point of view. The Engineer's estimate for the carrying out of certain works, *e.g.* the laying out of waste land and the culverting of an insanitary water-way, was not exceeded, and we need have no hesitation in saying that the success of all similar works, whether local or national, will largely depend upon classification and good organisation. We make no excuse for dealing with this subject rather at length in this chapter, for, after all, the crux of the situation is not the condition of the skilled man receiving out-of-work pay from his Trade Union, or the unskilled man who is temporarily unemployed but who knows that he will be in work in a comparatively few weeks, but the large army of unskilled, whose periods of unemployment are increasing in number, and who cannot be sure of work during any season of the year. At present resort is had to the Poor Law in a large number of cases, but the treatment of the workhouse and the casual ward is too inelastic and too stereotyped. The humanity of the officials is stifled by the rules and regulations they are compelled to carry out. The universal verdict is, "Offer honourable work to everyone who needs it." This work will be the touchstone of the character of the man. When such useful work has been offered and refused, you are in a position to deal with the vagrant and wastrel.

(4.) **Home Industries.**—One other remedy has frequently been put forward in connection with seasonal labour. Various schemes of "alternative" or "home" industries for the "under-employed" have been suggested. In connection with such schemes it is important to remember that they can in themselves do

nothing towards increasing the *effective* demand for the products of such industries. Also that if there be not some such increased demand, every new worker in any industry can only displace or partially displace another worker in that industry, for every ordinary industry is already more than supplied with the necessary labour. Still, we cannot help thinking that something could be done in this direction, given the necessary ability for devising and carrying out some fairly comprehensive scheme. The Recess Committee (1896), which was formed to discuss the proposed Department of Agriculture and Industries for Ireland, recommended various home industries for the relief of the Irish labourer. They refer, in illustration, to the cottage industries of Bohemia, Bavaria, Switzerland, the Tyrol, and especially Wurtemburg. In the province of Moscow alone, there are found more than a dozen trades which are maintained by these cottage workers. Although such trades would probably have but little chance of flourishing in a more complex industrial community like our own, it is more than possible that some forms of industry could be usefully worked by many of our seasonal labourers with material advantage to themselves and without detriment to the workers in other forms of labour. The Congested Districts Board in Ireland seems to have successfully accomplished something in this direction, and its example might well be copied in England.

But whatever direct remedies may be tried to lessen the evils of seasonal labour, indirect remedies are more lasting, because less artificial. Such indirect remedies are common to the whole problem of the Unemployed, and will be dealt with a little

later. Of these, the most important in this connection is such a proper organisation of the labour forces of the community by employers generally, that the mass of casual labour shall be continually diminished. Undoubtedly for the employers as a class this casual labour is an advantage. But here, as elsewhere, the benefit of a class, however influential, must be permanently subordinated to that of the community at large.

CHAPTER VII.

THE UNEMPLOYED—THE LOWER TYPES.

"The unemployed movement embodies the growing desire for useful healthy lives. It is the protest of Labour against charitable palliation of a social system that in all countries is breaking up, and must, either by force or steady change, give place to the organised and collective domination by the people of their social life through municipal administration and political development.—Rt. Hon. John Burns.

WE have spoken of the unemployable and of the under-employed. We must now deal with the Unemployed proper. And here, too, we may distinguish between at least two classes, although in individual cases it may be difficult to say in which class the worker should be placed. In this chapter we will confine ourselves to the lower types of the genuinely workless. Amongst them we must put the lower grade mechanic, the clerk, the warehouseman, the agriculturist who has come to the town and has fared badly, or the townsman whom the more efficient agriculturist has displaced, *i.e.*, the men from the upper ranks of the casual labourers and unskilled workers. In this division, too, we shall find many who have been first-class workers,

but through old age or failing health have been unable to maintain their position, and are gradually sinking in the social scale in consequence. If a factory be closed or a large industry become depressed, the ranks of this class are immediately recruited from the less efficient of the workers therein employed.

Or again, if some new labour-saving invention be adopted in such a factory or industry there is, at least for a time, a lessening in demand for this particular form of labour, and consequently many of the less efficient workers are thrown out of work.

And, yet once again, if there be any appreciable increase in hitherto little used forms of labour, *e.g.*, a considerable number of women or boys or alien labourers entering into competition with the ordinary workers of an industry, many of these will be unable to successfully compete with such, and will become unemployed.

In this class, then, we find that unemployment is traceable not so much to that continual glut of labour which is characteristic of the lowest forms of labour, but rather to those chances and changes of modern industry which help to make the "bad times" and the "good times" respectively of our commercial life. It seems inevitable that there should be some surplus in the supply of labour, and the remedies for such unemployment are consequently few and, for the most part, not easy of realisation. But the following have been tried in various countries with some degree of success:—(1) The reduction, wherever possible, of the hours of labour. (2) The creation of such new industries as afforestation, or the

revival of old ones, *e.g.*, agriculture. (3) The provision of farm colonies and small holdings, and (4) Emigration.

Remedies:—

(1.) **Reduction of Hours of Labour.**—Though the subject of reducing the hours of labour is not one primarily connected with the *employment*, but rather with the *efficiency*, of the worker, yet it has an important bearing upon the question of unemployment. There are certain trades where the introduction, say, of an eight hours day would only increase the speed at which the employed worked. The same amount of work would be done, but it would be done in the eight-hour day instead of in the nine or ten hour day, because of the increased efficiency of the workers. In such trades this reduction in the number of working hours would not benefit the unemployed, as no more workers would be required. This would probably be the effect, Mr. J. A. Hobson thinks,* in the mining and metal industries, the textile trades, and in all the trades which are concerned with the distribution of products. But, obviously, there are other trades where the reduction of the hours of labour would certainly mean a lessening in the amount of production. Of course, under the present competitive system, such a reduction of the hours of labour and consequent increase in the cost of production would tend to increase the price of the goods produced. If this were at all excessive, the sale of such goods would become less, and thus the industry decrease rather than increase. Such a result would certainly not benefit the unem-

* "The Problem of the Unemployed," p. 105.

ployed of that industry. It is therefore a question that needs careful examination in connection with each branch of trade whether a reduction in the hours of those employed would lead to an increased demand for labour in that trade. Where such an examination is made, and seems to warrant the conclusion that the increased cost of production will be borne by the consumer, the effects of the reduction of the hours of labour can only be good. Mr. Hobson takes the view that in such cases "the shorter working day will contribute to strengthen the economic position of the workers, and to increase the proportion of the consuming power which falls into their hands. It will directly absorb a certain proportion of "unemployment." It will do away with certain irregularities of employment which are not truly inherent in the nature and conditions of the trade, but are due to the disturbing existence of a large margin of spare labour. By relieving to some degree the glut of the labour market, it will assist labour to organise more effectively and to raise the general standard of working-class consumption."*

One branch of industry where such a reduction of the hours of labour would have these good effects seems to be the various means of locomotion and transport. If all the busmen, trammen, carmen, railway-workers, etc., were required to work only for eight, or at most ten, hours per day large numbers who are now unemployed could be saved permanently from unemployment. Such an arrangement would increase the efficiency and safety of the services supplied, and this would be a distinct advantage to the travelling public.

* Ibid, p. 109.

We may quote here a concrete example of such a reduction. The London County Council tried the experiment a few years since and found that no loss of profits ensued. The following is the official account of this experiment* :—

"The council, in 1899 and 1900, introduced a system whereby all classes of the tramway employees worked only six days in seven, and further, the hours of labour were reduced to an average of ten a day, equivalent to sixty hours a week. These changes necessitated an increase in the staff of about 426, representing an increase of 19 per cent. Since 1900, the undertakings of the two other companies have been acquired by the council. The companies employed 355 men, and to place these on the council's conditions involved the employment of seventy-four extra men—an increase of 20 per cent. The application of this process of reduction of hours, *where practicable*, and the absorption into each overworked trade of its own surplus unemployed, is the easiest method of providing work for the unemployed. This process has, to a certain extent, been in operation for the past few years, as will appear from the figures quoted in the Board of Trade's labour statistics, which show that from 1894 to 1901, 354,859 workers obtained a reduction of their hours of labour, amounting on an average to about four hours per week each."

There is no reason why this example should not be widely imitated by public bodies, and, to a lesser degree, by other large employers of labour. Where this, amongst other "model" conditions, has been tried it has been found to increase the efficiency of the workers already employed and to tend to

* L.C.C. Report on Lack of Employment (1903).

bring back into the ranks of labour many who would otherwise have been thrust out.

New Industries, &c. :—

(1.) **Afforestation.***—Although at first sight such a remedy as this seems perhaps impossible, yet all the evidence we have at our disposal seems to point to other conclusions. Surely we have not yet reached that state of commercial stagnation when no new industry can be successfully initiated ? Let us examine a little carefully the proposal that is being widely made to-day to create what is for England a comparatively new industry, *i.e.*, that of forestry. "Forestry may be defined as the cultivation of trees in such a way that the soil shall yield its maximum nett financial returns."†

That such a trade is possible to England and highly desirable is a fact to which not a few have lately borne eloquent testimony. The Departmental Committee which was appointed in 1902 to investigate this matter has collected a good deal of evidence in their bulky Report. Quite apart from the fact that such an industry would help the unemployed, it is becoming increasingly clear that some national system of afforestation should be set on foot. The price of imported timber is steadily rising owing to the huge demand on the forests of America, Canada, etc., which are slowly becoming exhausted. At the same time the uses to which such timber may be put are constantly increasing. The Postmaster-General has stated that the greater part of the telegraph poles employed by his department are imported from abroad because sufficient wood is not grown in

* Cf. "Afforestation," by T. Summerbell, M.P. I.L.P. Pamphlet.

† Prof. Somerville. *The Speaker*, January 12th, 1907.

England. In paper-making, *e.g.*, wood pulp is being universally used to-day; it has been stated, in fact, that each issue of a large London daily means a supply of timber equal to ten acres of average forest wood.

As Prof. Schlich has pointed out, we spend £25,000,000 annually on timber, a great proportion of which could be grown on British soil without using one acre of already cultivated land. We have, he estimates, 25,000,000 acres of waste land, mountain and heath and marshes. Some 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 acres of these would be quite sufficient for all our wants in this direction.*

In a letter to *The Times*, September 12th, 1907, he commends the steps already taken by local authorities.

"As I was the first to propose the afforestation of surplus lands as an auxiliary in dealing with the case of the unemployed, it is a source of great satisfaction to me that the corporation of Leeds has been so successful in its afforestation work by means of the unemployed. My proposals have on several occasions been called unpractical, because first attempts, made more or less in the direction indicated by me, were not successful. But, then, Rome was not built in a day. The system of employing these men requires a little development; and I feel sure that a few years hence the initial difficulties will have been overcome, if an earnest attempt is made to do so. It is essential that there should be a small permanent staff of men on the area, the members of which will act as foremen when the unemployed come during the winter time, while they will find ample work during summer on nursery work. . . . .

* Paper in *Journal of the Society of Arts*, March, 1901.

"The price of timber has slowly, but steadily, risen since 1895, owing to the increasing difficulty of meeting demands, and there is little doubt, if any, that any surplus areas now planted will give quite satisfactory financial results, if the work is done systematically and in the right way."

Now it is not at all likely that private enterprise would or could afforest the huge waste areas of Great Britain on anything like the necessary scale. The returns on such work as afforestation are so slow that private capital does not easily flow into this form of industry. This industry is eminently the work of the State, a fact which the Departmental Committee fully recognised.* When, however, the areas are large enough, and the industry is carried on in a thoroughly businesslike fashion, the returns, though slow, are very sure. Dr. Schlich gave evidence before the Departmental Committee that he had tested an ordinary area in the Erzgebirge Mountains, in Saxony, of only 4,000 acres, and he had found the *net* return per acre to work out at 38s. per annum. Such a fact speaks for itself as to the probable success of any serious attempt made by the State on the many areas of equal fertility in England. It seems superfluous to mention that State forestry is an exceedingly flourishing industry in Germany, employing almost half a million workers directly at this trade. France, too, has not been backward in tapping this newly-discovered source of national wealth. "In the last forty years the State authorities in France have reclaimed nearly 640 square miles, and spent £2,500,000. The most important work has been on the coast of

* Cf. § 10. See also the evidence of the recent Royal Commission, 1909, on Afforestation and Coast Erosion.

the Bay of Biscay; an area of 260 square miles having been reclaimed and afforested at a cost of £620,000."* There is no real reason why we should be behind either of these countries in this useful industry. The Departmental Committee went so far as to recommend that two "demonstration areas" should be immediately acquired by the State. This encouraged the institution, in 1904, of a Government School of Forestry in the Royal Forest of Dean which, with some neighbouring Crown lands, contains more than 20,000 acres of woodland. It is, consequently, a suitable area for instruction in forestry, and this institution has already become a distinct success.† Then the Alice Holt Woods in Hants and the Avondale Estate in Wicklow were successsively acquired by the Government in 1905 for demonstration areas. Another estate of 12,000 acres on the shores of Loch Awe has just been purchased in Scotland for a similar purpose by the present Government. We may, therefore, say that we are as a State already committed to the principle of afforestation. What is now wanted is a considerable extension of this principle. "There is no economic reason," says the economist, Mr. J. A. Hobson, "why capital should not be advanced by the State for the establishment of such an industry, supposing it can be worked, as Dr. Schlich affirms, to yield a profit of 2¾ per cent. after allowing for compound interest on the necessary outlay during the long period that must elapse before returns come in. Indeed, it might be possible to go further and allow the legitimacy of a public outlay of capital without

* "A Reproach to Civilisation." E. F. G. Hatch, p. 85.

† See article in *Country Life*, October 5th, 1907.

interest, assuming that the timber grown displaced a trade which was entirely of an import character."*

The advantages of such a national scheme of forestry are not few, nor far to seek. A new industry thus formed would quicken trade generally, and would give employment to large numbers of unskilled labourers as well as to highly trained foresters. The afforestation of many of our waste areas would also largely improve our land. The initial work of the Midland Afforestation Society has already proved this. In wild, exposed districts it would increase the protection for cattle and crops, and further fertilise the soil. It would, if carried out on any large scale, have an appreciable effect upon the climate and upon the catchment areas of our water supplies. Such a result as this last has actually taken place in connection with the Corporation Waterworks in Leeds, where the area surrounding the reservoirs has been most successfully planted with trees. There are some 576,000 acres of such catchment areas in Great Britain, and there is no reason why all of them should not be similarly treated.

The Reclamation of Waste Lands.—While we are dealing with this part of the subject, reference must be made to such waste areas as are not suitable yet for afforestation, *e.g.*, marsh land, foreshores, etc. That the reclamation of such lands can not only be effected but be made a financial success, the work of the Dutch Government in Haarlem Lake and in the Zuyder Zee is sufficient proof. This work has

* "The Problem of the Unemployed," p. 147.

been successfully undertaken, too, in our country, both in the Fens and on the banks of the Firth of Forth. That similar work might be, and ought to be done in reclaiming much of the foreshore of the Port of London is the opinion of many. The Foreshores Act of 1866 gave definite powers to the Board of Trade in this direction, and much land might be profitably added to the country by using these powers. Such works of public utility would be sufficient to employ large numbers of our genuine unemployed if carried out wisely, and at suitable times. Foresight and good management, together with co-operation between the public authorities, might relieve a great deal of real distress. More extended reference has been made to this subject in dealing with relief works carried out by local authorities.

We need say only a word as to the revival and extension of old industries. Agriculture is still the largest industry in the land, and it would be rash to assert that it could not possibly be extended and improved when we have the example of what Denmark has actually done in this direction in the last quarter of a century. Danish farming and dairy produce is to-day a flourishing industry because of the wise revival and organisation of the trade by the Danish people. The principle of co-operation has been carried out there with wonderful results, not the least wonderful of which is the establishment of a most prosperous peasant and small-freeholder class. If rural industries could be thus revived in England similar happy results might follow. An integral part of the Unemployed Problem is the steady decline of rural occupation. If this decline can be arrested (as has actually been accomplished

in Denmark), we shall have moved sensibly nearer the solution of the problem. To do this, however, more is required than a Bill for the redistribution of the land of the country, however necessary that redistribution may be. This leads us to consider a third remedy.

(3.) **Small Holdings and Farm Colonies.**—The latter we shall deal with more fully in the chapter specially devoted to that subject but we may well say a word here as to the provision of small holdings for the better-class unemployed. This subject is now so much in the air, owing to the passing of the Small Holdings Act of 1907, that any detailed arguments for such a measure of reform will be unnecessary. We may quote some words of Mr. Keir Hardie written as long ago as 1904, on this remedy for some of our unemployed. "Of the advantages of Small Cultivation I need not speak: they are too well known to need enumerating. Individual failures there may have been, and always will be, as in everything else, but wherever small holdings have been tried they have been, in the bulk, a success. This applies equally to private efforts, like those of Lord Carrington and others and to efforts of public-spirited County Councils like that of Worcestershire."*

What we have to remember in connection with the subject of Small Holdings for the Unemployed is the fact that this sort of remedy ought to be applied only in the case of those men who are already thoroughly acquainted with agricultural work. That there are large numbers of such men in our

* "The Unemployed Problem." J. Keir Hardie, M.P. Pamphlet published by the I.L.P.

big cities and towns even amongst the lower unskilled workers, there can be no doubt. Many of these men are still thoroughly capable agriculturists; what they lack is any opportunity of exhibiting their skill in this direction. Those who know this class of men very well are constantly asserting that many of them could do first-class agricultural work if the chance were given them. That not a few would only too eagerly seize a chance if it were presented to them seems equally certain. It is patent, therefore, that such a remedy cannot be applied to all the genuine unemployed, but only to such as by careful selection can start with a reasonable chance of success. In fact, this remedy is safer as an *indirect* rather than as a direct one for unemployment. Mr. J. A. Hobson has given us a warning in this direction. "Such schemes (*e.g.*, the provision of small holdings), if they are to contain the elements of success, must not be primarily devoted to the provision of work for those who are already unemployed. Because there is unemployed labour and vacant land, it by no means follows that the planting of this labour upon this land will be a serviceable mode of dealing with unemployment. . . It does not seem likely that those who are displaced from employment in the towns, or other town-bred persons, army pensioners, or the rank and file of the unemployed can be thus entrusted with the use of land and capital upon this business footing with any chance of success."*

For unemployed men, however, who have been carefully selected, if possible by previous trial in agricultural work, small holdings should be

* "The Problem of the Unemployed," p. 148.

provided by County Councils on the lines laid down by the new Small Holdings Act. After all this is only following the useful precedent set by the Congested Districts Board of Ireland. One of the many duties of this Board is to provide economic holdings for those tenants who have been taken from the "congested districts," *i.e.*, those districts which have insufficient land of any value and where the poverty is very great. This has been attempted already by some of our more enterprising County Councils, and it is expected that the working of the new Act will result in a large increase in the number of small holdings throughout the country, and this will at least mean the staying of the tide of migration from the country to the town.*

(4.) **Emigration.**—No one conversant with all the facts of the unemployed problem and those of the emigration question would advocate this as a satisfactory remedy for unemployment. But that, under present conditions it *is* a remedy and, in individual cases, a useful remedy, can hardly be doubted. We must not, however, forget that the individual's gain in such cases oftentimes means real loss to the community. The serious aspect of the emigration question is that every year we are draining our country, to a much larger extent than is generally recognised, of our best men and women workers. It is not the hopeless ne'er-do-wells, or the incorrigibly idle that form the main body of the army of emigrants who annually leave our shores. It is rather the good workers temporarily idle, or those who, finding present economic conditions impossible for them, wish to try their fortune in new surroundings.

* At the present time (October, 1908) about 300,000 acres have been applied for by nearly 20,000 persons.

Not the penniless vagrant, but the honest worker who has managed to gather a few pounds together as a last hope, is the typical emigrant, although it must be admitted that there is an admixture of weaker and less industrious material. The Salvation Army alone is shipping twenty thousand men away to the Colonies every year, whilst the Church Army sends as many hundreds to Canada alone. Whilst emigration is a matter of compulsion rather than of choice, as it is to thousands of our genuine unemployed to-day this state of things must still continue. And the question has quite recently become much more serious from the fact that some of the Colonies are undoubtedly becoming overstocked with such emigrants. Probably this is only temporary, but in Canada, at least, the situation is at the moment a very grave one for those who emigrate without definite situations in view. There is, practically speaking, room only for agriculturists and these need to be thoroughly capable and experienced farm-hands.

What we need is a definite system by which we could emigrate our inferior labourers, less skilled artisans, etc., leaving our better-class unemployed to find their feet again in the home country. This would require State organisation, and, of course, such a system could not be worked except by definite arrangement with the Colonial governments where such emigrants were sent. This much seems certain, we must have our emigration system much more thoroughly regulated by the home government as well as by the Colonial governments, if it is to effectually aid the solution of the Unemployed problem. Emigration, as we know it now, is no

sufficient and adequate remedy. There should be no insuperable barrier to inaugurating some system of state farms, say in Canada, which might be used as training grounds for our less efficient unemployed emigrants. When useful training had been received in this way, the men would be ready to offer themselves for work further West, or even to manage lands of their own.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNEMPLOYED.—THE HIGHER TYPES.

"A man willing to work and unable to find work is, perhaps, the saddest sight that fortune's inequality exhibits under the sun."—CARLYLE.

WE have yet to speak of our last class of unemployed, viz., the higher grades of the genuine Unemployed. Amongst these we shall include the skilled mechanic, the better-paid labourer, and even the black-coated clerk who, like the manual worker, suffers from the glut in the labour market. These are not the men who usually figure in the so-called Unemployed "processions," or, in fact, are found seeking relief in any quarter. Hard-earned savings, some slender insurance payments, or possibly the petty loans of a friend will in many instances help to keep the wolf from the door until work can be resumed or another "job" found. But at every time of trade depression there will be a steady drift from this class to the classes below. It is this downward tendency which is characteristic of the entire Unemployed Question, and thoroughly demoralising to the whole body of our workers. A recent writer, already quoted, observes that "the curve of pauperism follows

almost exactly, at an interval of one year, the curve of unemployment. That is to say, though the process is delayed for a short time, a certain proportion of these workmen are driven down by each period of depression into a state from which, as all experience shows, hardly any of them will emerge again into the ranks of regular labour."* It is fatally easy for even the skilled artisan or the fairly well-paid clerk to sink in the economic scale when once regular employment has ceased, and this fact tells most heavily on the higher ranks of our workers, because they have most to lose when the fall comes. But while it is so easy to sink it is as difficult to regain the position once lost. Nothing so disqualifies for regular skilled labour as even short periods of unemployment. The Trades Unions have undoubtedly done something towards lessening the risk of loss of economic position at times of trade depression, but a great deal more needs to be done if this evil is to be made preventable. What is the story that the Trades Unions tell of this "curve of unemployment?" It seems that there are cycles of trade prosperity and depression recurring about every decade. During this period unemployment will vary between 2 and 8 per cent. of the whole number of trades unionists.

These figures at any given time are certainly below the real estimate of unemployment even for the trades-union men. They merely represent those who are receiving unemployed relief for a definite period. Now usually a man must have been a member of his union for a year before he becomes entitled to such relief. This and other considerations, then, warrant us in the

* "Towards a Social Policy," Essay XI.

belief that "the returns made by the trade unions which only take account of the members who are in actual receipt of unemployed benefit gravely under-represent the unemployment of trade union members."* When we further remember that large numbers of workers in the higher grades of employment join no union at all, we can be certain that 2 per cent. in times of exceptionally good trade and 10 per cent. in times of exceptional depression are figures which are well under the true estimate of unemployment. We can be certain that such figures reveal a state of real distress, even in this last class, except when trade is at its best.

What then can be suggested in the way of remedies for this class of unemployed? We can more hopefully urge direct remedies here for it is such a class as the one of which we are speaking that would make the best use of such alleviative agencies.

Remedies:—

I. Insurance against Unemployment.

We have already spoken of the relief which the Trade Unions give to their unemployed members out of funds which are largely raised for this specific purpose. More than 200 of such societies are already providing relief which varies from, in some societies, nearly a £1 a week to, in other cases, only a few shillings per week. Every year about £500,000 is distributed in this way to Trades Union members. Some of these societies charge their members a fixed rate against such times of relief, thus adopting the principle of compulsory insurance against unemployment.

* "The Problem of the Unemployed," p. 15.

It is unfortunately the fact that many, even of the higher grade workers, belong to no trades union, while of course much larger numbers of the unskilled and casual labourers are not connected with any organisation. It seems that we shall have to considerably extend the principle of insurance if we are to materially benefit the unemployed as a whole. A glance at what other countries are doing in this connection will help us to define the one or two proposals we have to make. Where, on the Continent, insurance against unemployment has been instituted, there have been two distinct systems, viz., (1) where grants in aid have been given by the *local authorities*, and (2) where such grants have been made by the *State*.

(1) In seven countries now in Europe the local authorities give subventions to outside benefit schemes for the unemployed, viz., Belgium, Switzerland, France, Italy, Germany, Norway* and Denmark (?). To the town of Berne belongs the honour of first forming a Municipal Unemployed Insurance Fund (April, 1893) which is still flourishing. £500 to £600 are voted by the municipality annually towards this fund, about 30 per cent. of which is made up by contributions from the insured, from employers, and by other donations, etc But it is Belgium which has done most in the way of unemployed insurance. The Provincial Council of Liége led the way in 1897, the similar Councils of Antwerp, Hainault and Namur following the example. It was not until 1901 (August), however, that the municipalities of Belgium took the matter up, when the now famous "Ghent System" was inaugurated. The Ghent municipality established, and paid the

* Cf. *Board of Trade Labour Gazette*, August, 1906.

expenses of, a special fund to provide insurance against unemployment. This fund was used not only for paying subventions towards the benefit societies helping the unemployed, but also for supplementing the private funds of individuals which had been set apart in the event of unemployment. The amount of subventions is not to exceed the total amount of benefit funds, and no payment is made to any individual for more than sixty days, and never at a higher rate than one franc a day. An individual, to be eligible for help, has only to "be the rightful owner of a pass-book, showing an account with the National Savings and Pension Bank, and to submit to the measures of supervision provided for in the rules of the municipal fund." A Committee, composed of members of the Town Council, delegates from the affiliated Trades Unions, etc., controls the Fund and appoints a special Inspector. M. Varley, the President of the Fund, informed the Imperial Statistical Office in January, 1906, that this system was undoubtedly proving a success, and that a proof of this was to be found in the fact that the system was being applied, in various forms, in towns and districts of Belgium which affected a population of 5,000,000 people. He considered that the fund was most useful in reviving the principle of self-help, by teaching workers to become sufficiently provident to insure themselves against unemployment. It must be noted, however, that the provision, whereby individuals unconnected with any Trades Union or benefit society might avail themselves of unemployed benefit, has been so little used in Ghent, that no other municipality has copied this part of the experiment.

This system, or one very similar, has been adopted by six municipalities in France (Limoges, Dijon, Rheims, Lyons, Tarbes and Amiens), by Munich (where 35,000 marks have been granted for the last three years), and by Geneva. At Bâle there is the Trade Union Unemployed Insurance Fund (1901) to which the Cantonal Government contributes a grant of about £100. Switzerland alone, it is interesting to note, has furnished an example of *compulsory* unemployment insurance. In 1895, the municipality of St. Gall ordered that all male workers earning less than 4s. per diem should insure against unemployment. This experiment only lasted for two years, and was a complete failure.*

In all these schemes, as in those of state assistance, benefits are granted to what we may call the genuine unemployed. No worker who has been out of work owing to a strike, or owing to drunkenness, or other fault of his own, or from general incapacity to work either due to chronic weakness or special illness, is eligible to receive assistance. Those who are in receipt of poor relief and those who refuse work found for them by the suitable authority, are also debarred from benefit. In those countries where military service is compulsory, some regulation is generally made preventing members of funds receiving benefit during the time they are serving in the army.

(2.) **State Aid to Insurance.**—State aid towards unemployed insurance has, hitherto, only been given in three countries in Europe, viz., France, Norway and Denmark. The Budget Law of (April, 1905) France voted £4,400 for

* Cf. Cd. 2304, pp. 143-8.

grants-in-aid to societies, trades unions, etc., giving unemployed benefit. These grants-in-aid are given even when societies are also receiving subventions from municipal funds. The maximum amount to be granted by the State is 16 per cent. of the total benefit payments if the funds be local, and 24 per cent. if the funds be federated. Applications for these grants-in-aid have not as yet been as numerous as was anticipated, £1,107 only being paid out in 1905-6, and £1,700 in 1906-7.* But it is confidently expected that the rate of increase will be constant in future years. Doubtless the somewhat complicated conditions to be fulfilled before grants can be made have somewhat hindered the working of the scheme.

In October, 1906, Norway followed the example of France, but with the stipulation that two-thirds of the amount of the grants must be refunded by the local authorities of the places where those who have received the subventions have lived six consecutive months during the preceding five years. One quarter of the total funds of the various societies will thus be given in grants by the State. No worker is to receive more than half the usual wage he earns, and this not for more than ninety days in any twelve months; he must also have belonged to the fund from which he receives benefit for at least six months, and have paid his subscriptions for that length of time.†

In April, 1907, Denmark passed a law authorising the payment out of the Exchequer of a grant,

* Cf. *Board of Trade Labour Gazette*, November 1905, p. 325, and February, 1908, p. 39.

† Cf. *Board of Trade Labour Gazette*, July, 1906, p. 165.

to funds for giving unemployed relief, equal to one-third of the total amounts paid as premiums by members of these funds. A maximum for such a State grant has, however, been fixed at about £14,000. Any fund which has fifty members becomes eligible for participation in this grant, and bodies of workers may associate themseves for the purpose of insuring themselves against unemployment. The age limit for membership in such funds is between eighteen and sixty years, and the minimum benefit to be received is about 7d., and the maximum 2s. 3d. per diem. A special Minister, the Inspector of Unemployment, is the supreme authority in administering the grant.*

It is in this latter direction that it seems that in this country we might most usefully tackle the question of insurance against unemployment, and the Trade Union Congress, 1908, did pass a resolution in favour of such Government subsidies. The same resolution was, however, defeated in 1909. Recently the Board of Trade seems to have decided against this method of insurance for the statement made by Mr. Winston Churchill in May of 1909 foreshadowed a different measure, compulsory in character. His suggestion was to take first the trades in which unemployment was not only high but chronic, "house building and works of construction, engineering, machine and tool making, ship and boat building, vehicles, sawyers, and general labourers working at these trades." These groups would comprise about two-and-a-half million adult workers. The workmen, the employers and the State will all contribute, and this will mean about 6d. a week,

* Cf. *Board of Trade Labour Gazette*, July, 1907 p. 197.

which sum is considered to be adequate for the purpose of out-of-work pay during a considerable number of weeks. Insurance books will be kept by each worker, and stamps will be affixed every week as in Germany. As soon as the man is unemployed, he will take his book to the Labour Exchange and ask for work, and in this way the Exchange and the Insurance scheme will mutually support one another.

We may sum up what we have said on this point by echoing the words of the Official Report. "There can be little doubt that a system of this nature, if it can be administered so as to avoid abuses, and in particular to secure that the unemployed allowance shall be received only by men genuinely unable to find work, may encourage thrift and afford most welcome assistance to persons who would otherwise be exposed to the danger of suffering serious distress."*

II. Labour Exchanges.

The remedy we have just been suggesting is applicable only when hope of getting work has, for the time being, to be given up. The one with which we are now dealing will act in the direction of postponing the need for relief. As we have already seen, one of the minor causes of unemployment is the lack of fluidity which characterises the labour market of to-day. This defect can be greatly minimised if not totally removed by a comprehensive system of labour bureaux and exchanges. It will be necessary to have such a scheme definitely planned out and in full working order at all times, not leaving it to be hastily provided when special seasons of

* Cf. Cd. 2304, p. vi.

trade depression occur. The advantage of such a system is twofold; first, the collection and proper registration of all statistics dealing with unemployment. In spite of what has been said to the contrary about the useless accumulation of statistical detail, it is necessary to affirm the importance of maintaining some such system. A full account of those who are seeking work with the details of that work, together with a daily record of the demand in the labour market furnished by employers—all this is necessary if we are to attempt to deal with the problem of unemployment not as a local question, but on a national basis. We have only just begun to collect sufficient data to learn the nature and extent of the problem. Another advantage of such a scheme of labour registration and exchange is the real saving which it effects in the time, money and strength of the genuine seeker for work. Every period of trade depression witnesses an enormous expenditure of energy in this direction, and a great part of such energy is entirely wasted. Employers want workers in one district, and workers capable of doing such work are idle in another, but there is nothing to bring the two parties together. This has been the story, many times told, in the past, a story still largely true to-day. It is to reduce to a minimum this waste of energy in needless search for labour that a proper system of labour bureaux is advocated. While such a system cannot, in the nature of things, actually increase the demand for labour, it can reduce the undoubted leakage between that demand and the supply of it.

Labour Exchanges Act, 1909.—We have certainly moved forward in this matter during

the last few years in this country, *i.e.*, since the Labour Bureaux Act (London), 1902. We now have a total of forty-nine Labour Bureaux, twenty-eight of which are situated in London and district, and the remainder in the provinces. It is important to notice that twenty-five of the London bureaux are affiliated to the Central Employment Exchange, and are thus controlled by the Central (Unemployed) Body for London. This reminds of the fact that bureaux are largely useless if they are not *closely and effectively connected with one another*. We have much yet to do in this direction in England. We do not use telephonic communication to the extent that we might do and as is done in many countries on the Continent, and a further connection between our bureaux might usefully be made by the weekly or monthly issue of some publication like the *Board of Trade Labour Gazette*. These Labour Bureaux will now be supplanted by well-organised and well-equipped Labour Exchanges under the new Act of 1909. The Labour Exchanges Act, it is hoped, will prove effective and far-reaching in its effects by virtue of the more scientific organisation which is contemplated and the co-ordination of all such institutions, which has been lacking in the past. By this Act the funds are provided, through the Board of Trade for the establishment, in new buildings if necessary, of Labour Exchanges, modelled very much on the German lines, in all large municipalities and throughout the entire country.

Mr. Winston Churchill, speaking as President of the Board of Trade in the House of Commons on 19th May, 1909: "We propose to divide the whole country into about ten divisions, each with a Divisional Clearing House and presided

over by a divisional chief, and all co-ordinated with a National Clearing House in London. Distributed among these ten divisions will be between thirty and forty first-class Labour Exchanges in towns of 100,000 or upwards, and about forty-five second-class Labour Exchanges in towns of between 50,000 and 100,000, and 150 minor offices and sub-offices—third-class Labour Exchanges with waiting-rooms—will be established in the smaller centres." Advisory committees are to be set up in every large centre consisting of representatives of the workers and representatives of the employers in equal numbers under an impartial chairman. The ordinary working of the exchanges will cost £170,000 per annum, but while building is going on—and many new buildings will be required—about £200,000 a year. It is hoped that the Labour Exchanges will provide room for Trades Unions and facilities for washing, clothes mending, and also for non-alcoholic refreshments. Separate provision is to be made for men and women.

The Example of France and Germany.—France has succeeded in running five municipal bureaux for some years past, whilst Switzerland and Belgium have also shown that real good can be done along these lines. It is Germany, however, that has set the example for us in this matter. There are in that country at least three kinds of labour exchanges, (1) subsidised voluntary bureaux (2) municipal registries, and (3) exchanges managed by the trades unions, the guilds and the travellers' homes. The latter perform an important function in finding employment for those who largely use these institutions. The voluntary bureaux some-

times charge a small fee to cover the cost of registration, etc., but the municipal registries are always free. Both voluntary and municipal exchanges are managed by Committees on which representatives both of employers and employed sit, thus creating a real feeling of confidence in these agenices. The inter-connection of the various Exchanges is very complete, and they are used by many millions of workers who would never have access to the *trades union* bureaux. The cost of working these bureaux is found to work out at about 6d. for each situation secured. Even as regards the employment of agricultural labourers the opinion in Germany is that "the general bureaux and their own affiliated branches should occupy themselves with the placing of labour on the land."

III. Relief Stations, Travellers' Homes, etc.

But the foregoing remedy will not really be effective unless, along with it, there can be introduced some system of relief stations, at the distance of about a day's walk apart, to enable the genuine seeker for work to be helped on his way. We have already seen how utterly unsatisfactory the present casual ward system is and how intensely it is disliked by all respectable workers looking for a "job." It is true that the Salvation Army, the Church Army, and a few other such bodies have instituted labour homes which roughly correspond to such relief stations. But the provision is altogether inadequate and what is wanted is a network of such homes all over the country, worked on a national basis. Pending the introduction of such a system the Government might surely subsidise and control such organisations as are seeking to

perform this necessary work. There can be little doubt but that the absence of such homes drives many an honest and capable worker into very undesirable surroundings, often causing permanent demoralisation. In Denmark, the unemployed workman may apply to the "Free Fund" of the parish in which he finds himself, and shelter is provided for such time as will enable him to make search for work. No disability attaches to the receipt of temporary relief from this fund, and there does not seem to be any general complaint as to the abuse of it. The relief stations (Verpflegungs-stationen) of Germany are well known and have done real service to the workless of that country since the date of their foundation (1854). The method of carrying out the system varies somewhat in the various provinces, but the main principles are identical. Every travelling workman has to show his "pass," which is a paper of identity issued by the authorities to workers on producing the official receipt for payments made to insurance funds, certificate from last employer, etc. If a workmen arrive at a home without such a "pass" he may purchase one for 6d. or earn it by a task of labour of about four hours' duration. After showing his pass he is provided with food and lodging, and full instruction as to where the next relief station is situated. In some provinces, if this be a long way off, "light refreshments or an order for a meal at some intermediate place will also be supplied to the itinerant." In other provinces, notably Westphalia, conditions are stricter, and sometimes a task of work is imposed in exchange for food and lodging. The afternoon, however, is always left free for journeying in further search of employment. To some of

the relief stations are attached superior quarters where payment may be given for board and lodging, the charge being about 4d. a night. This accommodation is much patronised by the better-class unemployed, proving the usefulness of the system to the workmen of Germany.

Some such provision must be made for our genuine workless if the labour bureaux we have advocated are to be put to their fullest use.

The final remedy we have to suggest is one that is applicable to the unemployable and unemployed alike, viz., some system of Farm Colonies. This is such an important question that we shall deal with it in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

COLONIES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED.

"In the needs of agriculture at home, the vast unmet internal demand for agricultural produce of every kind, the possibilities of a more intensive and more co-operative basis of agricultural practice, and the unlearnt lessons suggested by the experience of Denmark and other countries, it is impossible to forecast the openings that this country may offer—perhaps in the immediate future—even for the purely agricultural worker."—REPORT OF CENTRAL LONDON (UNEMPLOYED) BODY.

IT has always been difficult to draw a hard and fast line of demarcation between colonies for the unemployable and colonies for the unemployed, chiefly owing to the fact that the majority of the existing colonies have not been started with any clear idea of the class that they were intended to benefit. It is only in recent years that any real attempt has been made to classify the men who can be found at a German or Dutch Colony.

In England such experiments, except in connection with the Salvation Army, are comparatively new, and even to-day the governing authorities of the English Colonies are not able to discriminate sufficiently between the efficient

and inefficient, the employable and the unemployable.

The First Labour Colonies.

The earliest and most famous example of the unemployed colony, viz., that at Fredericksoord, in Friesland, has also not been able to strictly carry out its object. It is, however, sufficiently interesting to justify a brief description. It is one of three, the other two being Willemsoord and Wilhelminasoord.

These colonies consist of 10,000 acres of heath and sand, and are now under cultivation by town-bred men, many of them over forty years of age, who have failed to get work in the town and have, therefore, been sent out by the Society of Beneficence, which was founded, in 1818, by General Van Den Bosch. The colonists are admitted on the recommendation of charitable associations and societies working in the big cities of Holland. Most of them are unskilled labourers, and very few of them have any knowledge of agricultural work. Fredericksoord, the best known of the three, has a population of 1,900, and the work on which colonists are engaged is chiefly agricultural, although it includes dairying, brick-making, mat-making, and basket work.

These three colonies receive married men, with their families, as well as unmarried men. At Fredericksoord there are at least 400 families. The procedure is fairly simple. The benevolent societies from the different towns, branches of the Society of Beneficence, constantly receive applications from the unemployed, many of whom are on the verge of becoming unemployable, for charitable assistance. These societies, where

it is impossible to get work for them in the town, recommend them to one of the three colonies mentioned, and if the man has a wife and children he is housed in a separate cottage with a garden, while members of the family who are capable of work, are given some light employment. The younger children are sent to the Government school on the colony, where they receive a fairly practical education and such industrial training as fits them to earn a livelihood. These schools are well manned and well conducted, and the training on the whole is excellent—so much so that the complaint of the colonists at the present moment is that the children leave them as soon as they are grown up, and go to the town, where they have no difficulty in finding remunerative work. Thus the colony, being left with its old men and without fresh blood, cannot expect to become a permanent settlement in the fullest sense.

The new men on arrival at the colony are placed on one of the five large farms, and there given work under skilled superintendence. Provided that their behaviour is good they may remain on the colony all their lives, but in certain cases, where a man has shown ability to learn the trade of agriculture, after a probation of at least two years, he is given a free farm of about 7½ acres. As a rule a colonist is not capable of earning his own living until he has been something like two years in the colony, so that two years is the shortest probation possible if a man is to qualify for the position of a free farmer. Sometimes men are in the colony four or five years before they obtain this promotion. At the present moment there are about 150 free farms of from

6¼ to 7½ acres; the majority of them are in good condition. These holdings are cultivated on what is practically a life tenure. Rent is paid to the colony, which provides stock and seeds and the necessary credit. If the free farmer conducts himself well in the opinion of the director, he can hold his farm until his death, while frequently in such a case the widow is allowed to retain the holding providing that she can cultivate it herself with the aid of the members of her family. In a few cases the daughter of a free farmer who marries the son of a colonist, takes over the farm, but there is no legal right to a holding under any circumstances, and a farmer might possibly be expelled without compensation for improvement. It is needless to say that such cases are very few and far between. Besides growing enough food to provide the family, a free farmer will have a cow, two or three milch sheep, and four or five pigs; for the rest the principal produce is butter and potatoes. Generally speaking, the credit of the farmers is improving, and there are very few bad debts; no interest is charged on loans, but the amount due to the colony by the free farmers is steadily decreasing, being only £1,691 in 1902; the loans advanced in that year only amounted to £47 5s.

Similarly, Willemsoord, which has an area of over 5,000 acres, is doing good work in establishing these small freeholders, nearly all of whom are so occupied on their own piece of land that they have no need to work as agricultural labourers, and are, in fact, entirely self-supporting. At Willemsoord, in addition to the particular trades already mentioned, there is a certain amount of backsmithing, tailoring, and carpentering.

This colony possesses six large farms, upon which the men are taught and trained, a chosen few being drafted off, as at Fredericksoord, on to free farms.

What general conclusions may we draw? It perhaps ought to be pointed out that the colonies are not so well managed as in Germany. There is at present a noticeable lack of enterprise, and new ideas which ought to be readily entertained do not find much favour. The total population of the colonies tends to decrease, a result which may be due either to the increase of employment in the large towns like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Hague, or to the growing disinclination of the unemployed to go to a colony where very few, comparatively speaking, have the chance or the opportunity of becoming independent. One point which militates against the success of the colonies is the age of the average man. If he is over forty and has not succeeded in the town, the chances are that he will not be wholly successful in the country. Then, again, the colonies have, perhaps in their desire to make both ends meet, made a mistake in encouraging authorities to send paupers on private contracts. The number of such paupers is on the increase, which is very noticeable during the periods of severe depression or hard winter. Financially the colonies cannot be considered altogether a failure, for if we take it for granted, as the latest figures seem to imply, that each colonist, man, woman, and child, costs the benevolent societies and other charities from £1 10s. to £2 per annum, we must at the same time admit that this is a small sum as compared with the amount that would have been expended on the same people

in the town, while the result of their labour has been for their physical and moral good, and the enrichment of the land. Whatever may be the mistakes of the management, there cannot be the slightest doubt that such a training colony, wisely administered, making a selection of the men who offer themselves or are sent to them, emphasising also the importance of a small holding as the reward of merit for industry, might well be adopted in England, and it is to be hoped that the experiment will before long be tried, if only on a small scale.

The German Colonies.

Germany has for a long while been contemplating similar work, and Paster von Bodelschwingh, who is the founder of the German colony system, has expressly stated that he considered the small holding system must eventually become an integral part of their work. He instanced one of their newest colonies, that of Freistatt, in this connection, stating that, although the experiment was only in its infancy, he had every hope of gradually extending this work.

As long ago as 1886 the idea of Heimat-kolonisten (Home Colonists) was broached, and at Friederich-wilhelmsdorf, near Walsdorf, about three miles from Bremerhaven, twelve colonists were taken on the understanding that it meant permanent settlement if they proved industrious and capable. At the present time there are only four or five colonists permanently settled on farms of their own, but some forty or fifty are in the probation stage, working on the farm.

Another and still more successful experiment was made in December, 1898, by the Executive Committee of the Town Labour Colony at Hamburg. It acquired an estate of over 900 acres at Schaferhof, in Holstein, and there seems every hope that many men who are at present working there will eventually find permanent settlement.

Hollesley Bay.

The only colony in England which at all approximates to the Schaferhof experiment is that situated at Hollesley Bay, near Woodbridge, in Suffolk. It is under the control of the Central Unemployed Committee (London) and was offered to the original Committee by Mr. Joseph Fels on exactly the same conditions as Sumpner's Farm at Laindon was offered to the Poplar Board of Guardians. The Hollesley Farm consists of an estate of 1,300 acres, taken over formally and legally by the Committee in February, 1905. It was originally a Colonial College, in which training and instruction in agriculture was given, and in many respects it is very well suited for colony purposes. About 500 out of the 1,300 acres are arable land, and the rest pasture, while a considerable amount is woodland and heath, part of which has already been brought under cultivation. The buildings of the college are in every way suited for this experiment, and twenty-three cottages on the estate will provide accommodation for about 300 men. There are farm buildings and well-fitted workshops—for example, carpenter's, blacksmith's, and wheelwright's, together with a shoeing forge—and a great deal of expense will thus be avoided, while

practically all the repairs that are required in such a colony could be carried out on the spot.

The Committee had three special objects before it in the conduct of the colony :—

(1) The provision of special work for periods of exceptional distress.

(2) The provision of more continuous work for men who are not only in exceptional need of employment, but who have either already lived upon the land, or show a marked aptitude for country life.

(3) The establishment of suitable men and families in agricultural or other rural industries.

In the case of No. 1, as is quite natural, the work of the selected men who are out of employment during a period of exceptional distress, will not be so much agricultural as road-making, reclaiming heath land, strengthening the sea wall, brickmaking, and the general repair work of the colony. All this can be done without interfering with ordinary industry.

A large amount of work has also been given in the direction of market gardening and farm labour, and there can be no doubt that from this point of view the colony has been more successful than was anticipated. At the same time the Local Government Board has discouraged any attempt to establish small holdings in connection with the colony for those who have shown a marked aptitude for country life—that is to say, it does not approve of any departure from the original idea of a labour colony as a place where men can be tested as to their willingness to work, and tided over a period of industrial depression.

It is contended by those who wish to see a more constructive attempt made to deal with

the problem of unemployed labour, that if the small holdings idea could have been carried into effect, and gradually developed upon co-operative lines, the experiment would have resulted not only in the absorption of a certain class of genuine unemployed men, but also in the quickening of rural industries.

The Value of Classification.

The other examples of labour colonies both in England and in Germany, fail to make a definite enough distinction between the unemployable and the unemployed.

The need for classification is most marked in the German labour colonies. At the same time it is untrue to say that these colonies, of which there are thirty-three, deal only with criminals. They are charitable institutions, on religious lines, to which all able-bodied men are admitted without distinction of character or religion, so long as there is room. The only form of punishment is dismissal, and colonists dismissed for bad behaviour cannot be admitted elsewhere without the consent of the colony which discharges them.

The whole of the colonies, which were started on the initiative of Pastor Von Bodelschwingh, of Bielefeld, are governed by a Central Board which attempts to co-ordinate and regulate the administration, and is responsible to a large extent for the finances.

The 1907 report shows that accommodation exists in these colonies for 5,703 persons, and the number admitted was 9,856. Of these, 3,967 had never entered a colony before; 1,775 had already been in a colony once; 1,152, twice; 796, three times; 532, four times; 374, five

times; 307, six times; and 953, more than six times. Out of this total 5,141, or 52.2 per cent. were between thirty and fifty years of age, inclusive; 2,252 or 22.8 per cent. were aged thirty years and under; and 2,463 or 25.0 per cent., were over fifty. Over 3,000 were labourers without any skilled trade, and nearly 1,000 were connected in some way or other with agriculture; 796 belonged to the metal and engineering trades —a fact which would be practically impossible in England.

The colonies are supported by (*a*) grants from the provincial governments, (*b*) municipalities, (*c*) donations, subscriptions, collections. The colonies are scattered throughout the length and breadth of the German Empire, and it is quite probable that the number will be increased. The average amount needed to be made up by subscriptions and donations after deducting the profit or adding the loss on the farms and industries is between 5s. and 6s. per colonist per week; the expenses of administration and interest on borrowed capital are included. So far as possible, an attempt is made to arrange for the fluctuation of the labour market, since there are nearly twice as many men in a colony in winter as in summer. The result is that the winter work is supplemented by the reclamation of waste land, either on the colonies themselves or on the property of neighbouring landowners.

Faults of the German System.

The radical fault of all the German colonies is the admixture of classes. Varying reports have been received and published with regard to these colonies, but a careful investigation on

the spot seems to show that the Board of Trade report has somewhat exaggerated the number of men who may be called "criminal." Roughly speaking, 20 per cent. would be criminal, 20 per cent. first offenders (that is to say, men charged with mendicancy or vagrancy), about 50 per cent. men of somewhat weak will—deficient in some respect or below par in physical and mental ability—while about 10 per cent. would be willing and industrious men of good character unemployed through no fault of their own. It is, however, for the 50 per cent. referred to that this class of colony is required. A much more satisfactory result would be produced if the criminal could be separated off from the man of fairly good character, and if again the genuine unemployed could be given a trial in another colony where opportunity would be offered, if necessary, of permanent work upon the land.

Luhlerheim.

The best results that have been produced in Germany can be witnessed at Luhlerheim. The Board of Trade report gives Wilhelmsdorf as an example, but Wilhelmsdorf, though the oldest of these colonies, is somewhat handicapped by being closely connected with the epileptic colony at Bielefeld, the result being a larger proporton of mentally and physically "below-par" men than would otherwise be the case. Luhlerheim has the advantage of a rather exceptional man in the person of Herr Siemon, who was at the head of the farming work of the Rauhe Haus, near Hamburg. He has created out of somewhat unpromising material, in the shape both of waste land and waste labour, what must be regarded

as an extremely successful labour colony. The buildings have been, in the main, constructed by the colonists with a very little paid skilled assistance. The colony itself is gradually being transformed from a tract of barren and sandy soil, which refused to grow anything owing to the hard, ocherous spit beneath the surface, into a fertile and productive farm. The cowsheds and piggeries, two very important factors in the success of the colony, were constructed by the colonists under skilled superintendence. The general result witnessed is the partial reclamation, at all events, of a large percentage of the men at a cost of something like 2s. 7d. per head per week—about half the cost of any other colony in Germany, and less than half the cost of any similar experiment in England.

The English Colonies.

Returning for a moment to the English colonies, which in the main cater for the unemployable, we are struck with the fact that both Hadleigh and Lingfield labour under peculiar difficulties owing to the inadequate financial support which they receive, especially from the authorities which are most indebted to these colonies for assistance. The Provincial Governments in Germany do, at any rate, subsidise the colonies to some extent (about one-third of the cost being derived from such sources), but in England both Hadleigh and Lingfield, apart from private subscriptions, have only the Boards of Guardians to look to, if we except the work of the Central Unemployed Committee in connection with Hadleigh during the last two winters. It any case, the financial support derivable from such sources barely covers the

cost of maintenance, and the men who are sent by Boards of Guardians, so far from being selected with a view to their permanent benefit, are often the hopeless ne'er-do-wells who would cost such Boards a larger sum if they remained in the workhouse.

In this sense especially, apart from its work amongst epileptic children, Lingfield may be regarded as a sort of subsidised Poor Law colony, and it is to the credit of the Director and those in charge that satisfactory results have been obtained to a very considerable extent. This colony consists of a farm of 250 acres, and has now been in existence for over nine years.

The cost is not extravagant as compared with the Poor Law. It works out at 9s. per week per man, exclusive of clothing, the chief item being food, 4s. 10d. per week; lodging and laundry, 2s. 2d.; superintendence, 1s. 6d.; waste and medical care, 6d.

In such a colony, farming cannot be made to pay, that goes without saying; the real assets may be described as the "helpless lives made useful, waste lives reclaimed, the drunkards restored, and mischief prevented." What is required is that this colony should be set aside to do this special work, and that some at any rate of the cost should be forthcoming from the State which indirectly reaps the reward.

Hadleigh is a larger colony, run on somewhat different lines by the Salvation Army. It consists of an area of about 3,000 acres, of which some 400 are let off at present to a farmer. It is situated four miles from Southend. The land is a stiff clay, rather poor and cold in character, but it is rapidly improving in value. About 100 acres

are planted with fruit trees, and the total receipts from the fruit farms, its pastures, market gardens, chicken farms amount to over £30,000. The population on the land near by has as a result of the colony greatly increased, and Hadleigh village now numbers over 1,300, and in many respects is quite thriving. Here again the difficulty crops up of the great mixture of men which Hadleigh receives—many of them taken from the shelters in the town, some supplied by Boards of Guardians, while a few are capable, willing workers who are unemployed for the time being, or who have come down through misfortune; the remainder are weak, unsatisfactory men sent by philanthropic societies, by relatives and friends. The best of these men Hadleigh seems to have little difficulty in restoring once more to permanent occupation, or if they cannot be so restored, they are usually emigrated.

The Church Army also has a small Labour Colony near Dorking, which is really a test farm. It consists of 150 acres of heavy clay soil, and satisfactorily fulfils its purpose of offering a test of work to men desirous of emigration.

Libury Hall, at Great Munden, Herts, a colony of 300 acres, is an example of the German method in England. About 460 men are sent back every year to Germany as a result of their operations. A very large number, nearly 50 per cent., during their stay earn sufficient to defray their expenses for their return home.

These colonies are perhaps specially fitted to deal with the chronically unemployed, the men who are below par or weak-willed, the chance being afforded to them by a change of environment to a new and more independent existence.

There are a considerable number of other colonies of the same type, amongst them the Scottish Labour Colony situated at Mid-Lochar-woods, south of Dumfries, and the Swiss colonies of Tannenhof and Herdern. The interesting thing about the Swiss colonies is that nearly 50 per cent. find work on leaving the colonies, or else have it found for them by the authorities. The finances are furnished partly by contributions from public authorities, and partly by private donations and subscriptions.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

"THE conquest of Nature is complete, may we not say? and now our business is, and has for long been, the organisation of man, who wields the forces of Nature."—WILLIAM MORRIS.

FROM the previous chapters we shall have seen that it is impossible to draw a distinct line of demarcation between the problems which surround the lives of the unemployable and the unemployed. Those who have had to do with the latter, either in connection with relief organisations, Labour Bureaux, or upon Distress Committees have come to the conclusion that a very fruitful source of supply, as far as the unemployable are concerned, is the large body of men who are either unemployed for long periods of time, or are only casually employed a few days a month. If we could cut off the supply at its source, if work could be found for the large army of men from whom the ranks of the unemployable are recruited, we should at least have made it possible to deal with the vagrant and wastrel. Undoubtedly, such indirect remedies as improved education, the lessening of the evils arising from drink and gambling, a reform in some of the methods and organisation of the Trades Unions, the establishment of Arbitration Boards and a legal Minimum Wage, the encouragement of Benefit Societies and of thrift generally, and various reforms

in taxation will go some way towards the solution of this problem. But other and direct remedies are necessary. These may all be summed up in one word—employment.

It cannot be denied that the question of finding employment is not made easier by the more complex conditions in which the great majority of the working classes live in our big city centres. In a village it may be possible to discover ways and means of employing those who are for shorter or longer periods out of work. In cities like London, Glasgow, Manchester or Birmingham, the whole question is complicated by a variety of considerations. At the same time, there is no excuse for the *laissez faire* policy which up to the present we have adopted. The wealth of England has more than doubled during the last fifty years. Notwithstanding the bad times which are the set-off to the years of prosperity, our average income and average productivity are higher now than they ever were in the history of the country. The increase of population in the minds of most economists has lost its terror owing to the apparently limitless improvements in the methods and organisation of manufactures. Yet, though these facts stare us in the face, the paradox of the situation is that even during the periods of prosperity, thousands of unemployed men and women were registered and relieved, and the number of the workless is still upon the increase. Admitting that our manufactures and improved organisation have raised the standard of life and bettered the position of large numbers of our fellow men, we still have to deplore the fact that no corresponding benefit has reached those who are on the lowest rung of the ladder. The

all-round improvement we have witnessed would seem to prove that we are moving upon the right lines, and it is only when we come to analyse the needs of that section of society which lies at the base of our superstructure, that we come to the conclusion that the economic disease which afflicts the body politic has not yet been diagnosed. The normal demand for labour may grow and expand—in fact, does expand in time of prosperity,—but the supply of fresh labour increases with equal rapidity. Up to the present the relation between demand and supply has been so imperfectly known and the methods of adjustment so little comprehended, that our statesmen have been content to tide over the distress winter by winter in the hope that more drastic measures would not be required.

The Abolition of the Inefficient.

Whatever may be the final solution, there can be no doubt that a first step to take is the abolition of the unemployable and the inefficient in so far as they are being manufactured by the conditions which surround them in early youth. The report of the Commissioners of Prisons, 1907-8, contains an extremely valuable section dealing with the work of the Borstal Association. In that report, the Commissioners state that up to a certain age every criminal who is not mentally defective is potentially a good citizen. In the same way, every boy who is physically and mentally sound is potentially a good worker. The Borstal Association, in specifying circumstances which induce the criminal habit, refer in particular to the absence of any system of control and organisation for the employment of the young. When the boy leaves school, the State relinquishes its control. The father

has little or no interest, and frequently has no imagination. He does not wish to do more than get him a job. At the age of eighteen the boy finds himself drifting on the sea of casual employment, becoming a loafer instead of an industrious worker. The cases dealt with by the Borstal Association are those of boys who have been practically unemployed ever since leaving school, and it is little wonder that the Commissioners suggest the adoption of compulsory continuation schools, as in Germany. Some 80 per cent. of the elementary school boys in Munich alone are apprenticed to a trade from the time of leaving school to the age of eighteen. "It seems to us," the Commissioners add, referring to the deficiencies of England in this respect, "that in the absence of organisation and direction in the earlier years of life, much good material is being wasted and allowed to drift until it lapses into crime or the beginnings of crime." The raising of the school age, and compulsory continuation classes, better manual and technical instruction, a more watchful eye over the interests of the boy on the part of the city and State, will make it easier for legislation to deal with the distinctly economic aspect of the question. The causes which lie midway between the economic and the personal will continue to operate notwithstanding State and municipal relief works. The supply must be cut off in every direction, and no effort must be spared to reduce the problem to its narrowest limits.

The Responsibility of the Nation.

The question that we now ask is, "How far is the State responsible for those who are unemployed, not because they are inefficient workers, but because our system of production seems to

make a surplus of labour necessary?" In a recent discussion in the House of Commons, some stress was laid upon the fact that under a Free Trade system, specific trades decayed; that although the country may readily introduce new methods and new machinery, yet in the long run a large number find themselves permanently displaced, owing to the lack of ability to adapt themselves to the changed conditions, or to learn a new trade. Labour-saving machinery does inflict considerable hardship in the first place upon large numbers of individual workers and one of the difficulties in connection with the docks in East London is due to the fact that the introduction of machinery has led to a reduction in the number of men employed. While these new methods must be adopted in the interests of industry as a whole, it is none the less obvious that, if large numbers of workers are dispensed with, some way of absorbing the displaced workers ought to be devised. It is cold comfort to tell these men that the nation will feel the benefit and that cheapness is essential to our trade. As a matter of fact, in the end, the nation does not feel the benefit owing to the burden of maintaining these derelicts in our workhouses and prisons. The employer may benefit, but the community suffers.

Supply and Demand.

The actual fluctuations of industrial activity in certain seasonal trades is another illustration of the mal-adjustment between the demand for and the supply of labour. As a rule, the winter is the worst time for such unemployment, so that it synchronises with the increase in the price of fuel and certain other necessaries of life. Over and above the seasonal vicissitudes, there is a

cyclic fluctuation due to some economic cause more profound than any we have mentioned up to the present. Those periods of great activity in trade, followed by depression, seem to point to the fact that modern competitive industry unregulated by State action, can only grow through a succession of periods of rapid expansion followed by actual or relative contraction. The law of supply and demand is generally regarded as an eternal verity not to be criticised or questioned. The result is that we have settled down to the view that since unemployment fluctuates with the demand, if the demand ceases there must necessarily be unemployment, and the state has no further responsibility in the matter. But there are two kinds of demand. There is the demand which the economist calls effective, namely, the power to buy, and the demand which the working classes make at all seasons of the year, namely, that of need and desire. Even while the market is glutted, the poor are crying out for the very goods which have no sale. The real demand on the part of our population does not greatly expand or contract. It is the effective demand which fluctuates. The question that our statesmen have to solve is how to make the real demand effective. If this could be accomplished, not only would the market be steadied, but those who are now unable to purchase, by their increased consumption would give increased employment, or at any rate would remove from the shoulders of the community the extra burden of maintaining them in idleness. The theory of under-consumption as the root cause of unemployment has, of course, never been proved, and is open to doubt, but there is a sense in which

it can be said that if only we could increase the consuming power of the working classes, we should have a stronger and more regular demand.

An Alternative Necessary.

In what direction is the unemployed man to look for assistance, since it is clear that by his own unaided efforts he cannot supply his own needs or exchange his labour for that of others? The average working man is completely the creature of a civilisation which has called into being economic laws and forces of which he is entirely ignorant. Who shall deliver him from his unenviable situation? There is no other solution than that which can be afforded by organised collective effort. The ramifications of the disease extend through the whole of the community, and no individual or group of individuals is therefore capable of supplying the remedy. It must take the shape of the alternative of work offered by the city or the state as distinct from the individual employer, the alternative, in fact, which the working man once had in an agricultural community, when there was free access to the land. The State must come to the rescue in the time of chronic unemployment, the city in the case of those periods of distress, which follow with monotonous regularity cycles of prosperity. The main cost of providing the alternative should fall upon the nation as a whole, for no one locality, however badly administered, can be said to be responsible for the problem of unemployment: indeed, it can be shown that the poorest districts which have the least recuperative power from a financial point of view are the very districts where the cost of educating the young, maintaining the poor and helping

the unemployed is heaviest. It can be shown, for example, that West Ham and Tottenham, two districts immediately outside the area of London, have to keep and maintain a large proportion of those who create the wealth of London itself; and, if this be the case, it is the acme of injustice to call upon them to solve the problem in their own immediate neighbourhood, or to supply all the necessary funds. In previous chapters we have indicated the lines upon which it would be safe for the State to make immediate experiments, *e.g.*, of afforestation, land reclamation and the construction of new roads. These national works should be so organised as not only to employ those who have been without work for long periods, but also to furnish an outlet for the unemployed labour of those cities and localities in which useful and productive work cannot readily be discovered.

Under-employment.

There is one other point that needs to be emphasised, and that is the importance of dealing with the problem of under-employment. Casual labour is at the root of much of our social misery and wretchedness.* A very large class of casual workers never in any one year earn sufficient to rise with their families above the poverty line. Into their ranks are constantly slipping the unfortunate, the untrained, the inefficient and the vicious. The mere offer of work to this class is not sufficient. If the casual labourer is to be rooted out of our industrial system, all industries which demand his presence must be completely

* Cf. Special Committee on Unskilled Labour (C.O.S.), p 53.

re-organised upon a different basis. Under-employment, with its concomitant social ills, must be resolutely dealt with by the State not from one, but from many sides, and this is the excuse, if excuse be required, which is offered for the suggestions made in the direction of better education—manual training, labour colonies and all that tends to discipline the weak-willed and ineffective citizen. The casual labourer or chronically unemployed man cannot be provided with work in the country except under the closest supervision and direction. The growth of the towns during the last fifty years and the urbanisation of the working classes has meant the almost total destruction of the agricultural instinct, and the loss of experience which the man bred and born upon the land acquires during the years of his youth and early manhood. To drain the towns of these men and attempt to place them upon the land without adequate training and resources would inevitably fail. To-day the unskilled-labourer of the town can only do the simplest forms of work, and even that under close supervision. We expect what is impossible if we think that a large number of unskilled labourers could in a short time be made independent by presenting them with a piece of land and a few implements of agriculture. What *is* possible, is a system of State relief works accompanied by a form of training which would fit the man for work in the country if work in the town could not be found for him.

Relief Works.

Thus, while he is engaged on the work of land reclamation, or afforestation, he could at the

same time be receiving simple instruction in the many-sided industry of agriculture, so that finally, if he should decide to emigrate to Canada, he would not be so hopelessly out of place in the Dominion as he is at the present time. But whether we give to the unskilled labourer the alternative to work upon the land under State direction, whether we find him work in the town or eventually emigrate him, we must discover some alternative to the present system of allowing him to grow degenerate and degraded by idleness. When the unemployed are unable themselves to get at the actual source of wealth and thus provide food for themselves, the community must step in and make this source available. Of course, it will be argued that such relief works are no better than the Parisian Municipal Workshops, and will be as certain to fail. The answer to this is, that in the first place, the Parisian Workshops were intended to fail, and that every effort was made to hasten their failure; and in the second place, that nearly every experiment when first made, ends disastrously, through lack of knowledge and experience; as soon as the principles underlying the experiment have been thoroughly grasped, mistakes are easily remedied. To obtain success, you must satisfy the conditions of success, and the failure of municipal relief works is due to ill-considered schemes, lack of organisation and careless supervision. To condemn the policy of State and municipal relief works because on a certain occasion, in the capital of another country, workmen were set to manufacture goods without regard to the demand for those goods, is to deserve the fate of the man who condemns without knowledge.

The Aim of Production.

Finally, we are far too apt to forget that the aim of any economic process should be consumption; if we separate production either of food or of goods from this all important end, we eventually create unemployment. We have ignored the fact that production for gain will not satisfy the same purpose as production to supply actual needs, so that in devising remedies for unemployment, the needs of the unemployed workers themselves must be taken into account. It is improbable that these needs can be satisfied while so large a proportion of the land of the country remains in private hands. It is not argued that every labourer who is unemployed should have direct and unimpeded access to the soil on his own account, but it is contended that either directly or indirectly work must be found upon the land which is the sole source of the material for labour. That being so, the community has first claim upon it. No injustice need be done to individual owners, but justice requires to be done to the nation itself, whose righteous demands are at present unsatisfied. Some may object to this absorption by the State of the large army of unemployed, on the ground that a certain margin of surplus labour is required by our present methods of industry. The answer is comparatively simple. No industrial system, which persists only at the cost of the life, health and happiness of a large number of men and women, can commend itself either from a moral or an economic point of view. The only question that remains is how so to modify or re-construct that system as to practically abolish all unemployment due to economic causes. To this task the community must now set its hand.

APPENDIX.

LABOUR EXCHANGES ACT.

A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LABOUR EXCHANGES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES INCIDENTAL THERETO.

BE it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :—

I.—(1) The Board of Trade may establish and maintain in such places as they think fit labour exchanges, and may assist any labour exchanges maintained by any other authorities or persons and in the exercise of those powers may, if they think fit, co-operate with any other authorities or persons having powers for the purpose.

(2) The Board of Trade may also, by such other means as they think fit, collect and furnish information as to employers requiring workpeople and workpeople seeking engagement or employment.

(3) The Board of Trade may take over any labour exchange (whether established before or after the *passing of this Act*) by agreement with the authority or person by whom the labour exchange is maintained, and any such authority or person shall have power to transfer it to the Board of Trade for the purposes of this Act.

(4) The powers of any central body or distress committee and the powers of any council through a special committee to establish or maintain under the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, a labour exchange or employment register shall, after the expiration of one year from the commencement of this Act, not be exercised except with the sanction of, and subject to any conditions imposed by, the Local Government Board for England, Scotland, or Ireland, as the case may require, and that sanction shall not be given except after consultation with the Board of Trade.

(5) The Board of Trade may appoint such officers and servants for the purposes of this Act as the Board may, with the sanction of the Treasury, determine, and there *shall be paid out of moneys provided by Parliament to such officers and servants such salaries or remuneration as the Treasury may determine, and any expenses incurred by the Board of Trade in carrying this Act into effect, to such amount as may be sanctioned by the Treasury, shall be defrayed out of moneys provided by Parliament.*

II.—(1) The Board of Trade may make general regulations with respect to the management of labour exchanges, and otherwise with respect to the exercise of their powers under this Act, and such regulations may, subject to the approval of the Treasury, authorise advances to be made by way of loan towards meeting the expenses of workpeople travelling to places where employment has been found for them through a labour exchange.

(2) Any general regulations made under this section shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament as soon as may be after they are made.

(3) Subject to any such regulations, the powers of the Board of Trade under this Act shall be exercised in such manner as the Board of Trade may direct.

(4) The Board of Trade may, in such cases as they think fit, establish advisory committees for the purpose of giving the Board advice and assistance in

connection with the management of any labour exchange.

III.—If any person knowingly makes any false statement or false representation to any officer of a labour exchange established under this Act, or to any person acting for or for the purposes of any such labour exchange, for the purpose of obtaining employment or procuring workpeople, that person shall be liable in respect of each offence on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding *ten pounds*.

IV.—In this Act the expression "labour exchange" means any office or place used for the purpose of collecting and furnishing information, either by the keeping of registers or otherwise, respecting employers who desire to engage workpeople and workpeople who seek engagement or employment.

V.—This Act may be cited as the Labour Exchanges Act, 1909.

LIST OF SOME WORKS

ON THE

UNEMPLOYED.

Compiled by the British Institute of Social Service, 11, Southampton Row, London, W.C.,
October 6th, 1908.

This list only professes to give some of the more recent sources of information on the subject. Foreign publications are not included, and no reference is made to articles in magazines, papers read at conferences, or to single chapters in books.

BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY PUBLICATIONS.

(To be obtained from Messrs. Wyman & Sons, Fetter Lane, London, E.C.)

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON VAGRANCY. Vol. I. Report. 123 pp. 1906. (Cd. 2852). 1s. 6d. Vol. II. Evidence, digest and index. (Cd. 2891). 4s. 1d. Vol. III. Appendix, with charts and maps. (Cd. 2892). 5s. 1d.

REPORT ON AGENCIES AND METHODS FOR DEALING WITH THE UNEMPLOYED. 438 pp. 1893. (C. 7182). 1s. 9d. (o. p.).

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRADE ON AGENCIES AND METHODS FOR DEALING WITH THE UNEMPLOYED IN CERTAIN FOREIGN COUNTRIES. 236 pp. 1904. (Cd. 2304). 1s.

RETURN AS TO THE PROCEEDINGS OF DISTRESS COMMITTEES IN ENGLAND AND WALES, and of the Central (Unemployed) Body for London, under the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, during the year ended 31st day of March, 1908. 35 pp. (H. C. 173 of 1908). 3½d.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON DISTRESS FROM WANT OF EMPLOYMENT. First Report, with proceedings and evidence. (H. C. 111 of. 1895). 1s. 9d. Second report, with appendix. (H. C. 253 of 1895). 4s. 1d. Third report, with proceedings, evidence, appendix and index. (H. C. 365 of 1895). 8s. 11d. Final report, with proceedings, evidence, appendix and index. (H. C. 321 of 1896). 1s. 6d.

UNEMPLOYED WORKMEN ACT, 1905. Report as to proceedings of Distress Committees in Scotland for the year ended 15th May, 1907. 1907. (Cd. 3830). 2½d.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS.

ALDEN, PERCY. Labour Colonies in England and on the Continent. 29 pp. Lond. Friends' Social Union. 1906. 1d. (Reprinted from the Co-operative Wholesale Societies' Annual, 1906).

——— Unemployed. A national question, with a preface by Sir John Gorst. 199 pp. Lond. King. 1905. 1s. net.

BARNES, G. N. Problem of the Unemployed. 16 pp. Lond. Independent Labour Party. 1908. 1d.

BRADSHAW, LEWIS. How to avoid the Red Peril of the Unemployed. 32 pp. Kettering. Northants. Printing Co. 1907. 3d.

CARLILE, WILSON, and CARLILE, V. W. Continental outcast: Land Colonies and Poor Law Relief.. 143 pp. Lond. Unwin. 1906. Cloth, 2s. net. Paper, 1s. net.

CASSON, W. A. Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905. Ed. 2, xxx., 134 pp. Lond. Knight. 1905. 1s. net.

CENTRAL (UNEMPLOYED) BODY FOR LONDON. Preliminary report . . . to May 12th, 1906. 65 pp. Lond. King. n. d. 1s.

———— Second report upon the work of the Central Body from May 12th, 1906, to June 30th, 1907. 149 pp. Lond. King. 1908. 1s.

CHANCE, SIR WILLIAM. Vagrancy. Lond. King. 1906. 6d. net.

CHARITY ORGANISATION SOCIETY. Relief of distress due to want of employment. Report of a Special Committee of the Council of the C.O.S. 231 pp. Lond. 1904. 1s.

———— Special Committee on Unskilled Labour. Report and minutes of evidence. June, 1908. 249 pp. Lond. 1908. 1s.

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL UNION. Oxford University Branch. Industrial invalids: I. The Unemployed and the Unemployable. By S. A. Barnett. II. The Belgian Labour Colonies. By H. J Torr. 24 pp. Oxford. 1904. 1d. (Reprinted from the *Economic Review*, October 1903, and January 1904.)

DRAGE, GEOFFREY. Unemployed. 277 pp. Lond. Macmillan. 1894. 3s. 6d. net.

FABIAN SOCIETY, Tract No. 47. Unemployed. By John Burns. 19 pp. Lond. 1893, reprinted 1905. 1d.

HAGGARD, H. R. Poor and the Land: being a report on the Salvation Army Colonies in the United States and at Hadleigh, England, with a scheme of National Land Settlement. xli., 144 pp. Lond. Longmans. 1905. Cloth, 2s. Paper, 1s. 6d.

HARDIE, J. K. Unemployed Problem, with some Suggestions for Solving it. 16 pp. Lond. Independent Labour Party. 1904. 1d.

HATCH, E. F. G. Reproach to Civilisation : a Treatise on the Problem of the Unemployed. 110 pp. Lond. Waterlow. 1906. 1s. net.

HIGGS, MRS. MARY. Glimpses into the Abyss. 331 pp. Lond. King. 1906. 3s. 6d. net.

——— How to deal with the Unemployed. 202 pp. Lond. Brown, Langham. 1904. 2s.

HOBSON, J. A. Problem of the Unemployed. An enquiry and an economic policy. Ed. 2. 163 pp. Lond. Methuen. 1904. 2s. 6d.

HOWARTH, E. G. and WILSON, MONA. West Ham : a Study in Social and Industrial Problems. Being the Report of the Outer London Inquiry Committee. 423 pp. Lond. Dent. 1907. 6s. net.

HUNT, H. H. Labour Colonies : What are they ? What can they do ? 15 pp. n. p. n. d. 1d.

KELLY, EDMOND. Unemployables. With a Preface by Sir William Chance. vii. 60 pp. Lond. King. 1907. 6d. net.

LANSBURY, GEORGE. Unemployment—the Next Step. 18 pp. Lond. R. Culley. 1907. 1d. (Social Tracts for the Times, No. 5.)

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL. Lack of Employment in London. Minutes of Conferences, February, 1903. Lond. King. 1903. (No. 662). 6d.

——— Lack of Employment. Proceedings of the Conference of Representatives of Administrative Authorities in London. Second meeting, 3rd April, 1903. Lond. King. 1903. (No. 620). 6d.

——— Report by the Medical Officer, submitting the result of a census of Homeless Persons on the night of the 8th Feburary, 1907, together with some information concerning the accommodation for women provided in shelters, homes and institutions. 6 pp. 1907.

LONDON UNEMPLOYED FUND, 1904-5. Report of the Central Executive Committee. 160 pp. Lond. King. 1905. 1s. net.

MACDONALD, J. R. New Unemployed Bill of the Labour Party. 15 pp. Lond. Independent Labour Party. 1907. 1d.

MOORE, H. E. Our Heritage in the Land; with introduction and scheme for State Aid. By Sir William Mather. Ed. 2, 144, 16 pp. Lond. King. 1906. 1s. net.

PATON, J. B. Unemployable and the Unemployed. New ed. 64 pp. Lond. Clarke (1906 ?) 6d. net. (Social Questions of the Day, No. 1.)

REASON, WILL. Ed. Our Industrial Outcasts. 155 pp. Lond. Melrose. 1905. 2s.

SUMMERBELL, T. Afforestation: the Unemployed and the Land. 16 pp. Lond. Independent Labour Party. 1908. 1d.

SUTHERS, R. B. My Right to Work. Lond. Clarion Press. 1906. 6d.

WOMEN'S INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL. Report of the National Conference on the Unemployment of Women dependent on their own earnings, held in London on October 15th, 1907. Lond. 1907 7d. post free.

WOODWORTH A. V. Report of an Inquiry into the Condition of the Unemployed conducted under the Toynbee Trust, winter 1895-6. 62 pp. Lond. Dent. 1897. 6d.