

a growing town, would you sell them all at once or would you sell them gradually? When you sell a few lots to people who at once commence to build houses or factories, the other lots immediately go up in value, do they not? Well, then, the sane real estate man sells gradually and gets the ascending scale of prices.

We are reminded forcibly of this weakness of small-pursed people to buy town-lots in distant places, by a statement credited to a Fort George newspaper. This honest British Columbian says that real estate dealers in Vancouver are selling \$10 town-lots in Fort George to people in Oklahoma, California, Wisconsin, Ontario and other places at \$150 to \$250. Perhaps this is an over-statement, but a courageous journalist vouches for it. There are many Fort George's in Canada just now and as a general rule it is as safe to buy mining stock in a company which does not own a mine, or an oil company which never sank a well, as to buy town-lots on a paper map.

GERMANY and Canada have had a friendly chat and have come to terms. For some time we have been suggesting that such a course would be profitable to this country. Last September, the Manufacturers pointed out that to advocate trade extensions with Germany was unpatriotic and disloyal. Nevertheless we felt that the disloyalty cry was being so overworked in Canada, that it would be safe to ignore it. We felt that if the British throne were tottering, another puny blow would not matter. Strangely enough, the reform has come and King Edward and Britannia still rule as usual.

Mr. Fielding rather surprised everybody with his celerity on this occasion. There are a lot of people who think, deep down in their hearts, that Mr. Fielding must have made a bad bargain, because he did not consult them. We confess to a little disappointment ourselves. Our campaign in favour of an improvement in German-Canadian relations was not yet well under way. We were collecting information through a Berlin correspondent and expected to make a great "hit" with it. Mr. Fielding does not seem to have given any person the slightest warning. It may be that he did not tell even Sir Wilfrid about it.

The Toronto *Evening Telegram* raises a nice point in connection

with this Treaty or Convention. The Editor of that estimable journal will be allowed to ask his question in his own inimitable way. We quote:

"If the consumer 'necessarily and inevitably pays the duty,' why should the producers of Canada rejoice at the removal or reduction of the German duty on this country's agricultural products?

"Free traders insist that a British duty on foreign food products would be a burden upon the old-country consumers of these products.

"Then the German duty on Canadian food products must be a burden upon the German consumers of these products.

"Why, then, should the farmers of Canada rejoice at the removal of German duties which they never had to pay, if free trade were true, which it is not and never was."

THAT long-drawn fight between the boss plumbers of Winnipeg and their employees has been settled by the Privy Council in favour of the bosses. The appeal was made from a decision by Judge Mathers arising out of a strike in July, 1906. It took nearly four years to carry the case through all the courts. The Judge granted an injunction against the strikers and also awarded the bosses damages amounting to \$4,000 for picketing, conspiracy and boycotting.

The principle involved was the right to picket and boycott during a strike. In other places in Canada, judges have refused to grant injunctions in such cases. Judge Mathers, however, took a different view, and the Privy Council upheld him. Whether the decision shall be considered a precedent binding on all other judges remains to be seen. If not considered absolutely binding, it will at least have considerable influence on future judicial decisions.

In accordance with trades-union tactics, it will now be in order for the labour organisations to have such legislation passed as will nullify the decision. When the British judges decided that union funds could be seized to pay damages assessed against unions, the labour party successfully sought legislation making the union funds "immune." There have been many similar examples. Of course, no government in these democratic days can afford to deny any such requests. It is "advanced legislation" don't you know.

The New British Labour Exchanges

By H. LINTON ECCLES

THE most important attempt—as it is also the first to be placed on a national basis—to deal with the tremendous problem of unemployment in Britain, is now in working order. The attempt takes the form of labour exchanges throughout the kingdom, and the idea is founded upon the schemes that have been instituted with varied success in Germany, France, Belgium and Switzerland.

Altogether no new legislation with such wide aims as this has met with less adverse criticism. The general feeling throughout the country is that the system must be given a fair trial, and that criticism would be much better postponed until the new labour exchanges have proved their ineffectiveness or otherwise. That, of course, is the only sensible attitude to adopt towards a novel institution.

The new plan of the Government for dealing with the out-of-works may be briefly described as having the general object of bringing the man who wants to work into touch with the employer who has work to offer. For this purpose a sub-department of the Board of Trade—of which Mr. Winston Churchill is president—has been formed to assume the duties of a central board of control. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland has been divided into eleven industrial districts, each in charge of a divisional chief.

These divisions, again, will be sub-divided into a national clearing-house, situated in London; ten divisional clearing-houses; 32 first-class exchanges for towns of over 100,000 inhabitants; 43 second-class exchanges for towns of over 50,000 inhabitants; 20 third-class exchanges for smaller towns; and 20 sub-offices for still smaller districts or urban areas. It is estimated that when all these offices are working the annual cost will be about £200,000 and that between 800 and 1,000 officials will be employed in the management of them.

Naturally, having seen something of the results achieved by these labour exchanges on the continent, I was greatly interested in their somewhat belated establishment in my own country. There is nothing strange about the idea of the State as employment agent in France and Germany and the lesser coun-

tries, but I was curious to learn how this entirely new role now adopted by a British Government would be regarded by both employers and employees in Britain. With the object, then, of informing myself in this direction, I set out to visit some of the exchanges.

These new State labour agents have no intention of hiding their light or their business under a bushel. In plain white letters on a green ground, the legend, "Board of Trade Labour Exchange" is painted over the shop. Also a sign hanging out over the door reads: "E. R.—Labour Exchange (Board of Trade)." That will do for the outside. Taking your turn in the queue, you get inside, and find yourself in what closely resembles a penny bank or a branch post-office. There is the inevitable counter between you and the clerks, and the just as inevitable grille or wire-work monstrosity on your edge of the counter. Evidently these counters were designed not to be leant across, but so that the business might be done over them as speedily as possible. And that despatch is necessary in these first days of registering, for there are hundreds, thousands even, of applicants lining up to have their names put down on the registers. One mentally, whilst waiting, figures out the proportion of unemployed to prospective employers.

Your turn comes, and the official behind the grille puts you through a brief catechism—age, trade, where you last worked, what you are willing to do, and so on. There is a refreshing freedom from red tape and silly, unnecessary questions. You are not asked what was the religion of your grandmother, or for how many children your step-father was responsible. They sensibly "cut the cackle," these new officials, and ask you only such queries as actually bear upon the immediate business of the moment—to satisfy your requirements, if possible. When he has entered his particulars the official hands you a card, stamped with a number and marked with an official seal, and says: "If you are suited before this day week, post this card to us and say so; you needn't put a stamp upon it. If you are not successful call again in seven days."

The exchanges, it should be explained, are

divided into three compartments—for employers, male and female employees respectively. Nobody pays a cent. Anyone who is out of work can go to his or her district exchange and register. The employer can write or telephone, stating his requirements. Applicants for work are first put on the "Live Register," which is kept for those who have either just registered or have renewed their application within a week, not having found employment. There is also an "Intermediate Register," for those whose cards have lapsed during the previous fourteen days, or who have been sent after jobs and have not informed the Exchange of the result. Another list is the "Dead Register," of people for whom work has been found, or who have not renewed their registration for over fourteen days.

What results may be expected from the new labour exchanges? Well, at any rate, the first will be that they will sort out the workers from the shirkers. It will separate the genuine workers from the "won't works." Previously there has been necessarily little true discrimination between the two classes. Then, as a matter of course, the skilled worker will benefit most. He is the man who has learnt a trade, who knows what he can do. He is not one of the nondescript class who are ready to "do anything," without being capable of doing anything properly. The casual labourer must remain an unsolved problem. He is bound always to alternate between employment and unemployment. He will always be the first to suffer when trade generally is bad.

The labour exchanges do not pretend to make work; no system of offices and officials can create employment. But they most certainly can regulate to a large extent the labour market. The exchanges can do nothing for the wastrels, the idlers, the tramps, the mere nomads of civilisation whose business in human society, whatever else it may be, is certainly not to live as useful members of it. But they will most decidedly prove a God-send to the genuine working man for whose labour there is a demand, either in his own or some other district. He, anyhow, will be saved the heart-breaking experience of tramping miles upon miles, chasing the shadow of employment, whose material embodiment lies perhaps in quite an opposite direction. The one question we find ourselves asking—as we have asked it about other reforms over and over again—is, why wasn't it accomplished long ago?