

(Memoranda circulated
to Council members),
(May 24th, 1931)

Executive Committee Meeting of May 21st., 1931.

// Item 3. Programme of research for session 1931-2.

The Committee then turned to the main business of drawing up the departmental research programme, on the basis of the Director's memorandum circulated previously to Committee members.

The Director submitted to the Chairman that it might be desirable to consider first (a) the views of Committee members on concentrating for the year on one subject from among those suggested in each case, and then (b) the specific research subject or subjects of each Department in turn. This was agreed to.

(a) Concentration upon one main subject.

The main arguments against such limitation were stated (by Dr. Dawson):
(1) all the subjects were really involved in studying unemployment, and
(2) difficulty would arise in the case of a student equipped for and desirous of studying a particular field or aspect which was not then the main subject chosen by the department.

With regard to the first objection, it was pointed out that while this was true, the question was one of efficiency, of making a more satisfactory attack upon one part of the whole problem to begin with; and of having a clear objective. It was also mentioned that the immediate need was a clear programme for the year; that room would undoubtedly be found for other subjects as soon as some part of the programme was achieved.

The Director stressed the need for integrating and coordinating the work which was to be done; the possibility and ease of so doing was likely to be much greater if a limited number of fields were entered first and expansion made gradually. The Chairman put it to the Committee that the Committee's essential work was to assist the orientation and coordination of the various pieces of unemployment research, and that each Department must be willing to frame its unemployment research with these needs in mind.

It was then put to, and finally approved by the Committee, that each Department should agree on one subject as a minimum or main study for the year, and upon a secondary topic to be pursued should funds or persons be available, and this be considered desirable. The study of secondary subjects should not be procluded, and these secondary subjects should be selected now: but the departments should do their best in supporting the main plan.

It was agreed, therefore, in connection with the second objection (see above) that "coordinability" being the first consideration, the eventuality of there being applications from good students who could not be accommodated must be accepted, if the fields of interest of such students should not accord well with the general programme.