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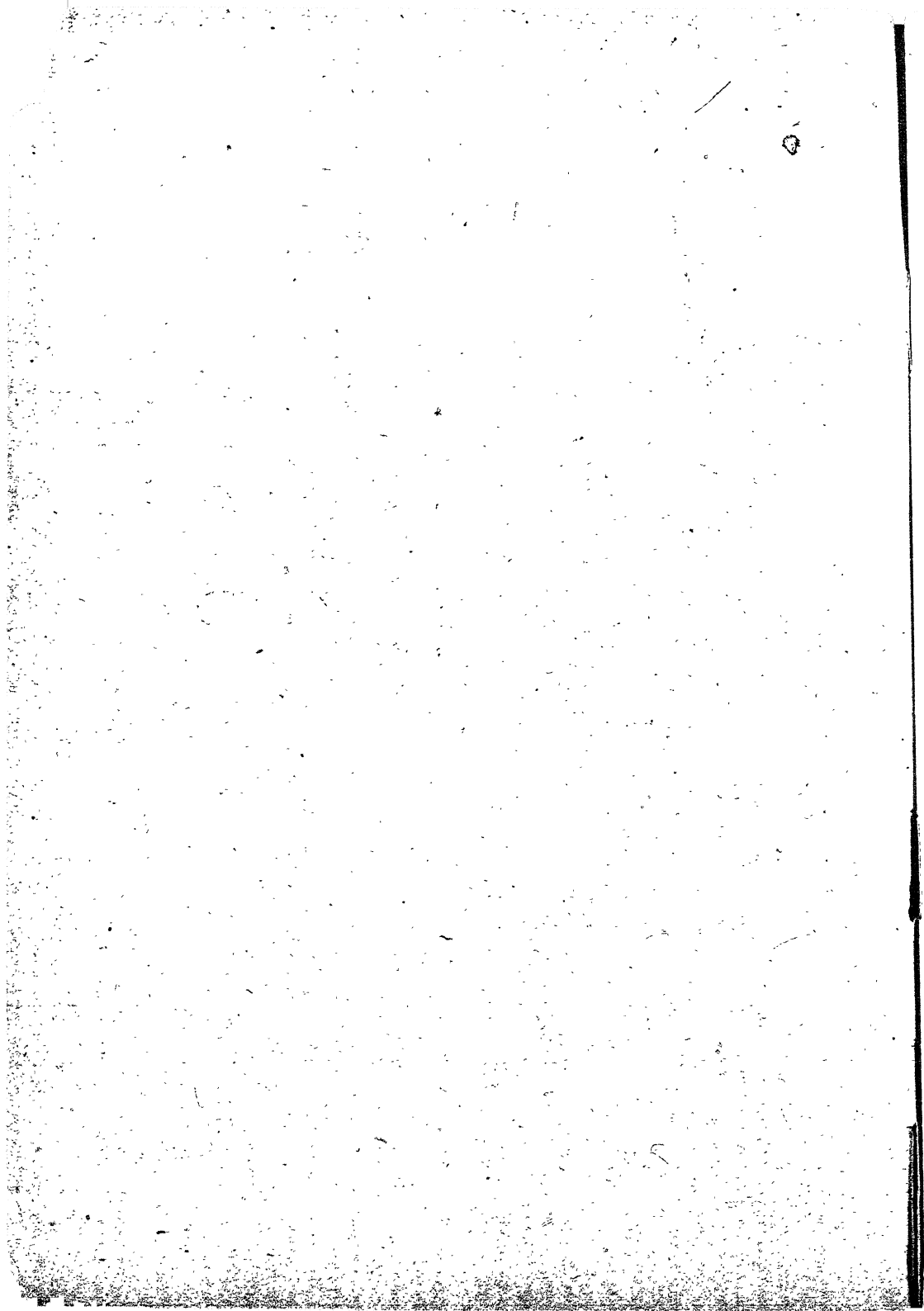
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THE PROBLEM
... OF THE ...
UNEMPLOYED

A Paper by HELEN R. Y. REID, B.A., read before the Montreal Local
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of Women

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THE PROBLEM
OF THE
UNEMPLOYED.

To Mr. Geoffrey Drage of the English Labour Commission I am indebted in great part for the classification and verbal treatment of the subject presented in the following paper; and to Mr. John A. Hobson, the eminent English Social Economist, is due the drafting of the scheme here suggested as a solution of the problem of the unemployed.

At the threshold of this subject, we come face to face with three or four radical questions. It is well to recognize these immediately, as by so doing we establish a certain classification which will better enable us to view the problem as a whole, and, at the same time, help us to grasp its minor details with greater clearness.... Who are the unemployed? Why are they unemployed? Do they require aid? If so, what is the best way of truly helping them?

CLASSIFICATION OF UNEMPLOYED.

Roughly speaking, two main classes of the unemployed can be distinguished:—Those with whom want of regular employment is merely temporary and those with whom it is permanent. Of those who are temporarily out of work, a large number are members of season trades, such as dock labourers; builders, painters, millhands, etc. Others may have been thrown out of regular employment by some temporary cause, such as a strike, which exercises directly or indirectly a wide-spread influence on other industries besides that in which it occurs. In either of these cases, although the exact length of the period of suspended work cannot be determined, these men have, throughout the slack time, a certain prospect of returning to regular work. With this class then, the only difficulty is tiding over the time till work be resumed.

Temporarily unemployed.

Others, however, with whom want of regular employment is merely temporary, have, besides an indeterminate period of waiting, no certain prospect of returning to their former employment. This happens when general depression of trade occurs and factories close down; it happens when an industry is removed from one place to another or when machinery is substituted for hand labour. An

employer, in such cases, can give no guarantee that the worker's services will be again required. The difficulty then, with this class consists not only in tiding over the slack period, but in preventing the good and efficient workman from deteriorating under casual employment so far as to be unfit for regular work, and thereby become liable to fall into the class of chronically unemployed. However, as regular employment has been with these the normal condition, they will very probably sooner or later find work in their own trade or some other.

Permanently unemployed.

**A
Casual or unskilled labourer.**

Of those who are permanently without regular employment we may distinguish two types, firstly:—The casual labourer, whose inefficiency together perhaps with mental, moral and physical unfitness for regular work prolongs a mode of life in which chronic want of employment is the main feature. Even in times of good trade we find a superabundance of men of this class. They represent the gradual accumulation of deposits from the various grades of regular workers dislodged from their former place in the course of agricultural and manufacturing disturbances, weakened by irregular town life and breeding weaklings and incapables. If the inefficiency be removable and removed the man has a chance of graduating from this dangerous class to the one above, in which regular employment is the rule of life; but in consequence of the conditions of his life, the value of the casual labourer's work tends to decline. Intermittent work breeds irregular habits, carelessness and a host of other evils and a sure and oftentimes swift degeneration from casually-employed to unemployable, unfit and superfluous follows.

**B
Unemployable.**

This lowest class consists of those who are permanently unemployed, because through some physical or moral defect they are economically worthless. They include all the vagrant class, the shiftless nomads of the lower strata of society, the tramps and paupers, vagabonds and rogues, all of whom live more or less by lying and begging. Each one of these represents a commercial deficit or dead loss to the community and in the mass constitutes one of the greatest social evils to present and future generations.

CAUSES OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

From this classification of the unemployed, many causes of this industrial malady will doubtless already have been suggested to your minds. Over and above all others in importance must be recognized the IMPERFECT ORGANIZATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM. "Why is it," asks Mr. Hobson, "that with a wheat-growing area so huge and so productive that in good years whole crops are left in the ground to rot, thousands of English and American labourers and Russian peasants cannot get enough to eat? Why is it that hundreds of cotton mills going all the time,

when a tramp has money he is called a sportsman - hunter adventurer.

thousands of people cannot get a decent shirt to their backs? With a growing glut of mines and miners, myriads of people are shivering for lack of coal?"

As long as present conditions hold, we shall find in every centre of civilized life a surplus of unemployed workers as we do of unemployed capital. Almost every branch of labour, industrial, commercial, professional, is overstocked—the supply of workers exceeds the demand. In East London alone, Mr. C. H. Booth estimates the superfluity of casual labourers at 100,000; in England at 317,000, not counting therein the lowest degrees of the population. "It may not be too much to say that if the whole of this class were swept out of existence, all the work they do could be done, together with their own work, by the men, women and children of the classes above them; that all they earn and spend might be earned and could very easily be spent by these classes who would be better off while no class nor any industry would suffer in the least." Has not society twisted the Divine plan into something unnatural and revolting, when by years of abuse of economic power such a large percentage of the population has arrived at such conditions!

The following picture drawn a few years ago by Mr. Frederic Harrison shows how far we yet fall short of the true meaning of moral growth:—

"To me at least it would be enough to condemn modern society as hardly an advance on slavery or serfdom, if the permanent condition of industry were to be that which we now behold; that ninety per cent of the actual producers of wealth have no home that they can call their own beyond the end of a week; have no bit of soil, or so much as a room that belongs to them; have nothing of value of any kind except as much as will go in a cart; have the precarious chance of weekly wages which barely suffice to keep them in health; are housed for the most part in places that no man thinks fit for his horse; are separated by so narrow a margin from destitution, that a month of bad trade, sickness or unexpected loss brings them face to face with hunger and pauperism."

SECONDARY CAUSES OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

Without losing sight then of this main cause of this economic problem, we may now direct our attention to some of the more evident, though less radical causes of unemployment. Besides the regular recurrence of periods of great industrial depression, we have worklessness due to strikes, to seasonal fluctuations, to winter slackness, to the substitution of machinery for hand-labour, to rural migration and to the introduction of cheap foreign labour.

Fluctuations in demand due to the effect of fashion, the effect of the removal of an industry from one district to another, the dependence of one trade on another and the dependence of trades upon events outside the sphere of industry altogether, although perhaps not permanently hurtful, result immediately in a local or temporary depression of trade and consequent unemployment.

Strikes.

Speaking generally a strike is not a cause but an effect of depressed trade and is preceded by a fall of prices in the goods with the production of which the trade is conducted. Overproduction, too great a supply, forces employers to lower prices which they can only render profitable by reduction of wages or by introducing new labour-saving machinery which diminishes the demand for labour. Strikes for higher wages or for some other improvement in the condition of workers together with sympathetic strikes, come under the head of voluntary unemployment, but all relate directly to the true cause, the *overproduction* and *under-consumption* in trade (the excess of supply over demand) and until this evil be removed, strikes of every sort must be expected in the workshops of the world and consequent irregularity of employment.

Seasonal trades and winter slackness.

Intermittent employment is in many trades due to *seasonal fluctuations* and so far seems to be hardly preventable. While fine weather is bad for the boot and shoe trade, it is good for all out-of-door work and keeps men employed in the various spheres of dock labour, building, river and road work as well as on the fields. In countries where the winter season is as long and continuous as our own, the effect on certain trades and work assumes more serious proportions. All out-of-door work is at a standstill for several months of the year. Builders, painters, stone-workers, wharf and field labourers are brought face to face with the problem of providing for themselves and their families out of scanty savings or of finding new work in a field already full of men better equipped and skilled in their work than they are themselves. When to this is added all the temptations to indolence, intemperance and vice to which the irregularity of employment exposes them, we cannot be greatly surprised at the large numbers of unfit that are added constantly to the pauper sediment at the bottom of society.

Effect of fashion and other causes

Certain industries again are dependent on supply of materials from abroad and must suffer from any event which affects that supply. Sudden fluctuations in the demand for labour are again often due to capricious changes in fashion and taste which might, to a large extent, be prevented. As the exact nature of the change cannot be foreseen, orders are liable to be withheld till the last moment and it is impossible to manufacture to stock as in the olden times. In this way irregularity in prices and employment in connection with articles of luxury and convenience, silks, ribbons etc., is increasing as the refinement and rapidity of fashion-changes obtains a hold over a large proportion of the consuming public.

Legislation against *alien immigration* has often been cited as a cure-all for unemployment. The constant infiltration of cheap foreign labour is in large measure responsible for the existence of the "sweating workshops" and the survival of low forms of industrial development which form a factor in the problem of poverty. As industrial competitors "these aliens are fettered by no standard of life; it rises and falls with their opportunities; they are not depressed by penury and not demoralized by gain." Consider what it means for the lowest class of home workers, doing ill-paid and irregular work, for wages which keep them on the verge of starvation, to have brought into their midst a number of competitors who can live more cheaply than they can live and who will consent to toil from morning to night for whatever they can get! Just as a base currency drives out a pure one, so does a low standard of life drive out a high one!

It has long been recognized by sociologists that the problem of unemployment includes among its many elements the great problem of *rural migration*. That factors, besides lack of work help to feed the constant stream of population which flows from city to town is of course admitted. The superior attractions, offered by the town in diversity, conditions and remuneration of employment as well as in social amenities, certainly account for no small portion of the rural exodus, but if those on the land had plenty to do and a decent return for doing it, the overgrowth of our towns would speedily receive a salutary check. In Switzerland rural migration is counteracted in some degree by a remarkable system of house industries, which, while in a measure a survival of a primitive form of production, still plays a most important part in the economic life of the nation. In the census of 1888 over 32,000 men and women or 73 per cent. of the total workers in the trade were engaged in their homes in watch and clock work. Over 27,000 worked in the same way at embroidery; over 37,000 at silk; 100 per cent. of wickerwork was being made in homes; 95 per cent. of wood-carving; 70 per cent. of musical instruments etc. The application of technical instruction to the house industries has been productive of immense good though doubtless their vitality owes much to the preference of the Swiss workman for his traditional work, to the difficulty of migration and to the strong attachment of the Swiss for their native soil and canton. The general emigration rate of 1.78 seems very favourable when compared with the rate for the United Kingdom which was, in 1893, (taking only British and Irish) nearly 6 per 1000. It is natural that a system, of industry so entirely outside the law, involving as it does drawbacks and blemishes in regard to conditions of labor and the employment of women and children, should be locked on with a certain degree of hostility. Then again, because of the lowness of wages earned and the consequent depression of wages in towns, the

Alien Immigration.

Rural Migration.

Swiss House Industries.

house-industrial system is not in favour with the urban working-classes. On the other hand there are compensating advantages in the greater freedom enjoyed by the workers and the maintenance of family life, and it seems unquestionable that such home industries as these hand-trades materially alleviate the problem of rural migration and consequently the problem of rural and city unemployment. These hand-trades when brought to a high state of excellence by Government, properly regulated with no middlemen or contract makers to crush down the worker under the iron heel of a sweating system would be a source of contentment to many who come now to the cities dissatisfied and out of work, who appeal for work at lower rates than the regular worker and thus displace good men while lowering the wages of all in the trade.

Having thus hastily summarized the many minor causes of unemployment and irregularity of work, I must once again draw your attention to the fundamental cause behind them all, viz., the imperfect organization of our industrial system which demands the existence of a considerable margin supply of labour, capital and land. Only when these three factors of production are in continuous, healthful and harmonious operation can distress from involuntary unemployment be regarded in the light of an evil permanently removed.

**True Cause
of Unem-
ployment.**

Noting this central fact of the unemployed problem, viz., the simultaneous general unemployment of labour, capital and land in periods of depressed trade, we see that economically this takes the shape of a general slackness or under use of the various factors of production. In order to produce we must have money or *Capital* with which to erect buildings, buy machinery and raw material; the men, women and children who combine with capital to produce, represent *Labour*. When people are out of work, when factories are closed down and machinery is not being used, there is an under-use of these factors of production, capital and labour. Now, if the demand for goods were regular, this under-use of labour and capital would not occur. The demand means not only the desire to own, to have, to consume, but it means the power to gratify the desire. Thousands of people wish to consume within legitimate and reasonable limits but are unable to do so from lack of this power. Others, not so numerous, have an excessive amount of power to consume but have not a correspondingly great desire. A market demand sufficiently great and constant to keep in employment all willing labour together with a more natural distribution of the power to consume among those who have the desire to consume, would seem to offer an effective mode of deliverance from this industrial trouble. Whether this policy should be adopted in the manner indicated by Hobson may be questioned by many, but his scheme demands attention in a paper of this kind. In order to increase the demand and raise the general standard of consumption, the tax-

**Hobson's
Solution
and
Remedy.**

ation is advocated of certain properties whose increasing values are due to public activity and effort, this being administered in the supply of common wants and the enrichment of the common life. Higher wages and a shorter working-day with economic co-operation on the part of the consumers, would also tend, according to Hobson, to a more even distribution of the power to consume, while, by use of the franchise, the working classes may secure such equality of education, and economic opportunities as will remove or abate the dangers of ignorance and destitution which at present bar the progress of the rear-guard of labour.

While no remedy but an economic one will be radical in affecting the mass of employment, we cannot afford to neglect the consideration of the numerous propositions which seek, by special measures, to cure or alleviate the malady of unemployment. These agencies we group in two ways :

1st. *Agencies* whose object is to *find work* for the unemployed, **Other Remedies.** such as Trades Unions and Friendly Societies, Labour Bureaux, Agencies for discharged seamen, soldiers and prisoners, newspapers, etc., and, in conjunction with these should be considered Travellers' Funds, Relief Stations, Out-of-Work Insurance, etc., etc.

2nd. *Agencies* whose object is to *make work*. Among these we have certain permanent agencies in England, labour colonies on the Continent, besides the home industries in Switzerland, together with certain temporary agencies which usually take the form of relief works established by Government because of exceptional distress and sudden dearth of employment. Such are the Mansion House Relief Works, National Works in Paris, Irish and Lancashire Relief Works.

AGENCIES TO FIND WORK.

Of the agencies to find work, first in importance come the Labour Bureau, Labour Exchange and Trades Unions. The two former are most valuable factors of industrial life on the Continent, not as markedly so in England and our own country, where **Trades Unions.** Trades Unions so adequately fill the need of bringing worker and work together and of providing statistics of the conditions of the labour market, both local and national. In England and America, municipal Labour Bureaux and registry offices exist as well as those under private control, but the great mass of workmen find employment through their Trades Unions and these seem to be most eminently qualified for the task of finding work ; firstly, because they have a thorough knowledge of their own trade and of the state of the labour market within it, and secondly, because they have not only strong financial incentive to find the unemployed member work, but they have power to see that he uses every effort to obtain employment under pain of censure or expulsion from the society.

When unions undertake to find their members work, the first step usually made is the payment of "*unemployed benefit*." Of course this benefit is dependent on certain conditions differing in different unions. All agree, however, that "the amount should not be fixed at a figure so high as to act as a temptation to members to prefer idleness on benefit to work and its obligations," and that the reason of discharge should be satisfactory to the union. The amount granted and the length of the period during which it is paid vary considerably. As a rule the payment is graduated on a descending scale. *Travelling benefit* is also paid by certain unions to members wishing to travel in search of work. Certain precautions are taken against imposture but the system has been criticised as one which fostered a roving spirit and tended to degrade the members. Many unions issue periodical reports as to the state of the trade and labour market in their locality. These details are sent to and from the central office, and men can thus be passed from congested districts to those where there is a demand for labour. The plan of equalizing work among all members of a trade is the chief system for providing for the unemployed in many unions. Strong unions are often able to impose *restrictions on overtime* and demand shorter hours and *rotation of gangs* for the purpose of spreading work over the greatest possible number of men.

**Labour
Bureaux.**

Although the Labour Bureau System may be regarded as continental in origin and character, instances of temporary and permanent registries can be named both in *England and America*. At present in England there are a few (10) permanent bureaux varying in character and conditions and on the whole experimental in point of operations. In *New Zealand and Australia* two hundred local agencies were established in 1891 "for the compilation of statistics concerning conditions of labour generally, the establishment of agencies reporting scarcity or overplus of workers in particular districts and the transfer of such workers from overcrowded localities to places needing labour." The system is most successful in New Zealand. On the whole it has not been satisfactory in Australia.

The work done on the continent by authorized labour Registries is very extensive. In France during the year 1891 out of a total of 2,495,079 applicants 459,459 were placed by the Registries in permanent and 361,991 in temporary situations. Free Municipal Labour agencies were established in Paris in 1886 and now are to be found in many parts of the country. A permanent shelter for workmen waiting to be hired was erected in Paris in 1875, and from this was developed, in 1883, an elaborate Labour exchange. The Paris Exchange was mother to that established in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1895, and their objects are similar in character, viz., "to bring the demand for and supply of work as speedily as possible together, to facilitate the meeting together of working people in a building of

**Labour
Exchange.**

their own for the discussion of their general interests, for collecting statistics for the purpose of demonstrating whether there be a disproportion between work and workers and conducting all researches necessary to acquainting working people and employees, generally, of both sexes, with outlets for their activities both at home and in other countries." Besides acting as a Labour Bureau, the Exchange gives advice and counsel free of charge in matters relating to apprenticeship, accidents, employers' liability, wage contracts, etc.

In order that Labour Bureaux may successfully operate, it is, of course, essential that they should possess alike the confidence of the workmen and of employers. Instances may be cited from almost every city of importance on this continent and in England, where, outside of private Labour Bureaux, these have arisen in connection with relief work and have remained on a semi-philanthropic or charitable footing. They have almost universally failed to draw or deserve the application of employers in search of the best available labour, and have failed to induce skilled and capable workers to have regular recourse to them as a means of getting good and remunerative employment. "An attempt to use the bureau as a means of disposing of the submerged tenth," says a Labour Bureau Manager, "is certain to be fatal to its success." Disconnection with relief work is then essential; no less so is the selection of applicants, the non-interference in trade disputes, and equally important is the character of the Bureau manager. Its success often depends principally upon this last consideration. Time forbids my doing more than drawing attention to the voluntary and obligatory out-of-work insurance in Switzerland; to the Scotch and English Agencies for finding work for discharged soldiers, sailors and prisoners, agencies for the last named being connected now with every gaol; to the working of the Salvation Army Prison-Gate Brigade; to the M. A. B. Y. S. for workhouse girls and to the Girls' Friendly Society; all of which belong to those agencies which try rather to find than to make work for the unemployed.

Other agencies for finding work.

AGENCIES TO MAKE WORK.

We must next consider those agencies which are permanent and whose object is to make work. In England, the Salvation Army have, with this object, established work-shops in London and a farm colony in Essex. The workshops at Whitechapel and Battersea are filled with unemployed men sent from the Salvation Army Labour Exchange; and no real selection is made on entering, though a certain test of work is made a condition of remaining. Besides bridging over temporary distress, the workshop is used as a sifting ground for the selection of men to draft on to the Farm-Colony in Essex where some industrial training, chiefly in connection with

Permanent Agencies to make work. Salvation Army. Farm and work-shops.

agriculture is given. Valuable educative and restorative work has doubtless been done, but results will be more clearly seen when the Over Sea Colony which the farm is designed to feed, shall have been put into operation.

**Church
Army
Labour
Homes.**

In the *Church Army Labour Homes* it is considered desirable to deal with the unemployed in numbers small enough to admit of personal influence, therefore 25 persons is made the maximum in each house. Every case is carefully investigated and only those who are capable of being helped are admitted. As work is carried on in co-operation with the Board of Guardians, the Charity Organization Society and other agencies, full information regarding each man is made possible and it is thus found easier to procure employment for them afterwards. Of the 654 who left the Homes during 1892, situations were found for 339. Two small attempts at farm colonies are being made at Langley, Essex and in Westmoreland, but as they have only been at work a short time criticism of their results would be unjust.

**Farm
Colonies
at Langley
and West-
moreland.**

**German
Colonies.**

The German System of dealing with the unemployed of which the Labour Colonies is the most important branch, comprises also Relief Stations for travelling workmen, workmen's lodging-houses (410) and Labour Bureaux. The first Labour Colony was found at *Wilhelmsdorf* in 1882 and since then some twenty-eight others have arisen throughout the country. The system is under the control of the German Labour Colony Central Board. All able-bodied single men are admitted to work without distinction of character, and the object is the permanent moral elevation of the colonists. The funds are derived from grants from the provincial Governments and municipalities and from charitable sources. Prolonged residence is discouraged, and no colonist is allowed to remain more than two years. With regard to the class of persons with whom the colonies deal, it is a significant fact that of the total number recorded, 76 per cent. were of the ex-criminal class and nearly one half the colonists return again and again for relief. However limited the effect of the colonies seems on the unemployed, it is evident that these institutions deal very ably with the problem of vagrancy and begging, the number of prosecutions for vagabondage having fallen from 23,093 in 1880 before the colonies were founded to 13,583, in 1890. They also meet the case of discharged prisoners for whom it is so difficult to find work. At the same time, owing to the cheapness of colonist labour, there is a tendency to decrease wages in the immediate neighbourhood of the colonies which is certainly an evil affecting legitimate business that cannot be overlooked. Then, competition in the market of goods is also a feature to be considered, and where industry is interfered with, as in the case of the town colonies where brushes, toys, furniture, etc., are made, this must be condemned. The reformation of the men is a result which is looked for but is rarely assured. Of those who

do not return, little trace is to be had, as the ex-colonist takes pains to hide the fact of his ever having been in a colony. The financial drain in all cases but one (that of the colony of Berlin) has been great, owing to the inefficient nature of colonist labour. With Mr. Drage we may conclude, from these facts, that colonies open to all tend to be occupied by discharged prisoners; also that many of those who frequent the colonies stand in need of permanent, not temporary help.

The Dutch Free Colonies, the first of which was founded in 1815, are worked in a somewhat different manner from that of the German Colonies, in that they provide a permanent house for the colonists and recognize the family. In Holland, the adult colonist is regarded as a hopeless case and attention is concentrated on the education of the children. No stress is laid on the religious element, and the colonies, again unlike those in Germany, deal with the impotent, as well as the able-bodied poor. The success of the Dutch Colonies does not, however, afford much encouragement. Several objections may be justly raised—the first is the greatness of the cost in proportion to the number benefited. Each family costs the Society of Beneficence about \$115 per annum, and only a few new families are admitted each year. These come mostly from the towns, and being ignorant of agricultural labour, which is the chief occupation, they do very poor work in spite of the training given. For good work, good colonists are needed and these do not come. Because of the family basis of the system there seems to be a danger of breeding a permanent race of paupers, and this is a serious objection.

Several penal colonies for convicted beggars and loafers exist in Belgium (2) and Holland (2) under State management where some thousands of men are engaged in agricultural work under a kind of military discipline. These organizations stand for education and reform, but the system, from all accounts, would seem to be almost wholly punitive. A labour colony of selected men is in existence about five miles from Paris at *La Chalmelle* under official control. No ex-convicts are allowed. The type of man is, in consequence, altogether better than that found in Germany; 106 men have been received since its foundation in 1892, of whom 36 have been placed in permanent situations. *Switzerland* possesses two institutions of the kind of which the older, the *Tannenhof Arbeiterheim* is the more important—they have aims, methods and results somewhat similar to those of the German Labour Colonies.

It would appear, then, that if a labour colony system is to be adopted, one system of colonies should be established for the discharged prisoners, the vagrant and the loafer on the open or free principle, and another for the worthy unemployed on the principle of selection or investigation. "The classes will not mix; to admit one is to exclude the other."

**Temporary
Agencies to
make work.
England
in 1892.**

Coming to the last division of our agencies for helping the unemployed, we now must consider briefly some recent examples of temporary provision of work. In England, during the year 1892, the trade depression succeeding a period of prosperity, was so marked, that steps were taken to cope with the distress which was surely at hand.

Organizations arose to deal especially with out-of-work cases, but in most instances, these concerned themselves rather with relief in money and kind than with the provision of work. A circular was issued, however, by the Local Government Board recommending Local Authorities and Boards of Guardians in England and Wales to open relief works during the winter months, it being considered "not desirable that the working classes should be familiarized with Poor Law relief." The Board considered that what was required was firstly, "work which would not involve the stigma of pauperism; secondly, work which all can perform; thirdly, work which does not compete with that of other labourers at present employed; and lastly, work which is not likely to interfere with the resumption of regular employment in their own trades by those who seek it" Applicants were to be recommended by the Boards of Guardians, and wages were to be something less than ordinary wages for similar work. In response to the circular, 96 local works were started with methods varying as regards wages, hours, recommendations, etc. The work provided was generally road-sweeping, snow-clearing and scavenging, demolition of old buildings and levelling ground for parks, etc. On the whole, the results were inadequate, and this was due, among other causes, to the lack of investigation into cases and to the lack of co-operation with existing relief agencies, both of which precautions had been enjoined upon local authorities by the Central Board. Several of the London Board Guardians declined altogether to carry out the suggestions of the Local Government Board on the plea that "provision of work for the unemployed would be foreign to their duties as administrators of the Poor Law," and "that such provision would have the effect of impressing the working classes with the idea that the State had set itself the task of guaranteeing employment, whenever the labour market was slack, for all men who might be out of work from whatever cause." They maintained that the necessary funds for providing work should be contributed from charitable sources. This coincides with the report from Birmingham which "falls back on the principle that municipalities exist for certain limited public functions. The local government of a town as respects its lighting, watching and public works has no necessary connection with the relief of distress. It is the duty of the municipality to carry out its proper municipal functions in the most effective and economical manner, and, with this object, to

employ the most able and competent workmen. The claim that every man out of work shall be found work by some one else cannot be recognized."

In Scotland, relief works were opened at Dundee, Greenock, Aberdeen, Patrick and Glasgow. The greatest care in selecting applicants was exercised at Glasgow where the most extensive scheme was carried on at stone-breaking, trenching and digging in the parks. Although a registry was opened, and answers were confirmed by the Charity Organization, it was found "that a large number of the men employed were those whose distress was the result of habits which would produce poverty and suffering in any case." In view of the loss incurred on the works, the mode of payment was changed from time to piece work with the result of an abrupt falling-off in the number at work. 1,251 of the 2,801 registered, were at this time temporarily supplied with work at a cost of £1,710 to the city.

In the same year, 1892, the *Mansion House Conference* originated a scheme to provide work for certain unemployed married men, under sixty-five years of age, living within a specified radius. The Lord Mayor raised a fund and started the selected men at digging on the Abbey Mills waste land, making this a test for permanent help. Only 224, out of 716 applicants performed this work, the decrease in numbers being due to the sifting process and to the refusal of some men to work. Of these, 129 proved unhelpable in a permanent way. The rest obtained work of different kinds through the Committee or by their own efforts; a few being assured work, money, clothes, trade-society fees or tools, and some being sent to Canada. Subsequent investigation, as far as reported, shows that these men are doing well.

Relief works have been established in Ireland, three times in twelve years, owing to the failure of the potato crop. At one time, 15,529 were at work on the 161-road-departments. Dissatisfaction with the men and work was freely expressed at each period of relief work.

The success of all these schemes has not been great from obvious reasons. Offers of work without discrimination attract many whose disease is not lack of work, and who are really chronic loafers. Relief work which demands irregular and not continuous attendance is also liable to attract these men, for they are not unwilling to work for a few days at a time, and so take advantage of any system of shifts or successive relays of men, which may be established on the ground that it gives them a chance to look for regular work during the rest of the week. Success or failure of the works themselves, would seem, however, to depend very largely on supervision and administration; more careful discipline than usual is required, and yet there is often, in practice, a tendency to

laxity of management. Whether the establishment of Voluntary Relief Works be advisable or not, we may at least conclude with Mr. Drage that by whomsoever established, they should be conducted on certain hard and fast lines. It is important that such relief be administered in connection with a central labour bureau, by means of which as far as possible the supply of labour in the several districts may be adjusted to the demand. Although national in application, the works should be conducted locally, in order not to attract men from other districts and lead to a permanent surplus of unemployed in any one district. Careful discrimination as to temporary or permanent unemployment should be made, only those of the former class being helped, and these being forced, on pain of dismissal, to earn the wages they receive. Besides the strict supervision which would be necessary, it must be recognized by the men that they cannot depend permanently on relief works. To ensure this, employment could be offered for a short time only.

**Historical
Examples.**

**National
Works in
Paris, 1848.**

We cannot refer to the provision of work for the unemployed without thinking of two historical examples, each famous in its way,—the first in point of time and importance, being the National Works in Paris. The violent and sudden crisis of the Revolution of February, 1848, naturally disturbed the course of industry in Paris. A commercial panic ensued, in the course of which large numbers of work people were thrown out of work. The provisional Government, to meet this question, passed a decree "that the Provisional Government of the French Republic undertakes to guarantee the existence of the workmen by work. It undertakes to guarantee work for every citizen." Work on Government buildings was immediately resumed and men were admitted by hundreds and thousands to the buildings. When 6,000 were at work there remained no vacancies, so, instead of distributing relief in kind, each of the unemployed was given 1.50 fr. a day. The numbers claiming work or relief increased, and a semi-military reorganization of the works became necessary, the men being divided into companies of 900, and these being again sub-divided into squads and divisions. The decree was passed in February, and in May the total number enrolled in the registry of unemployed had reached 87,942. The National Assembly, through an executive committee, decided to reduce the works, "without prejudice, however, to the sacred principle of the guarantee of work." Unmarried men were invited to enlist in the Republican Army, and if they refused, they were struck off the brigade-roll of the National Works. Masters were allowed to requisition such numbers of workmen as they declared necessary for the resumption or continuance of their works, and those who refused were struck off the roll. All others were to be paid by piece and not by time. The attempt to carry these changes into practice on the 22nd June, resulted in the bloody insurrection of the 23rd June and the following days.

The other historical example which I would quote is the establishment of relief works in *Lancashire*, England, during the cotton famine of 1863, due to the war between the Northern and Southern States. This work is said to have been thoroughly satisfactory; £1,200,000 was used by the various societies in distressed districts, to enable them to execute works of public utility and sanitary improvement. Only factory-unemployed were taken on, and one element responsible in great part for the success of the enterprise, was that the work was necessary and useful, the sanitary conditions of most of the boroughs being in a wretched condition.

**Lancashire
Relief
Works 1863.**

Certain agencies such as the Poor Law and Charity Organization Society, deal incidentally with want of employment, their mission being, on the part of the former, to relieve destitution from whatever cause, and of the latter, to "centralize information and localize responsibility," the Charity Organization being a source of intercommunication with all other charitable associations. The English Poor Law, however, provides relief for unemployed men willing to go to the workhouse or willing to work outdoors under the inspection and supervision of the Board of Guardians. Only in exceptional cases is relief given or found by the Charity Organization. It is held that the "best cure for a man who has lost a job is to find another," and that "the search for work is usually most effectively carried on by the person most interested in its success." In exceptional cases, however, aid is given in the way of payment of Trade Union arrears, taking tools out of pawn, medical assistance and emigration. Too much stress cannot be laid on the right and judicious administration of charity. With regard to the unemployed, a loose system of administration is a powerful instrument for evil, and is often the means of maintaining and increasing pauperism. In this connection the work of the Charity Organization is of the first importance, as it affords the most effective way, by means of its system of case-investigation, of providing against imposture and overlapping of work. Whoever gives charity undertakes a definite responsibility, one which is perhaps not always realized. All charity should be of the kind that will be of permanent value to the recipient, and no one by false charity has the right to injure the person he thinks we will help. To make sure he does not, no stone should be left unturned to obtain all necessary information in regard to the applicant, on consideration of which it will be decided what is the most effective way to act. What a help it would be to us all had we such institutions as the Charity Organization, to which we might turn for just such confirmation and advice when engaged in charitable work!

**Other
Agencies.
Poor Law
and Charity
Organization.**

It has often been stated that no radical improvement in industrial organization, no work of social reconstruction, can be of any real avail, unless it is preceded by such moral and intellectual improvement in the condition of the mass of workers as shall render the new machinery effective. Is it not clear, however, that little moral or intellectual education can be effectively brought to bear upon the mass of human beings, whose whole energies are necessarily absorbed by the effort to secure the means of bare physical support.

It should be the care of all reformers to remember that, together with the all-important moral and mental growth, there should be a simultaneous development in the material conditions of the life of the poor. Too much stress cannot be laid on the good that may be accomplished by personal friendship with those who need "not alms but a friend." There is no more precious gift than the giving of one's self. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that besides the inculcation of habits of cleanliness, thrift, industry and steadiness, besides moral, intellectual and religious teaching, the poor require better food and more of it, warmer clothes, better and surer shelter, and greater security of permanent employment on decent wages.

**Technical
Education.**

All efforts therefore in the way of model workmen's dwellings, public baths and wash-houses, progressive factory legislation, better wages and a just taxation should be stimulated and encouraged. In this connection we may also mention the beneficial effect of technical education. In no place has this been more strongly realized than in Switzerland, the little country which long ago earned the right to be regarded as the laboratory of political experiments for Europe. The methods pursued by the Swiss Government have been those of a Mater Benigna protecting and encouraging trade and industry. They have taken various forms, i.e., the liberal subsidizing of technical schools of all kinds, the foundation of commercial museums and travelling sample collections, active solicitude for the home industries of which we have spoken, and the promotion of periodical exhibits of native products of the industrial arts, affording opportunities to Swiss industry to justify itself both to the country and to the world. When we realize that in the decade from 1884-94, ninety-one institutions, industrial schools and museums, artisans' schools, etc., received from the Federal Government over £145,000 in grants and that in 1895 two hundred and eleven similar institutions took advantage of this Federal aid, we may perhaps consider it worth our country's while to follow the commercial movements of energetic Switzerland.

In the States the demand for more technical education and manual and industrial training is growing more and more urgent. In Massachusetts, trade schools have been established under the

auspices of the State, the State making an appropriation of \$25,000 to every town that appropriates a like sum for the establishment of a school in the interests of the textile manufactures of the town. Other States are following the example of Massachusetts with the result that many town children pass from the public schools, after they have received a sound elementary training and enter these trade schools in order to become experts in special lines of manufacture. The establishment of such schools should receive the support of all friends of the poor and of all students of the problems of poverty, not only because of the consequent benefit and stimulus to trade and industry, but because teaching people how to help themselves is of far greater good to the individuals and to the community than making them recipients of charity-work through wood-yards, sewing-societies and the like.

The work of the various university and school settlements will always have an important bearing on the conditions of the poor. By the dissemination of knowledge, by lectures, classes, etc., and the substitution of wholesome recreation for the streets or the public house, much may be done to raise the standard of the worker; and by encouraging a healthy public opinion among those who can affect the regulation of labor, either as employers or consumers, the problem of poverty and lack of work may be effectively attacked.

At all times and under all circumstances, we are each one individually able and responsible for a certain amount of good work among the poor, and among those whose opportunities, are by the conditions of their life, few and limited in nature. We should use every means of making this work the best of its kind, and by so doing help others less fortunate than ourselves towards the realization of what William Morris calls, in socialistic strain, the claims of a decent life; "firstly, a healthy body; secondly, an active mind in sympathy with the past, the present and the future; thirdly, occupation fit for a healthy body and an active mind; and fourthly, a beautiful world to live in." "Hopeful work and fearless rest," these he calls: "man's greatest earthly blessings." "To have space and freedom to gain these is the end of politics; to learn how best to employ them is the end of education; to learn their inmost meaning is the end of religion."

HOW INDIVIDUALS MAY HELP.

Let every member of our Council read carefully during the coming year, one, at least, of the books in the appended list with a view to becoming better informed and better fitted to cope with the many phases of the social problem with which we are daily brought in contact. Let her then lend the book to a friend.

Let every member resolve henceforth to give no doles at the door or on the street, but to find, by proper investigation, the right channels for her charity, which, when misplaced, becomes a means of propagating pauperism and fraud.

Let every member see that she has on her visiting list of *friends*, the name of one poor family at least, to whom her visits are constant and welcome and in whom she maintains an ever-active and loving interest.

Let every member resolve "by her own forethought, by her own self-control, and by her own self-denial, if necessary," to prevent as far as lies in her power, all irregularity of trade due to sudden and frequent changes of fashion. Let her prevent as far as lies in her power, irregularity of service in shops, such service often being extended to long and late hours for several days in the week to satisfy the demands of a thoughtless public.

Let every member "lend a hand" as well as a voice to all schemes for providing the working people and their children with better dwellings, healthy recreation, public play grounds, public baths and wash-houses, shorter hours and better wages; and by so doing help fulfil the law of love and service which shall one day rule the world.

The following list of books may be of assistance to members of Councils and to Councils who intend to make a study of one or any of the problems of social life :—

Problem of the Unemployed, J. A. Hobson, Methuen & Co., 36 Essex street, London, W.C.

The Unemployed, Geoffrey Drage, MacMillan & Co., London.

Report on Unemployed, English Board of Trade, 1893.

Report of the Statistics of Labour, Massachusetts, 1893.

Problems of Poverty, J. A. Hobson.

The Problem of the Poor, Helen Campbell, Roberts Bros., Boston.

Charity Organization, C. S. Loch, Secretary to London C. O. Society.

American Charities, A. G. Warner, Crowell & Co., New York.

Dependents, Defectives, Delinquents, Henderson, D. C. Heath & Co., Boston.

Women's Work, Lady Dilke, Amy Bulley, and Margaret Whitley, Methuen & Co., London.

Women Wage Earners, Helen Campbell, Roberts Bros., Boston.

Municipalities at work, Frederick Dolman, Methuen & Co., London.

The Housing of the Working-Classes, F. Bowmaker, Methuen & Co., London.

Luxury, Emile de Laveleye, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London.

Mutual Thrift, Rev. J. Frome Wilkinson, M.A., Methuen & Co., London.

The Working-Class movement in America, Dr. E. & E. Marx Aveling Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London.

The Co-operative movement, Beatrice Porter, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London.

Trade Unionism, G. Howell, M.P., Methuen & Co., London.

The Rural Exodus, P. Anderson Graham, Methuen & Co., London.

The Alien Invasion, W. H. Wilkins, B. A., Methuen & Co., London.

NOTE

It is encouraging to note the growing interest which Canadian women are taking in the social problems affecting society abroad and at home. The numerous Local Councils of the Dominion are, as it were, distributing centres for this interest, and in the serious attention given by them to the consideration of the problem treated in the preceding pages, we recognize a growing sense of local and personal responsibility which augures well for the future. Gratifying reports have been received from Montreal, Kingston and Ottawa. In **Ottawa**, the last-named city, a Charity Organization has been actively at work since 1895 and has alleviated the distress of the City poor and unemployed in a truly encouraging manner. At the same time much overlapping of work and exposure to fraud and imposture, together with a great part of the responsibility of investigation has been removed from the various charitable agencies between which the Board of Associated Charities acts as a centre of intercommunication. The difficulties encountered are those familiar to all large centres, viz., the flow of the country to the town and consequent swelling the ranks of the needy poor, and the lack of employment especially in winter, with the suffering and many evils to which worklessness gives rise both physically and morally. To meet these evils various measures have been taken. An employment list has been kept. Garden plots have been worked and in winter, fuel has been distributed by the city on the recommendation of the Associated Charities. It is suggested that supplementary house industries, worked during the slack winter period, would do something towards alleviating the distress of the poor. A system of insurance against worklessness or towards a Food and Fuel fund is also recommended. Stress is laid by both Kingston and Ottawa on the necessity for more technical training and for the further development of the science and practice of agriculture.

In Kingston, the Poor Relief Committee has fulfilled a part of the **Kingston** functions of a Charity Organization. The Committee works in co-operation and correspondence with the other benevolent institutions

of the city. Among other useful branches, it maintains an employment bureau and Industrial department for women. An effort made by the Kingston Council to promote a public scheme for supplying work to the unemployed by means of a permanent tax on the rate-payers, did not meet with success. It is of interest to note that a system of Savings Bank or Insurance, similar to that suggested by Ottawa, has been successfully conducted for some years in Kingston by an affiliated society of the Local Council. This takes the form of a Food and Fuel Club for which small sums have been taken during the summer months from the wives of the workingmen.

Elsewhere.

In Vancouver and Victoria, the Councils have done excellent work in forming organizations similar to boards of Associated Charities. In Montreal such a scheme is shortly to be realized. It is hoped that the coming year will see the birth of many of these admirable organizations throughout the Dominion.

