

105. The matter has not been put before the different trades-unions for the purpose of considering it as a practical matter?—No, it has not.

106. *The Acting-Chairman.*] I understand you to say that you do not consider that national insurance against unemployment could be carried out in New Zealand?—Yes.

107. The reason you give is that this country is not developed?—Yes; I think the conditions of employment are so different here that it would be impossible to ascertain the number of men who would have to be provided for either with work or with insurance-money.

108. I think you suggested that it was owing to the fact that the country was practically undeveloped, and there would be so many difficulties to overcome?—Yes.

109. Would the proportion of unemployed to employed decrease or increase as the country is developed?—That I think could be answered in two ways; but, speaking generally, I should say unemployment would increase with the development of the country.

110. Does not that seem to imply that the more work you find the less people you are going to find to do it?—In proportion I suppose it follows that as the country is developed we will have larger immigration into New Zealand. In thickly populated countries they have a larger proportion of unemployed than sparsely populated countries have.

111. Let us take the present time: is the proportion of unemployed to employed less or greater in New Zealand than it is in England?—I have not made actual inquiries, but I should certainly say it is less.

112. *Hon. Mr. Sinclair.*] The weather would be a factor in the Mother-country?—Yes.

113. *The Acting-Chairman.*] Assuming it is so, the conditions are more favourable for a scheme of unemployment here than in England?—In theory it might be, but I should not imagine so in practice. In the first place I do not think it is necessary—that is, unemployment insurance. What we ought to do is to try as far as possible to do away with unemployment—so arrange things as to reduce unemployment by doing away with intermittent and casual employment, and I have submitted one or two proposals in that direction.

114. You suggest dealing with the causes that give rise to unemployment in preference to dealing with the after-effects?—Yes.

115. *Mr. Anderson.*] How would you propose dealing with the causes rather than the effects?—I have suggested that the first step that should be taken is this: that we should get into touch with the schools—that is to say, arrange with the Education Department to furnish our local agents with the names and certain particulars of boys as they leave the schools. The officer would then communicate with the parents and try if possible to arrange that they be given employment in skilled trades. The local officer would also report to the head office on his endeavour to steer the boys into skilled trades in preference to unskilled trades. It seems to me that there is too large a proportion of boys in New Zealand going into unskilled occupations; or, even if they go into skilled trades, they leave them and gradually drift into unskilled occupations. In some cases boys do not learn their trades properly. We would have some definite data as to the extent to which this drifting into unskilled occupations has been going on. We would also be able to find out to what extent employers are teaching the boys their trades. In this connection I made some investigations into the systems in vogue in Switzerland and in different parts of Germany where they deal with that difficulty. They establish trade boards, consisting of employers' and workers' representatives. The boards see that the terms of employment are being carried out, and that the apprentices are being taught their trades. Then they have continuation schools established by the State. The boys are thus equipped for their callings. I would like to see such a system established here. I believe one step in this direction has already been taken in the Wanganui district—that is, in respect to continuation classes. It seems to me that it ought to be the duty of the State to see that every boy and every girl is properly equipped to take his or her part in the work of life and follow a particular calling. By doing as I have suggested I think we would be able to start such a system and then develop it.

116. If I understand you rightly your scheme deals more particularly with the skilled trades?—My scheme is suggested with the view of doing away with or minimizing unskilled occupations.

117. There must be men to do unskilled work?—Yes.

118. What provision would you make for them: would you select them or let them drift into that occupation?—There would almost certainly be a number of men who would drift under any circumstances.

119. You were dealing specially with the cause of unemployment: you attack that trouble at its root?—Yes, and it seems to me that to attack the root we must get hold of the boy as he is leaving the school.

120. A man may be out of work, and there is no means under the present conditions of civilization to keep him in work: you do not seem to be able to enlighten the Committee so as to obviate that—to keep him in work?—I suggest the system of getting the boys as they leave school and steering the larger proportion of them into skilled instead of unskilled trades. I think that will prevent unemployment, which is due to the casual nature of the work. It would also be necessary for the State to provide workers with sections within a reasonable distance of the towns where they could put in their spare time. We are doing that at the present time to some extent in the country.

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ISAAC SALEK examined. (No. 7.)

1. *The Acting-Chairman.*] What is your occupation, Mr. Salek?—I am district secretary, Wanganui district, Odd Fellows, Manchester Unity. I am also on the board of directors which governs the affairs of the Manchester Unity in the Dominion. I am also a trustee of the branch.