

leaving the matter to the good will or to the intermittent attention of anybody. The Committee was unanimous that "the Government must provide out of the Consolidated Fund such sums as are necessary to cope with the situation." From the Consolidated Fund, because every one in the Dominion contributes to that fund on a certain basis. The workers contribute through the Customs taxes; and the employers and those people who are not, strictly speaking, employers—the people in receipt of incomes not derived directly from industry, but from investments—also contribute to the Consolidated Fund through the income-tax, and so on. The problem is a national one, affecting not only the industrial life of the community, if the latter is allowed to deteriorate, but the moral life also of society and the nation generally. It is a national question and should be dealt with on a national basis, and any relief of the present immediate situation ought therefore to come from the prime national source of revenue. We considered that the statistical information at our disposal was not what was required to enable the committee to deal with the question on a permanent basis, and, as the data are now collated in a very haphazard fashion, no special attention is given to the question of unemployment from the statistical point of view. We therefore recommend that the Government's Statistical Department should forthwith concentrate upon the collection and compilation of the figures, and of accurate data, in this connection; and particularly with respect to the causes and the volume of periodical and seasonal unemployment. New Zealand is mainly, and will be for a long time probably, a primary producing country, and in connection with the primary industries of this country—probably of all countries—a large amount of seasonal labour is engaged, and it is therefore necessary if we are to have any permanent grappling with the problem, that we should have the whole sources of information fully explored from the statistical point of view, to enable those who have to deal with it to obtain true data to form their judgment on and make their decisions accordingly. Of course, there is the possibility of organizing the Department of Labour for the minimizing of the effect of the seasonal conditions by regularizing the employment throughout the year. There is in every way the need for making provision to obtain the fullest information as to the magnitude and incidence of unemployment. Then material has to be obtained as to the most suitable form of productive work under State control that can absorb from time to time the labour temporarily not required in industry. In speaking of the dislocation of a large volume of labour from time to time through seasonal occupations, the question arises as to how it can best be utilized productively throughout the year. And I wish to emphasise that word "productively," because there was no question in the mind of the committee—there can be no question in the mind of any one who thinks over the question seriously—that the solution of this aspect of the problem is to be found in the economical employment of this surplus labour. The present position is wasteful economically, but it is very much more wasteful morally, because the most valuable property the nation has unquestionably is the moral fibre of its workers. If that deteriorates, then the country is eventually doomed; and therefore before anything else we must endeavour to concentrate our temporarily unemployed workers upon productive works. With that end in view, the committee recommends the Government to appoint immediately a committee of three, consisting of a Government representative and one representative each of employers and workers, to make the necessary investigation into the question. The Government representative presumably would be one in touch with labour, and there would also be one representative each from the employers and the workers. You will notice that the workers' side of the committee thought the number should be increased to two from each side. It was thought that one man from each side would be able to form a clear judgment, and able to exhibit a conscientious vision as to the problems involved; but, on the other hand, it was felt that the problem is a different one as it presents itself from the point of view of the country workers as compared with the position of the town workers, and that was the main cause of the addendum put forward in the committee by the workers' representatives, and embodied in the report, as follows: "That the committee referred to in clause 4 should consist of five members instead of three (one Government representative and two each of employers and workers)." Of course, that is not a part of the unanimous recommendation of the committee, but it is the addendum. I will briefly summarize the functions of the proposed committee of investigation: To receive from the statistical officers appointed to carry out the investigation the material collected, and to analyse the same, and study the problem; and to frame such measures as far as they are able that will cope with the problem; then from the general statistical material, where they find it necessary, to conduct special inquiries as to the incidence and causation of unemployment in the various industries, in order that special attention may be given to the location, or the consequences, of the problem, which could not be effectively done by the officers whose first function would be to collect the data. A further provision is that the committee should co-operate with private employers, Government Departments, and local authorities in an endeavour to provide avenues of employment and to regulate the demand for labour in connection with temporary measures taken by the Government. The effect of that provision will appeal to every one here. Another function of the committee would be to co-operate with the Immigration Department with regard to the employment of immigrants in industry. If you have a body temporarily charged with the conduct of dealing with unemployment its members would make a recommendation to all persons whose activities would affect the position, and the Immigration Department is one of the bodies which the committee is unanimously of the opinion has some responsibility in regard to the unemployment problem in this country. There will be a recommendation in that connection to come before the Conference later on. A further function of the proposed committee would be to regularly furnish detailed information as to the trend of employment, so that the material would be at the disposal of the employers, and workers seeking employment would know where work was available, and if they wished to go to it they would have the information at their command. There are various ways in which this committee can work to minimize the question of unemployment, and also to ease off the great uncertainty the workers have as to employment at certain times, and also of relieving the strain that is often hanging over their heads of providing for the daily necessities of their dependants. I have no hesitation, but the greatest pleasure, in moving that the report be adopted.