

situation day in and day out find idle hands knocking at the door asking for employment or relief, and I am very glad to see this recommendation to the Government to take money from the Consolidated Fund to cope with this distress. I am also pleased to note that the suggestion made by Mr. Morton in regard to the education of our young people for farming pursuits has been endorsed by Mr. Semple. I believe it is a very good suggestion, and that, if put into operation, it will bring the young men of this country into closer touch with an avenue of employment which will give work not only to themselves, but also to many others in handling the goods they will produce on the land. I am glad to see the statistical side of the question referred to. I myself have been up against the difficulty of not being able to ascertain the facts and judge the position. We shall, I trust, be in a better position in the future to know the facts and to size up the situation. I am glad to see that agreement has been reached so far.

*Mr. Finn:* Sir, I have very much pleasure in supporting the resolution now before us. I think it is very generally agreed that to have men out of work is an economic loss, and an evil that should not exist in a country like New Zealand. Unemployment retards progress and undermines the foundations of the civilization we are trying to build up. I think, however, that the report adequately provides for all that is necessary. A committee is asked for, and that committee will have the power of investigating the problem and of arriving at conclusions which it would not be possible for this Conference to reach. New Zealand is an agricultural and pastoral country, and it is to the land that we must look for the revenue that is necessary to meet our obligations. We must also look to the land to provide work for those who are in need of it. We have in New Zealand exceptional climatic conditions which enable this country to overcome many of its difficulties, such as distance from markets and the higher standard of living we enjoy as compared with the countries with which we compete. It must be conceded that with the small population we have—less than a million workers—our production is really remarkable. But I am of opinion, nevertheless, that we are at present only scratching the surface, and that when we commence in real earnest to undertake the intensive development of the country what we then produce will surprise most of us. It has been stated in the report—and, I think, quite rightly—that there is unlimited scope for employment on the land. There is one other point which I think we should refer to, and that is this: that, with the heavy interest charge we have to meet, we cannot afford to be content with our present production if it is possible for us to produce more than we are producing at the present time. If by accelerating production we can, say, pay off our national debt eight years sooner than it would otherwise be possible for us to do it, that means a saving of something like £100,000,000 to this country. That is surely a very strong reason, even if a stronger reason did not already exist, why a vigorous and concerted effort should be made to provide work for every one requiring it, and in so doing help to increase the production of the country.

*Mr. Revell:* I should like at this stage to express my appreciation, almost gratitude, to the Committee for having embarked on some scheme for the alleviation of the man who is thrown out of work. In the industry with which I am particularly concerned—the freezing industry—an army of about seven thousand men is required to kill and prepare for export the 9,000,000-odd carcasses that left New Zealand for the United Kingdom last year. These men are required as soon as the farmer wants them. As soon as the fat stock is ready for the market he needs that army at his disposal, and the men have to be gleaned from somewhere, and they are gleaned from the ranks of the casual employees. And when the season is completed—and the season is only about twenty-seven weeks of the year—for some of them, a large majority in fact, it is only about thirteen or fourteen weeks—those men are thrown out of work again. During the season they are required to be at the beck and call of the producers, or of the freezing companies, to do the work as the stuff comes forward. It may be of interest to you to know that the slaughtermen are regarded in some directions as men who earn almost fabulous wealth in wages—almost an amount that would place them in the position of having to pay income-tax, if it were only true. Now, the slaughterman who kills the first sheep in the season and continues in his job until the last sheep is killed averages a weekly earning in the industry for the twenty-seven weeks of £5 6s. 2½d. That is what he earns during that period; and he is the highest-paid man in the industry. The average wages for a man who is working as a labourer in the slaughterhouse, as an assistant or in usual way of timework, is about £3 12s. 6d. per week for the twenty-seven weeks he is employed. He goes into the industry at the beginning of the season hard-up. If he is a man who stands well in his town he will have a great heap of bills piled up looking at him that he has to pick up, and he finishes the season, after rendering a national service, as hard-up as when he started. He has to keep this evil spectre of unemployment in front of him for fully five months before the season opens up again. Now, during that period he is entitled to some form of relief. He prefers work, and, I would say, in his own interests and in the interests of his family he ought to be given work instead of being asked to take anything in the shape of a charitable dole. The workers have indicated from this side that we are prepared to pay so much out of the miserable wage we receive for the purpose of tiding over that unemployed period. We are not thinking of not working, as we are an army of seven-thousand men who are urgently wanted at that particular time of the killing season for the purpose of rendering a national service. We are expected to do the job quickly, and we do it, because there is a certain number of sheep or carcasses to be sent out of the country, and usually the works are all shut down by the middle of June. There is no wonder, therefore, that these men at times become a little impatient with their surroundings and have a dust-up with the boss. That cannot be helped; but at the same time they kill those nine-million sheep, and have them ready for export within twenty-seven weeks of the year; so that they must do a little bit of work sometime or another. A proposal for unemployment insurance should have received more sympathetic attention from the other side than it has; but, however, I am grateful that we have started by recognizing that it is a national duty to the men who perform