

national service that they should be catered for in some direction or another. All the great national reforms in this country have had to start in a small way. Mr. Seddon did not get all his own way in the old-age pensions. The Hon. John McKenzie did not get all his own way when he embarked on the land-for-settlement policy. And so we hope that this is the genesis of the movement by which the man who renders a national service for a specific purpose, and becomes an expert in a particular line, should not have the spectre of five months of starvation facing him, as is the case at the present time.

*Mr. Black :* I want to offer a suggestion at this stage of the debate. We have had a great deal of discussion on this matter, and I do not think much more is required. The suggestion I have to make is that in the selection of information for the Statistical Department there is really no definite scheme laid down, and when the secretary of a union sends in his returns he only sends in the approximate figures, which are very often very unsatisfactory indeed. I think that the registration of the unemployed should be compulsory, and in that way we should get the correct information for the Department that would be helpful to them and also to the others that have to administer this question.

*Mr. Roberts :* Regarding Professor Murphy's suggestion that the professors were not voting on this question, and that naturally they would not be responsible for the report, I think I voice the opinion of the Conference that, as a matter of fact, we should all be pleased to hear an expression of opinion from Professor Murphy on our labours. Possibly he does not think the report is of sufficient value or importance to express an opinion on, for or against the matter ; but I think the committee expects from the professors either condemnation or approval of anything they have done. I can assure Professor Murphy that any criticism will be welcomed, and will not be viewed other than in a friendly light ; in fact, his arguments would help us.

*The Chairman :* I have ruled that the professors have the right to address the Conference like any other delegates, but they cannot vote.

*Professor Murphy :* I am only concerned to deal with matters that come within my own capacity, and I find that if I enter into controversy at times it is very often afterwards turned up against me. I wanted to save myself from this attention, which goes on to the Conference records. I do not want to be faced later on with this position : that "you apparently endorsed such-and-such a view at the National Industrial Conference." That is all I wish to do.

*Mr. J. Fisher :* I wish to record my appreciation of the work of this committee. I do not propose to take up the time of the Conference at any length, but I think we are apt to lose sight of the fact that very often we are close at home approached as nearly to the objects we have in view as we are likely to do from far afield. Most of the speakers on the other side have been very much concerned as to the necessity of instituting unemployment insurance. I think it is a subject upon which there can be quite a wide divergence of opinion ; but I would like to say this : that I believe we have in our own legislation probably the most beneficent proposals or provisions that exist in any country, and that is under the National Provident Fund. That was an Act brought in, I believe, by the Liberal party, and has been enlarged and liberalized by the Reform party, and is of such a nature as to warrant the complete endorsement of the most advanced Labour party. Now, under the provisions of that Act there are full and adequate facilities for providing for old age, mutually contributed to by the State, by the employer, and by the worker. It not only makes every provision for a man when he becomes unable to work, but it also provides an allowance for maternity trouble, and also, in the event of the death of the party covered, for his children up to the age of fourteen years. Now, sir, I believe that under that legislation it would be possible, with a very slight extension, or with some alteration, to make the legislation that we have in this country cover all the requirements that the gentlemen opposite are so anxious to obtain, and which also, I believe, the members on this side are equally anxious to endorse should be brought about, even if we look at it from a different angle to what they do. I believe that it will be worthy of the closest investigation of the proposed committee to just see whether we have not now in our possession the machinery ready to hand upon which an unemployment-insurance fund could be built without any very great cost, and without the necessity of adopting plans that are in existence in other countries ; because I take it that in all those countries which have made this provision for unemployment the schemes still exist as they do with us, and that we are as capable of solving our own difficulties as they have proved to be in solving theirs. I commend to this Conference the desirability of very sympathetically and very seriously investigating the possibilities of the National Provident Fund as a probable solution of unemployment insurance.

*Hon. Mr. Weston :* Mr. Chairman, I rose to say that on this side of the Conference we are all fully sensed of our responsibilities towards the man who, through bad luck or through economic exigencies, is out of employment. I quite agree with the remark of one of the delegates on the other side, that there is no worse fate for a man able and willing to work than to find himself with no avenues of employment. That is always accentuated when there are others dependent upon him. At the same time, when you are dealing with a problem, there is nothing like arriving at the exact facts before you decide upon the remedy ; and in dealing with this side of the problem I would like to accentuate this point : that exaggeration does harm not only to the unemployed, but also to the reputation of this Conference. I have gone into some figures, and I feel sure that when speaking on this question many men, through sympathy or through anxiety to grapple with the problem, have really exaggerated the position. If you take out the population of New Zealand, and the number of adult workers in proportion to that population, and then take the number of unemployed—and I have taken the very outside number fixed by delegates on the other side, namely, 10,000—you will find that in the population of New Zealand, which roughly may be regarded as 1,450,000, you have 435,000 male and female workers, and the number of unemployed, at an outside figure, is 10,000, which represents one person unemployed to every 43·5 workers. Now, if we take the United States of America, with a population of 120,000,000, we may take it roughly that seven-twenty-fourths of that