WILEY

The Report of the Central Unemployed Body for London

Author(s): R. H. Tawney

Source: *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 72 (Dec., 1908), pp. 645-647

Published by: Wiley on behalf of the Royal Economic Society

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2220651>

Accessed: 26-06-2016 04:41 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Wiley, Royal Economic Society are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to
The Economic Journal

The report contains much other valuable information which space will not allow of discussion. Over-crowding, cleanliness of the home, occupations of the parents, are subjects which have received careful examination; the results are summarised in elaborate tables. As an investigation into the problem of the necessitous child, the report is unique of its kind, and merits a more careful study than is usually given to municipal publications.

R. A. BRAY

The Report of the Central Unemployed Body for London.

THE Report of the Central Unemployed Body for London upon its work from May, 1906, to June 30th, 1907, contains a good deal of valuable information as to the classes of unemployed workmen who apply for relief in the metropolis, and some material for estimating the efficacy of the machinery created by the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905. The main facts of the Central Body's activity during the period under review are as follows:—

(1) The total number of persons who registered their names was 27,570, of whom 1,415 were women, and 26,155 were men, as against a total of 36,488 registering in 1905-6 (p. 92). The figures from Battersea, which made no returns, are not included in these totals.

(2) The Central Body offered work "to over 4,500 unemployed applicants" (p. 21).

(3) The work offered consisted (a) of that organised in London and the neighbourhood by the Works Committee, and was "principally general groundwork, levelling, returfing, cleaning out ponds and river beds" (p. 31). The rate of wages paid was 6*d.* an hour. The hours were 42½ per week. The total cost of these works appears to have been between £18,000 and £19,000, a proportion of which was repaid to the C.U.B. by the London County Council and by H.M. Office of Works (p. 111).

(b) Of that organised by the Working Colonies Committee, which established "colonies" at Hollesley Bay, Rea Island, Garden City, and Fambridge. The men were employed continuously for successive periods of a month, returning to London at the end of each month for two days to visit their families and look for work. They received board and lodging at the colonies, and allowances of 6*d.* a week, which allowances, based on the size of the family, but in no case exceeding 17*s.* 6*d.*, were paid to their families in London. Hollesley Bay was intended

to be "a training colony," *i.e.*, a permanent institution through which successive relays of colonists passed with the hope of preparing them for agricultural work in England or in the Colonies. The other three colonies were temporary settlements formed to execute particular pieces of work (p. 32).

(4) It emigrated 5,415 persons at a cost (for emigration and transference to other places in England) of £38,613 (pp. 127-8).

(5) It opened twenty-five Labour Exchanges. The number of persons registered by these was 74,238. The number of persons for whom work was found was 12,529. These figures do not, however, represent the real significance of the exchanges, as only eight were open in August, 1906, and the full twenty-five were not established till January, 1907.

(6) It spent in all £194,441 19s. 6d., of which sum £69,281 came from the rates, £50,899 from the Exchequer, £40,046 from voluntary contributions, and £34,213 from loans.

What is of permanent value in the large activities thus indicated? Three salient facts seem to emerge. The first is that little permanent good is effected by the relief works which were opened. It is possible that when (if ever) casual employment is reduced to a minimum and when (if ever) compulsory detention colonies are established for the confirmed vagrant and idler, relief works may be of use in tiding over a period of annual distress men who are generally in regular work. But at present distress committees are swamped with applications from persons who are always on the verge of distress, and who cannot be helped by temporary relief works, because they have no permanent employment to which to return when relief is over. Discrimination is so difficult as to be almost impossible. Thus Poplar reports: "Owing to the large number of casual workers who made application for relief work or emigration, it was impossible to carry out to the letter the instructions C.B., October 19th, 1906" (an instruction as to strict classification). The following table (p. 18) is suggestive:—

Total applicants to 22 committees, 1905-6	31,534
Reapplied to same committee, 1906-7 ...	7,160
Being ...	22·7 per cent.
Applicants assisted, 1905-6 ...	6,392
Reapplied to same committee, 1906-7 ...	2,720
Being ...	42·6 per cent.

Secondly, general labourers form the majority of applicants, and their distress represents a permanent over-supply in London

of that class of labour. Out of 3,501 men, 2,269 are classified as "Locomotion, Transport and General Labour" (p. 27). Thirdly, and as a corollary of this fact, what seems to be needed is (a) an extension of the system of Labour Exchanges, to give place-mobility; (b) the prevention by compulsory continuation schools of the manufacture of unemployable youths; such schools would give adaptability and steadiness of character, and would cut off the stream of unqualified lads who at present pour into the already overstocked unskilled Labour Market. It should be noted that 67·7 per cent. of the applicants were under forty-four, *i.e.*, in the prime of life, while 40·7 per cent. were under thirty-four, *i.e.*, young men. Until the causes of *chronic* distress are handled, the relief of *occasional* and *intermittent* distress is almost impossible.

R. H. TAWNEY

Report of the Committee on Indian Railway Finance and Administration. (C^d 4111.)

IN May, 1907, the Secretary of State for India appointed a Departmental Committee to inquire and report:—“(1) Whether the amounts allotted in recent years for railway construction and equipment in India are sufficient for the needs of the country and for the development of its trade; and if not, then: (2) What additional amounts may properly and advantageously be raised for this purpose; (3) Within what limits of time and by what methods they should be raised; (4) Towards what objects they should be applied; and (5) Whether the system under which the Railway Board now works is satisfactory, or is capable of improvement; and to make recommendations.”

The history of railway development in India has been as follows:—From 1850 to 1870 construction was undertaken by companies under guarantees from Government; from 1870 to 1880 the Government resorted to construction by direct State agency; from 1880 to the present day both of these methods have been employed, but the guarantees given to companies have been of a less generous character. Roughly speaking, India now possesses 30,000 miles of railway, representing a capital expenditure of £300,000,000. The net earnings represent a return of 5 per cent. on the capital. Of the 30,000 miles of railway the Government of India is financially responsible for about four-fifths. During the last few years, owing to the activity of trade, the equipment of the lines has been unequal to the requirements of the traffic. Hence the present inquiry.

x x 2