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SEASONAL UNEMPLOYMENT

A THESIS

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PREFACE.

As a man walking thru a thicket, taken suddenly unawares, begins striking here and there in hopes of landing an effective blow, so we in dealing with unemployment have been beating the air trusting that in some way, somehow, relief would come. This thesis has been written with the belief that the unemployment problem, far from being a conglomerate, falls logically under several distinct heads, of which seasonal unemployment is one, and the aim has been to show the extent to which it enters into the situation, and to point out the remedies which naturally follow. Climatic variations in different countries affect the extent of seasonal fluctuations in industry which cause seasonal unemployment, and hence this study has been confined largely to the United States where the problem is our own problem, and the effects, maximum.

The paucity of statistics bearing particular-

ly upon the subject in hand has been a barrier in the way of anything like a complete study. In the last federal census, statistics of unemployment were taken, but these, with the exception of manufactories and mining, have not as yet been made available, so that the data herein presented as touching the whole country are exceedingly narrow.

Inasmuch as any attention at all to the subject of unemployment is of comparatively recent date, the source material is more or less limited in scope and general in nature. With the exception of a few standard works and a few close studies of single trades and localities, and the data of labor bureaus, state and national, the large bulk of the material, mainly magazine and newspaper articles, has been of little aid other than suggestive. It is the hope that this thesis which in the writing has been a source of interest and pleasure thruout may serve some useful end in so needful a field.

I

INTRODUCTORY.

The problem of unemployment is the great out-of-work problem. Its importance is readily patent when one considers the large concern it is constantly giving to city, state and nation. The fact that there is a problem at all has had to battle itself into the consciousness of the general public. Long used to the individualistic, laissez faire theory in our economic life, we have slipped along into another epoch,^a ushered in by all the modern phases of machinery, division of labor and large-scale production, without being aware of the vital changes it has entailed thruout our whole industrial system. All industry now, in a larger measure than ever before, presents a united front. Collectivism is already with us. From one end of the country to the other, industry is being woven and knitted together as in a vast tapestry. Easily within the span of a

a. Charles Nagel, The Unemployment Problem in America, American Labor Legislation Review, February, 1912, p. 92.

life-time, from a country with frontier conditions at every hand, the "nation has become one market".^b Under such a system, if the nation at large, and the strong and favorably situated, leave out of account any consideration of those less favorably circumstanced, it requires no stretch of the imagination to understand the why and the wherefore of the ever enlarging army of the unemployed.^b The time is far past when society can shift the responsibility by disclaiming any part in it. How antiquated is the observation, in this day and age, that "any one who wants work can find it".^c Says J. H. Hollander, "It has not been easy for society to realize that poverty is not of necessity the result of mental weakness, or moral lapse of the individual; that thrift, chastity, and even religious faith do not secure relief from galling want; and that modern industrialism has intensified ~~re~~liability of the wage-earner to sink into economic need thru no fault of his own." ^d

There is a tendency, it seems, on the part of a great many of the modern writers on unemployment to treat the subject narrowly.^e Overlooking entirely the matter of

- a. Hon. Victor Murdock of Kansas, Speech in the House of Representatives, Washington, D. C., May 1st, 1914.
- b. J. A. Hobson, The Problem of the Unemployed, p. 44.
- c. H. R. Seager, Social Insurance, p. 85; Josiah Strong, Social Progress, A Year Book, 1914, p. 95-96; C. R. Henderson, Insurance Against Unemployment, American Legislation Review, V.3, June, 1913, p. 173.
- d. Abolition of Poverty, p. 44.
- e. A. C. Pigou, Unemployment, Ch. 2.

the idle rich, they eliminate as beyond any consideration that large number who, from a variety of causes, seem either unable or unwilling to work, and proceed, then, to a discussion of various plans of relief for the class termed "involuntarily" idle. While it may always be desirable to attack a problem, as large and complex as is this one of unemployment, by parts, concentrating at the most favorable point, it should be done under consciousness of the situation in its entirety, that the aim may be in the direction of total and absolute solution. The trite saying that "no one is so easy to help as he who is willing to help himself" applies with especial force when considering the unemployed, but in a matter of as growing vital importance to the nation as this one is, there is a demand for those looking for a "man's work" not a "soft snap". While the "involuntarily idle" class may appeal to public sentiment as most deserving of consideration, no one will deny for a moment, that the class that have deteriorated, become discouraged, and lost all heart thru enforced idleness of repeated and long duration, and who as a result do not want work are as

sorely in need of aid, as are those who have just started in that direction. When, therefore, we maintain that we are dealing with the "men who want work", and are "not concerned with loafers in society, either at the top or at the bottom",^a let us do so with the understanding that we are dealing with but a fragment of the question. "One cannot solve a problem by reading out of the problem one of the most difficult and complicated factors."^b Let us understand that at bottom these various classes are but parts of one and the same vast, far-reaching, economic problem. Furthermore, let us understand that as soon as we begin to single out and deal with any class irrespective of other and related classes, we introduce still further complications. In many cases, whether a man belongs to one or another of these classes depends upon what moment he is taken. "It is true that these classes merge into one another. Not seldom characteristics of all classes of the unemployed are found somewhat mixed in the same person. There are men according to their moods, employable, unemployable, vagrant."^c The steps from the willing worker to the unwilling are often

a. Hon. Victor Murdock, Speech, loc. cit.

b. Wm. D. P. Bliss, (Editor) The New Encyclopedia of Social Reform, 1908, p. 1243.

c. Literary Digest, V. 47, p. 1067, Quoting Dr. Josiah Strong.

found to be "at first irregularly, then frequently, and then chronically, and then entirely unemployed".^a No clear line of demarcation exists between these various idle classes.^b All are out of work. All should work. Dealing with this class and with that class, may result in temporary relief, but relief it remains to the end, the result of which has been and will ever continue to be an aggravation of the whole situation. The crying need is that we deal constructively rather than remedially with the whole subject.

No fact is more persistent in our economic life than that consumption must be preceded by production. In the course of conquest and settlement, as soon as any good becomes scarce, i. e. ceases to be a free good, the matter of its production for the further supplying of human wants becomes important. Production entails labor and sacrifice. It follows then, since all are consumers, that if any number are idle from any cause whatsoever, an extra burden is laid upon the remainder. In the words of one of the older economists, "a non-producing consumer is a weight upon society". Thus society may be said to be affected in two

a. E. T. Devine, *Misery and Its Causes*, p. 125.

b. C. R. Henderson, *loc. cit.*, p. 179.

ways. In the first place, it must contribute directly to the support of its idle; must as a part of its never-ending daily routine in some way or other provide for their wants. In the second place, society must sustain the loss in production entailed by these wasted days, and months, and years. Almost overwhelming are any estimates of the total time lost to the productive industries of the nation thru unemployment. I. M. Rubinow says, "an approximate estimate would indicate that during one year (1899-1900) over 1,900,000 years of productive labor were lost."^a

But however great the effect upon the nation industrially and economically, the effect from the social standpoint^b can scarcely be over-estimated. As W. H. Beveridge says, "the problem of unemployment lies in a very special sense at the root of most other social problems."^c In the words of a recent writer, "uncertain and insufficient wages, juvenile delinquency, crime, and prostitution- this is the array of evils that are breaking up our homes, and the parent of them all is unemployment."

Of more immediate consequences still are the

- a. Journal of Political Economy, V. 21, p. 318.
- b. Jane Addams, Solving the Problem of the Unemployed, Ladies Home Journal, V. 30, September, 1913, p. 23.
- c. Unemployment, p. 12.

effects of unemployment upon the unemployed themselves. In a large measure they form a class whose hands are entirely empty of the good things of life; for with the loss of work comes loss of independence, and loss of friends, and loss of home, and loss of hope. In this twentieth century when the chances of success have become so unequal; when the nation strides along utterly oblivious of the fact that a large number of its citizens must be protected in the possession of work, we witness the deterioration of both the individual and the state.^a

a. W. W. Bruere, Harpers, V. 124, Anchoring the Home, p. 922.

II

SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN INDUSTRY.

In any consideration of unemployment however at variance opinions may be as to underlying causes, there can be little exception taken to the view that these causes, whatever they may be on the whole, act largely as disturbances in the demand for labor, rather than in the supply which remains fairly constant.^a No more common phenomenon exists in the world of business than the varying call of different activities upon the labor force. According to the trade, now this call is greater, now less, while at the same time the labor supply remains about the same. May not this fact serve us as an aid in determining, first, as to where to begin the attack upon the problem, and second, as to how to begin it. It would seem that any plan which aims primarily at the solution of this problem by centering atten-

a. I. M. Rubinow, loc. cit., p. 325.

tion upon this or that particular class of the unemployed with the idea of readjustment in view, is putting the cart before the horse. In facing this "predominate social question of the day"^a, nothing other than entire neglect can be more inadequate than to approach it with mere measures of relief. The very ones so aided return again and again as soon as previous effects of relief have worn away. It may be quite in keeping with our inclinations to approach this situation in a desultory manner, but sooner or later we shall be compelled to arouse ourselves to the fact that unemployment "represents not a want to be satisfied, but a disease to be eradicated".^b

Inquiry into the causes of fluctuations in the demand for labor usually takes into consideration the following: (1) Cyclical or long period fluctuations,^c or those due to the periodic ebb and flow of industry resulting in the characteristic "hard times" and "good times". (2) Seasonal or short period fluctuations,^d or those resulting either directly or indirectly from a change in climatic conditions due to the various seasons of the year.

a. Sidney Webb, *Seasonal Trades*, p. 17.

b. W. H. Beveridge, *op. cit.*, Preface.

c. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The Prevention of Destitution*, p. 111.

d. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

These "seasonal fluctuations may arise from the annual succession of seed time and harvest, or of winter and summer, or they may be dependent on such social arrangements as the dictates of fashion, terms and vacations, city gaities and seaside holidays."^a And (3) casual fluctuations^b, or those fluctuations following as the result of the transitory nature of the work. A casual worker is one who does odd jobs never settling down to permanent work. These causes are fundamental and hence any changes resulting in a smoothing out of the fluctuations will carry with them a certain finality so sorely lacking in our usual efforts.

Of these three causes of fluctuations in the demand for labor, and hence by so much causes of unemployment, probably that of seasonal fluctuations is the most peculiarly characteristic of the situation, and the most susceptible of treatment. In substantiation of this position, let us look to the following considerations: in the first place the class closest to this whole matter is the wage-earning class who receive only a living wage at best. Economically their resistance is slight, and, if for any reason

a. Ibid., p. 124.

b. Ibid., p. 127.

their wage is cut off, they soon begin to be in want. Now in the case of cyclical fluctuations which act over a period of years, we have results therefrom which are slow in accruing. The break in industry is not as a rule so abrupt as to turn laborers out wholesale. "Cyclical fluctuations mean for practical purposes the gradual and barely perceptible worsening, thru three or four years, of conditions of life which are always bad and their equally gradual and imperceptible return in the next three or four years, to being not worse than usual."^a Laborers thrown out of employment as a result of cyclical fluctuations either seek other employment of a more or less permanent nature, or they enter the ranks of the seasonal or casual worker. They do not weather the whole period of cyclical depression. On the other hand, the casual worker, intermittently unemployed, uses his vacant periods which at worst extend only over weeks or days or even hours, in looking up other jobs, in the meantime rather basking in the freedom befallen him. The idle period is generally too short to bring upon the casual worker that dire pinch of necessity so characteristic of the

a. W. H. Beveridge, op. cit., p. 190.

chronically unemployed. As such, he is subjected rather to the attendant poverty of under-employment, than to the destitution and want of unemployment. With seasonal fluctuations, however, acting over a term of months, the period, while long enough to cause dire need, is still not of sufficient length to compel a complete readjustment of the labor affected. In other words, the circumstances connected with seasonal unemployment seem to be such as to hold within their grasp all the evils of unemployment. In the second place, seasonal unemployment is in a large measure winter unemployment.^a We are not likely to appreciate all that this means. Added to the fact that the workman is out of his wage, we must also remember that it is during this season that the three primary needs of food, shelter, and clothing are greatest. It is the aggravated wants of the winter season's unemployed that bring society face to face with this problem of the jobless man. Indeed, were it not for the urgent cry of want that goes up from the thousands unfed and unsheltered from winter's cold, is there any likelihood that society would even yet concern itself much with

a. I. M. Rubinow, loc. cit., p. 320.

this matter? In the third place, a good deal of work that is casual is subject to much seasonal fluctuation, and as a result is as much seasonal as casual. There is a scarcity of odd jobs in the winter season as compared with the summer season. Spring brings its quota of house-cleaning, painting, and repair work, while autumn is attended by work preparatory for winter. If added to these facts, we consider that of all these fluctuations, the seasonal is the most regular, that it is as certain to occur as are the seasons to come around, and, furthermore, that the amount of seasonal unemployment at any given time, say for this year, will closely approximate that of the same time last year,^a we have some facts, definite in their nature, and vital to the problem, which assist greatly in dealing with the situation.

Were it not for the fact that such scanty headway had been made in dealing with this problem of unemployment, one might be surprised that the seasonal characteristics have received so little consideration. When we reflect that not only does the work in many trades suffer an entire

a. I. M. Rubinow, loc. cit., p. 320; Bulletin of Department of Labor, New York, No. 54, March, 1913, V. 15, p. 7.

cessation due to the succession of the seasons, but that nearly all business shows the effects to a greater or less degree, we cannot but conclude that the evils resulting therefrom are anything but negligible.^a Quoting from J.S. Poyntz, "It is probable that the results of seasonal fluctuations in industry occupy a more important place with relation to general questions of unemployment and distress than has generally been assigned to them. Not only do seasonal trades often employ casual labor in large quantities to fill the demands of the busy season, but the irregularity of habits and demoralization of character which result from unemployment lasting over even a small part of the year are largely contributory to that mental diathesis which unfits the worker for any but casual labor."^b It is true that the nature of the climate of a particular country may have its modifying effects. While the climate in some countries may present such an evenness as to result in very little change, here in our own country we experience four pretty well defined seasons influenced very slightly on the whole by trade-winds and ocean currents. Here we have hot

a. T. S. Adams and Helen L. Sumner, *Labor Problems*, p. 163.

b. From Sidney Webb, *Seasonal Trades*, p. 52.

summers, and cold winters; a comparatively long spring-time when it is neither winter nor summer, and an equally long autumn when it is neither summer nor winter. We have all the fluctuations in business activities possible, due to change of seasons.

While the data in regard to the extent of unemployment in general is very inadequate, that concerning the change of seasons is especially so. Mr. Beveridge, in consulting certain trade union statistics, seems to have arrived at the conclusion that seasonal fluctuations are of somewhat minor importance - a mere "surface movement".^a The fact of the matter is that this might hold true for England, and still not be true in like measure for some other country. In considering the climate of England as well as the organized condition of her industry, as compared with that of the United States, one can readily see how great variations between these countries might obtain concerning these facts. Still, even in England, statistics of the Building Trade industry - an industry, by the way, made up of some thirty subdivisions or branches several of which form separate "Trades"

a. Op. cit., p. 32.

for 1906 give as the unemployment due to seasonal fluctuation a mean of 15% on the average periodically unemployed. Out of approximately 1,000,000 wage-earners in the Building Trade, from 80,000 to 220,000, i.e. from 8% to 22%, are annually unemployed. The percentage is greatest in December and January, while in May and again in August it has practically vanished.^a It would certainly seem that conditions of unemployment such as these are of major importance. Indeed, the Webbs maintain that while seasonal fluctuations of business prevail to some extent in almost all trades "in some they amount to devastating tidal waves".^b In our own country, in the state of Oregon where climatic conditions resemble somewhat those of England, we find much the same conditions prevailing. Taking the manufacturing industries there, we find that January is the slackest month of the year and September the busiest, and the predominating cause of the variations is the change of seasons.^c The statistics of unemployment show 24.6% for January while that of September is nil.^d In an investigation covering 20 unions made in Chicago statistics show that the average workman em-

a. Sidney Webb, op. cit., p. 339.

b. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, op. cit., p. 229.

c. Frank O'Hara, Unemployment in Oregon, p. 11.

d. Ibid, p. 14.

ployed therein loses about three months of his trade during the year. This means in other words an annual unemployment of 25%.^a When we reflect that unemployment strikes the unskilled workman hardest, and that the percentage of skilled workmen in unions is much greater than that of labor as a whole, these figures for industry in general cannot be considered otherwise than conservative.^b Perhaps as significant a fact as any concerning seasonal fluctuations in industry is their almost utter lack of synchronism. While a large majority of the industries of any size employ their minimum number of workmen during the winter months, thereby emphasizing the cold weather aspect of seasonal unemployment, the time when this slackness begins or ends, varies greatly. Moreover, taking industry altogether, there is not a single month in the year that does not rank as one of the best months for some one or more occupations. It is interesting to note in this connection how different activities may be paired as showing those in which seasonal fluctuations exhibit diametrically opposite effects. As illustrative of this, let us take the case of paper-hangers and

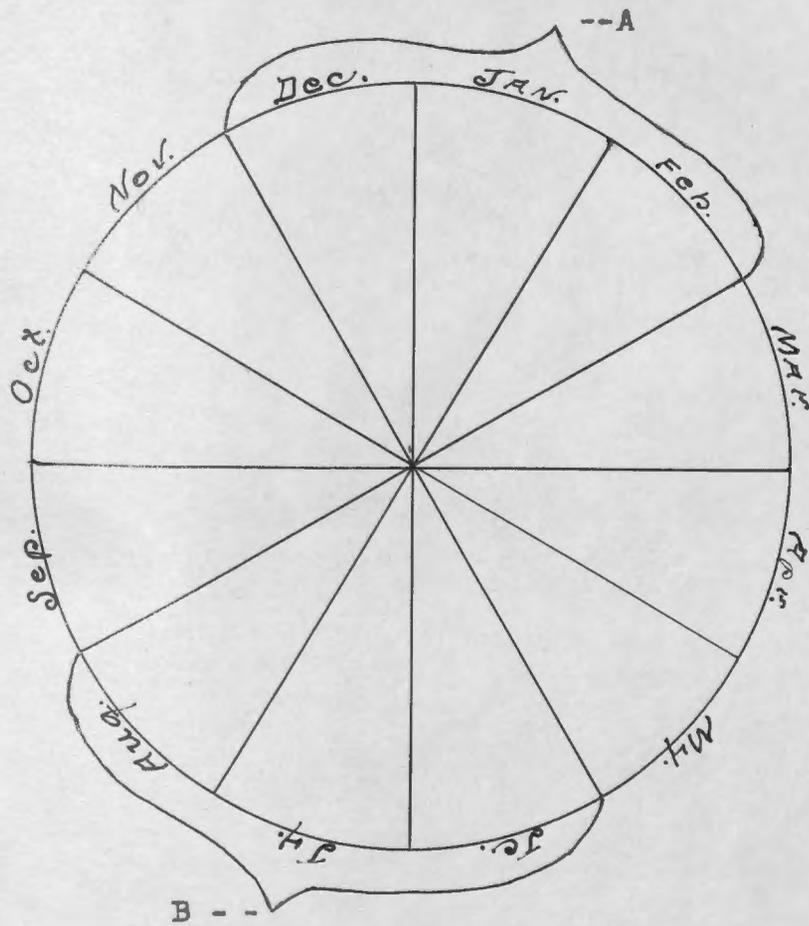
- a. Report of the Mayor's Commission on Unemployment, Chicago, March, 1914, p. 46.
- b. N. B. Dearle, Problems of Unemployment in the London Building Trades, 1908, p. 81.

steam fitters.^a While the paper-hangers find business good during the greater part of the year, thru the three months of December, January, and February, there is practically nothing to do, and they must during this time either seek other employment, or lie idle. With the steam fitters on the other hand, we find that while their season of work corresponds closely in length to that of the paper-hangers, their slack slack months are the summer months of June, July, and August. The relationship here in point may be graphically shown by use of Chart I. In this connection nothing is better illustrative of the reciprocal nature of certain occupations than curves plotted from the total number employed during each month of the year. In Chart II we have such curves from the returns to the English Board of Trades for gasworkers and brickmakers. The figures are for the year 1906 and while they do not represent the total number of workers, they are taken, nevertheless, upon a "thoroughly representative basis".^b The data for the curves in Chart III for the laborers in the logging operations and lumber mills, are taken from the federal census for Minnesota for 1910.

a. Luke Grant, Seasonal Occupations in the Building Trades, Annals of the American Academy, V. 33, p. 354.

b. Sidney Webb, pp. cit., p. 163.

Chart I.

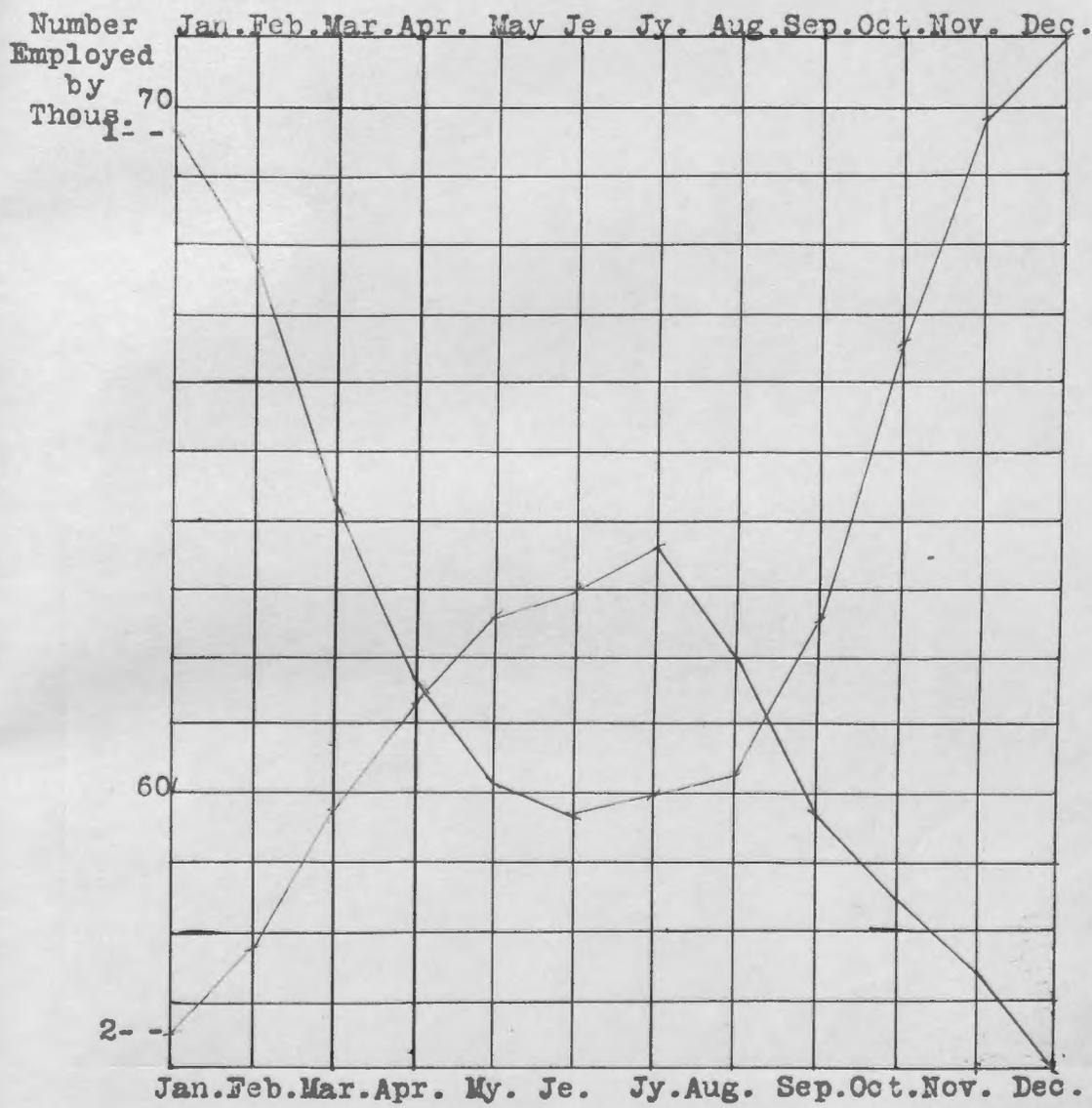


A. Dull Season for Paperhangers.

B. Dull Season for Steam Fitters.

Chart II.^a

Curves of Seasonal Fluctuations.

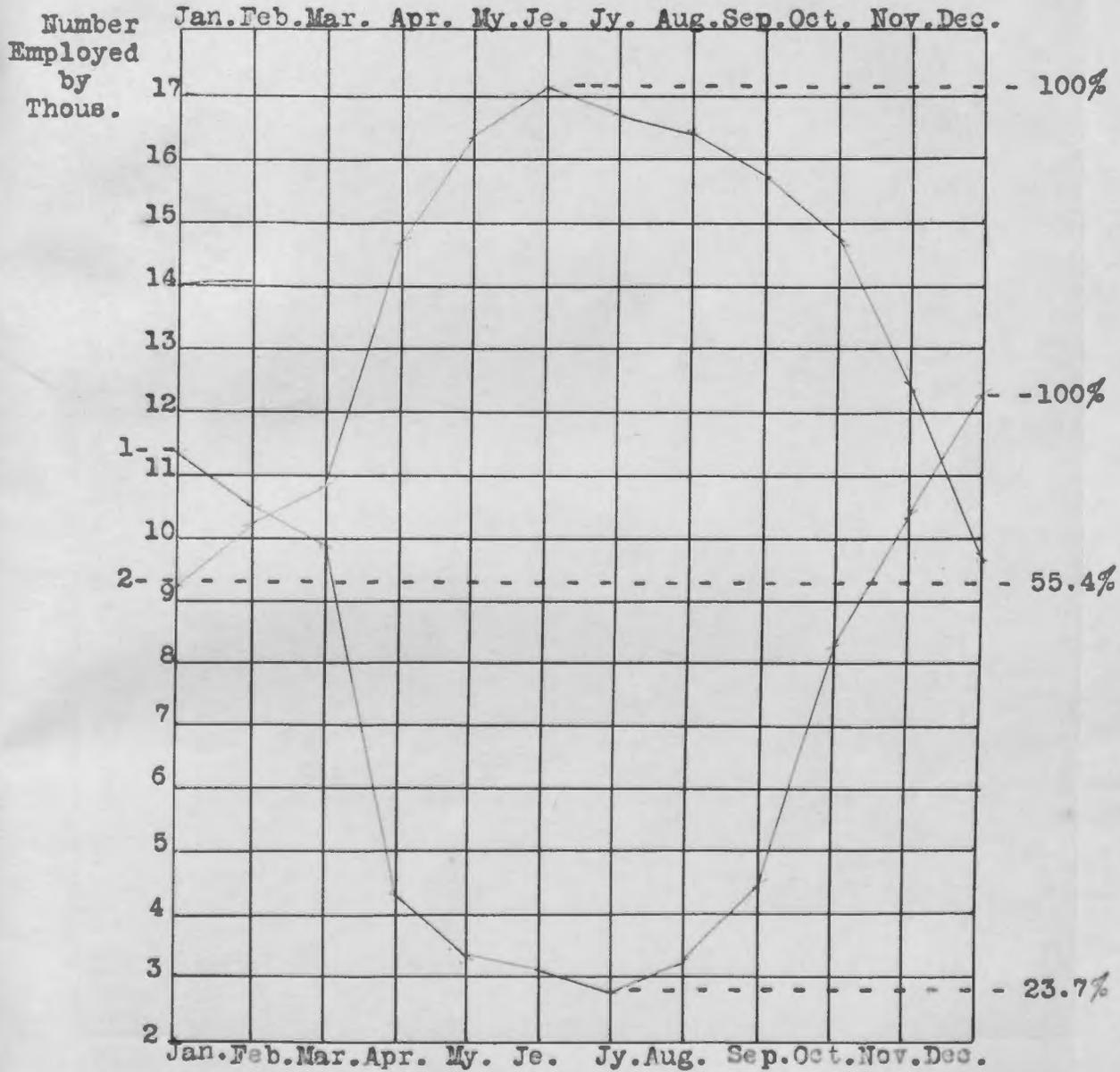


- 1. Gasworkers.
- 2. Brickmakers.

a. Taken from Webb, Seasonal Trades, p. 164.

Chart III.^a

Curves of Seasonal Fluctuations.



- 1. Logging Operations.
- 2. Lumber Mills.

a. Thirteenth Federal Census, 1910, Abstract with Supplement for Minnesota, p. 682.

The figures are complete for these industries, and present a rather significant situation. In logging we find that the maximum number of laborers were employed in December, and the minimum in July. There was an extreme fluctuation from 12,317 to 2,917, or a seasonal variation of 76.3%. In the lumber mill industry the maximum was reached in July, and the minimum in January. The variation altho not so great as in the logging operations was large - 44.6%.

Occupations as affected by the seasons in such a way as to cause unemployment fall into two classes.^a First, those in which there is an entire discharge of the workmen. Second, those in which there is only a partial discharge of the labor force, or a shortening of the hours of labor, or both. Considering the continuity of industry in general, as one would naturally suppose, the vast majority of occupations comes within the second class. In other words, it is the nature of most industries to continue without cessation thruout the year passing alternately thru busy and slack seasons. In short, were it not for the fact that there is one industry of vital importance in the first class, we might set aside any idea of division, and consider all in-

a. I. M. Rubinow, loc. cit., p. 323.

dustries in somewhat the same category. The occupation in question is that of harvesting. This occupation is not only of most vital importance to the small-grain growing states, but to the nation as well. The harvest time, a period lasting from two to four weeks in the states particularly concerned, beginning in the early summer with Oklahoma, and extending northward as the season advances, ^a is one of feverish activity and excitement. Second only to the anxiety concerning the kind of a crop the season will bring forth, is the anxiety as to whether or not it will be safely garnered. Business thruout the land is in a state of suspense until this period of harvest is past. During the short harvest time the fields of the middle west require at least one hundred thousand extra "hands"^b to be used for a short time and then turned away. The necessity of this labor force at just the right time together with the isolated and scattered nature of the work forms one of the most trying problems with which the country has to deal. Because of the necessity of the transfer of men from place to place, agriculture of all industries experiences the difficulty of the extreme im-

a. Minneapolis Journal, April 4, 1915, p. 12.

b. William M. Duffus, Labor Market Conditions in Harvest Fields of the Middle West, 1914, p. 3.

mobility of labor.^a Closely related to the harvest time for small grain we have the similar seasons for many other crops, among which may be mentioned the sugar beet industry, the cotton industry, that of cane sugar and molasses, and of fruit growing etc. The canning industry is still another illustration of a strictly seasonal business. Notwithstanding the fact that the federal statistics of this industry were taken in connection with that of preserving which has a much longer season, unemployment in some instances runs as high as 99 $\frac{1}{2}$ %.^b The putting up of natural ice, a brief January occupation, and the somewhat long period of railroad construction are additional illustrations of the same thing.

- a. F. T. Carlton, History and Problems of Organized Labor, p. 443.
- b. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, V. 8, p. 289.

III

THE NUMBER OF WAGE-EARNERS IN INDUSTRY.

When we come to a consideration of the amount of unemployment that exists, we immediately find ourselves face to face with perplexities. Not only are the data available meagre,^a but what little we do have is often incorrect and misleading. In the first place, the facts are largely those of labor unions only, thus failing by a wide margin of covering the entire industrial field.^b In the second place, in no respect do these statistics allow for employment secured in other lines. A laborer out of work in his trade is reported unemployed regardless of the fact that he may have taken up a temporary position elsewhere; in other words, in these statistics no allowance is made for what is known as dove-tailing.^c Perhaps the most complete study of unemployment that has yet been made, altho

a. F. T. Carlton, op. cit., p. 436; J. H. Hollander, op.cit., p. 78; W. H. Beveridge, op. cit., p. 27.

b. Mayor's Report, op. cit., p. 14.

c. Ibid., p. 14.

covering a city of only 82,000 people, was that made by R. S. Rowntree and B. Lasker in York. The data were carefully collected in detail, with the object of telling the complete story of unemployment existing there. While the work is one of peculiar value as giving an actual cross-section view, one cannot but reflect upon the inadequacy of the data in disclosing the effects of continually changing conditions. The fact that a man is unemployed today augurs little concerning the situation tomorrow. A mill closed this week may be running full blast next week. The statistics of unemployment taken were for static York.^a They gave little indication of the day-in and day-out unemployment in living, growing York. These same difficulties will enter in, of course, to cloud the view of the actual situation concerning data for a whole state, or nation, as well.

The stereotyped characteristic of such data is overcome in a measure by taking the statistics month by month. We thus get, in addition to the figures showing the actual unemployment at the time, some indication of the change that is occurring, and incidentally an excellent line

a. B. S. Rowntree and B. Lasker, Unemployment; A Social Study, p. 303.

on the seasonal fluctuations. Altho the 1910 census collected data touching the number of wage-earners, by months, for all industries, statistics are available for only those of manufacturing and mining. The total number of wage-earners month by month for the whole country in manufacturing industries is given in Table I, where the number employed in the maximum month is taken for 100%.

Table I.

Wage-earners in Manufacturing Industries, 1909.

<u>Month.</u>	<u>Number.</u>	<u>Per Cent.</u>	<u>Month.</u>	<u>Number.</u>	<u>Per Cent.</u>
January,	6,210,063	88.6	July,	6,486,676	92.6
February,	6,297,627	89.9	August,	6,656,933	95.0
March,	6,423,517	91.7	September,	6,898,765	98.5
April,	6,437,633	91.9	October,	6,997,090	99.9
May,	6,457,279	92.2	November,	7,006,853	100.0
June,	6,517,496	93.0	December,	6,990,652	99.8

We see by the table that in 1909 the month in which the maximum number of wage-earners were employed in manufactories in the United States was November, and that the month of minimum number was January, when the per cent

of employment was 88.6, or when, conversely, the maximum amount of unemployment was 11.4%, amounting in round numbers close to 800,000 men. It is necessary to pause to note here that the steady, and, with the single exception of the month of July, continuous increase of wage-earners up to November, is due no doubt in part to growth in the industries, altho we have no certain way of estimating the extent. This might be done had we month to month data for both the previous, and succeeding years. We do know, however, that the normal growth in manufacturing industries for the preceding decade was less than 200,000 a year^a and upon this basis the increase due to growth or expansion would amount to about a fifth of the monthly increase shown in the table. On the other hand, attention should be called to the fact that where statistics are given for the combined industries of the whole country they fall short of showing the full extent of variation, since fluctuations in one state, or industry, may balance those to a large extent in another state, or industry. An almost innumerable number of instances might be cited illustrating each of these points. For instance, we find that in the lumber and timber indus-

a. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, V. 8, p. 240 - 1910 Census, 4,712,763; 1910 Census, 6,615,046.

try for the State of Washington the per cent of wage-earners of the minimum month to the maximum month is a slight fraction over 70%,^a while for the United States as a whole it is nearly 88%^b showing how the fluctuations in the other lumber and timber states have served to offset the variations of Washington State, thus bringing the percentage up. A comparison of the maximum and minimum months of the United States as a whole, with those of the different geographic divisions shows the same effects as touching these larger areas.

Table II.^c

Maximum and minimum months in the manufactories of the United States and also of the geographic divisions, 1909.

<u>Division</u>	<u>Maximum Month</u>	<u>Minimum Month</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
United States,	November,	January,	88.6
New England,	December,	January,	92.6
Middle Atlantic,	November,	January,	88.4
East North Central,	December,	January,	87.0
West North Central,	September,	January,	86.9
South Atlantic,	September,	January,	87.6
East South Central,	November,	February,	87.0
West South Central,	November,	February,	82.0
Mountain,	October,	February,	80.2
Pacific,	September,	January,	73.0

With the single exception of the New England

a. Ibid., p. 300.

b. Ibid., p. 285.

c. Ibid., p. 304.

states, rather unique as to the extent in which the effects of seasonal fluctuations neutralize one another,^a the nine different geographic divisions of the country show a lower percentage of employment of the minimum to the maximum month than does the entire country as a whole.

Leaving for a moment the matter of seasonal variations as touching separate industries, attention is called to the considerable divergence in regard to the month of maximum number of wage-earners in manufactories in the different divisions, and to the great uniformity as regarding the minimum months. It will be seen from the table that the maximum months are scattered along here and there rather uniformly thruout the whole last quarter of the year. A study of the individual states in this respect shows a like condition with but one or two exceptions, as the following figures show. The month of greatest activity was September in 11 states, October in 13 states, November in 9 states, December in 13 states.^b South Carolina was the only state whose maximum month occurred in the first half of the year. Her maximum month was March and her minimum month was June. January is supremely the month of minimum employment. It

a. Ibid., p. 281.

b. Ibid., p. 281.

was such for the United States as a whole and for two-thirds of the geographic divisions. A like situation exists in the individual states, January being the minimum month in 28 of them.^a

As an example of the way seasonal fluctuations in one industry may largely offset those of another industry when data concerning both are combined, we cite the following condition in Vermont. Here August is the maximum month for marble and stone workers, and the minimum month for woolen, worsted, and felt workers; while December is the maximum month for woolen, worsted, and felt workers, but the minimum month for marble and stone workers. It may readily be seen that when figures are taken to show the maximum and minimum months of wage-earners combining these two industries, their variations serve to neutralize one another as it were. The effects of statistics taken for industries collectively may be further shown by the following table. Here the results are taken from the 14 industries showing the greatest variation in employment in the United States. In none of these 14 different industries employing altogether nearly a half a million wage-earners does the employment of the

a. Ibid., p. 281.

minimum month equal 50% of that of the maximum month of the year. This large annual displacement of workmen is entirely hidden in statistics given for industry as a whole.

Table III.^a

Showing the percentage of wage-earners in the minimum month to those of the maximum month in the following industries.

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Max. Mo.</u>	<u>Wage-earn.</u>	<u>Min. Mo.</u>	<u>Wage-earn.</u>	<u>Per c.</u>
Brick and Tile,	July,	104,930	Jan.	38,312	36.5
Glass,	Dec.	81,665	July	40,222	43.3
Canning & Preserves,	Sep.	154,800	Jan.	19,998	12.9
Fertilizers,	Mar.	29,310	July	14,264	48.7
Oil, Cot. Seed & Cot.	Nov.	29,334	July	5,174	17.6
Ice, manufactured,	July,	22,872	Jan.	9,847	43.1
Artificial Stone,	Aug.	12,884	Jan.	4,856	37.7
Hats, straw,	Mar.	11,488	July	4,700	40.9
Beet Sugar,	Nov.	16,807	Feb.	2,206	13.1
Sugar & Molasses,	Nov.	15,761	Feb.	559	3.5
Liquors, vinous,	Oct.	3,726	June	1,363	36.6
Vinegar & Cider,	Oct.	3,464	Mar.	886	25.6
Grindstones,	May,	1,665	Jan.	795	47.7
Rice, clean. & polish,	Oct.	2,017	July	436	21.6

A comparison of the table of the minimum and maximum months of employment in the manufactories of the whole United States with a similar table for Minnesota shows a striking parallelism of conditions, not only as to the extent of the variations, but as to their nature as well. In

a. Ibid., p. 277.

the following table, as in Table I, the number of wage-earners in the maximum month is taken as 100%.

Table IV.^a

Maximum and minimum months of employment in the manufactories of Minnesota for the year 1909.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Num. Wkmen.</u>	<u>Per cent.</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Num. Wkmen.</u>	<u>Per c.</u>
Jan.	79,918	88.2	July	84,667	93.4
Feb.	80,909	89.2	Aug.	85,847	94.7
Mar.	81,134	89.5	Sept.	87,643	96.7
Apr.	82,081	90.6	Oct.	90,620	100.0
May	82,952	91.5	Nov.	89,503	98.8
June	85,038	93.8	Dec.	86,896	96.9

The table shows the employment of the minimum month in Minnesota to be but a fraction of 1% less than that of the states as a whole. It shows the increase in the number of wage-earners to be gradual up to the maximum month with the exception of a slight falling off in July as was seen to be the case with the United States. Following out the comparison, it shows January to be the minimum month,

a. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Abstract with Supplement for Minnesota, p. 682.

but indicates a slight departure in that October instead of November is the maximum month. This is all the more significant when it is noted, first, that the difference in the whole United States between these two months is but a tenth of one per cent, and, second, that in the Special Report of the Census Office for Manufactories for 1905, October and not November is given as the maximum month.^a

A good idea of the wide-spread variation of seasonal fluctuations can be obtained from the data collected from 73 important industries in Minnesota. There is not a single month in the whole year that does not rank as a best month for one or more of the 73 industries; not a month that is not the slackest for one or more of them. The exact distribution of these industries throuour the year as to maximum months and minimum months is shown to be as follows:-

Table V.^b

<u>Month</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Minimum</u>
January	4	33	July	8	13
February	3	7	August	1	2
March	5	2	September	4	3
April	3	1	October	14	3
May	6	3	November	8	1
June	5	3	December	12	2

a. Part I, p. lxxix.

b. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Abstract with Supplement for Minnesota, pp. 698-700.

Here in Table V the busy fall and the slack winter feature of industry is shown.

We can show the seasonal fluctuations in Minnesota industries from a slightly different angle by taking the reports of the positions secured by the three state employment offices in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Duluth for a given year. Altho in consideration of industry as a whole these statistics are exceedingly narrow, yet their importance in showing general tendencies cannot be entirely overlooked. The following statistics are for the year beginning with July, 1912, and ending with June, 1913.

Table VI.^a

Number of positions secured. (Male).

<u>Month</u>	<u>St. Paul</u>	<u>Minneapolis</u>	<u>Duluth</u>	<u>State</u>
July	1008	1908	998	3914
August	1858	1858	969	3667
September	728	1860	676	2964
October	838	1956	780	3574
November	720	1340	622	2682
December	460	610	435	1505
January	501	736	337	1574
February	421	602	278	1301
March	521	732	420	1673
April	1058	1762	690	3510
May	1111	1888	931	3930
June	892	1294	736	2922

a. 14th Biennial Report, Department of Labor, State of Minnesota, 1913-14, p. 184.

Of the total number of positions secured in the state for the year, the St. Paul office supplied 27.4%, the Minneapolis office, 48.9%, and the Duluth office, 23.7%. Considering the wide difference in the number of positions secured by these three offices, the uniformity of the variation in demand for labor which the statistics show is all the more remarkable. Notice, for instance, that beginning with July the figures show a decrease in all three offices for August, a further decrease for September, an increase for October, a decrease for November, a further decrease for December, an increase for January in the St. Paul and Minneapolis offices, but a decrease in the Duluth office, a decrease in all three offices for February, an increase for March, a further increase for April, a still further increase for May, and a decrease for June. Aside from this, these statistics give a slight indication of another characteristic of demand, viz., that it tends to oscillate throughout the year. In other words, demand does not always present a steady decrease to one minimum point as general statistics tend to show, but it ebbs and flows, varying with conditions and with the industry.^a The table gives a suggestion of

a. Sidney Webb, op. cit., p. 40.

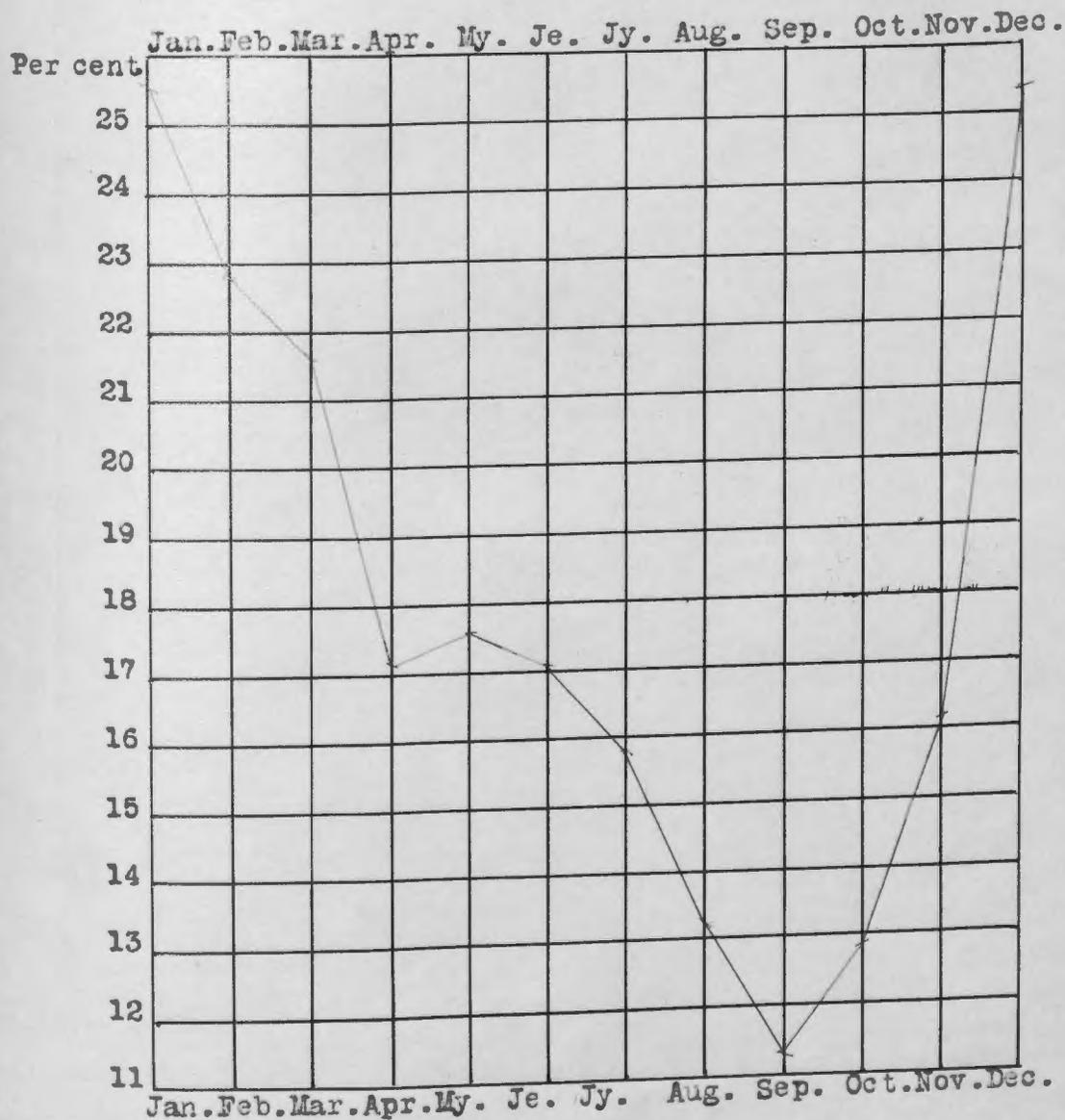
of three or four busy seasons with as many slack ones. Later on a table and chart will be given illustrating this in a single industry.

Chart IV is made from trade union statistics for New York State. It is given because it shows not the month by month unemployment of a single year but of a number of years, and it thus serves to establish more conclusively the persistency of these seasonal fluctuations. It is readily seen that this chart bears out the general characteristics of seasonal fluctuations illustrated in preceding tables and charts. While it is generally conceded that trade union statistics show a smaller amount of unemployment than that existing for labor in general, one is impressed here with the large percentage of unemployment shown. Chart V is constructed from figures taken from the same source, and serves to show the peculiar seasonal conditions existing in the theatrical and music unions of the state for the year 1913. These unions have a membership of 3952, and the statistics are from representative unions with a membership of 1209.

Thus far, all data given to illustrate seasonal fluctu-

Chart IV.^a

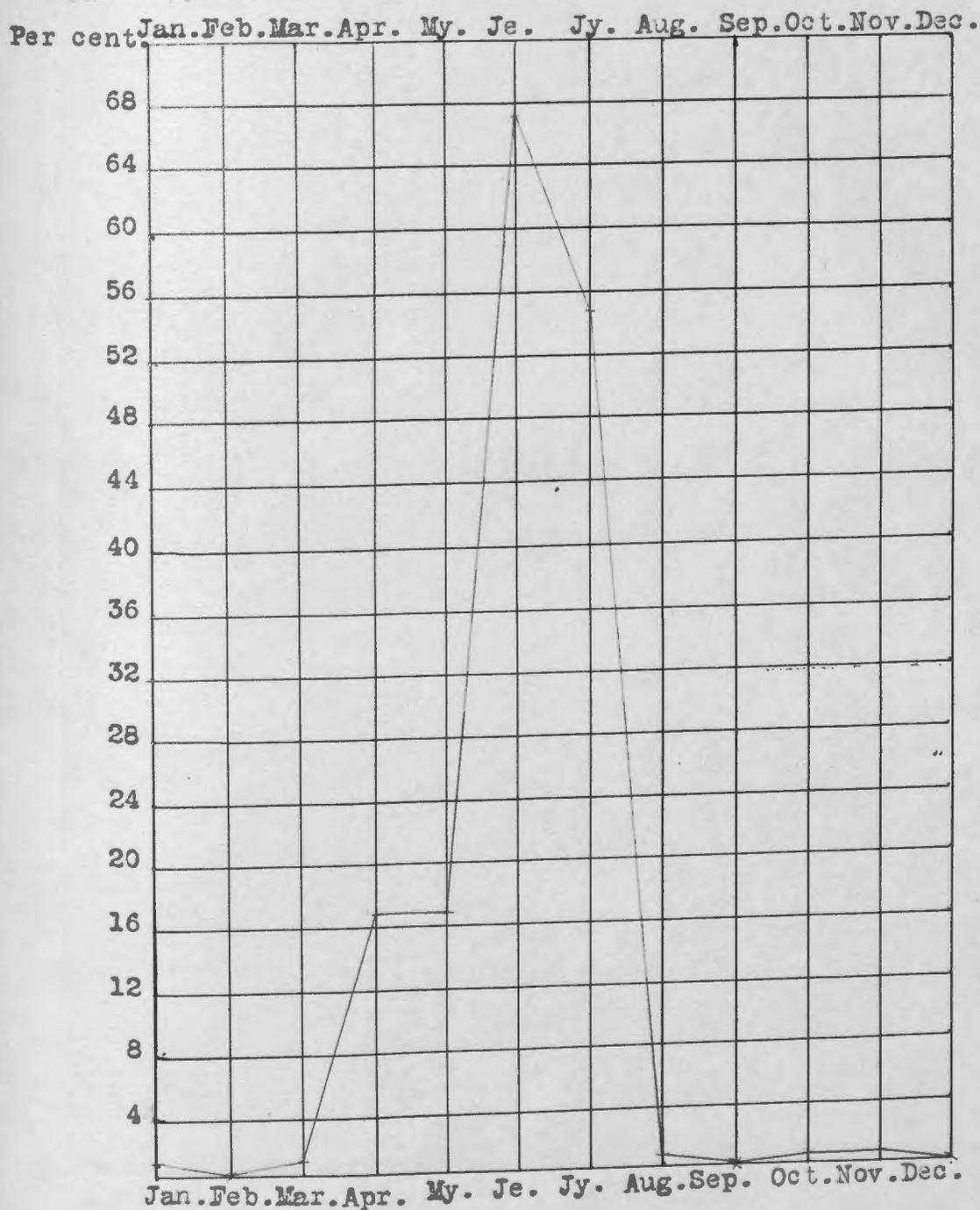
Showing percentage of idle wage-earners in representative trade unions, mean, 1902-13.



a. State of New York, Department of Labor, Bulletin Whole No. 58, Series on Unemployment, #2, p. 4.

Chart V. ^a

Chart showing percentage of unemployment in representative theatrical and music trade unions.



a. State of New York, Department of Labor, Bulletin, op. cit., p. 9.

ations have dealt exclusively with the number of wage-earners concerned. These fluctuations can be shown from another standpoint, viz., that of the weekly pay roll where the same story of variation is told. The statistics are taken from 75 association shops in the Cloak, Suit, and Skirt Industry in New York City.

Table VII.^a

Total weekly amount of pay roll for all productive labor in 75 association shops, August, 1912, to July, 1913.

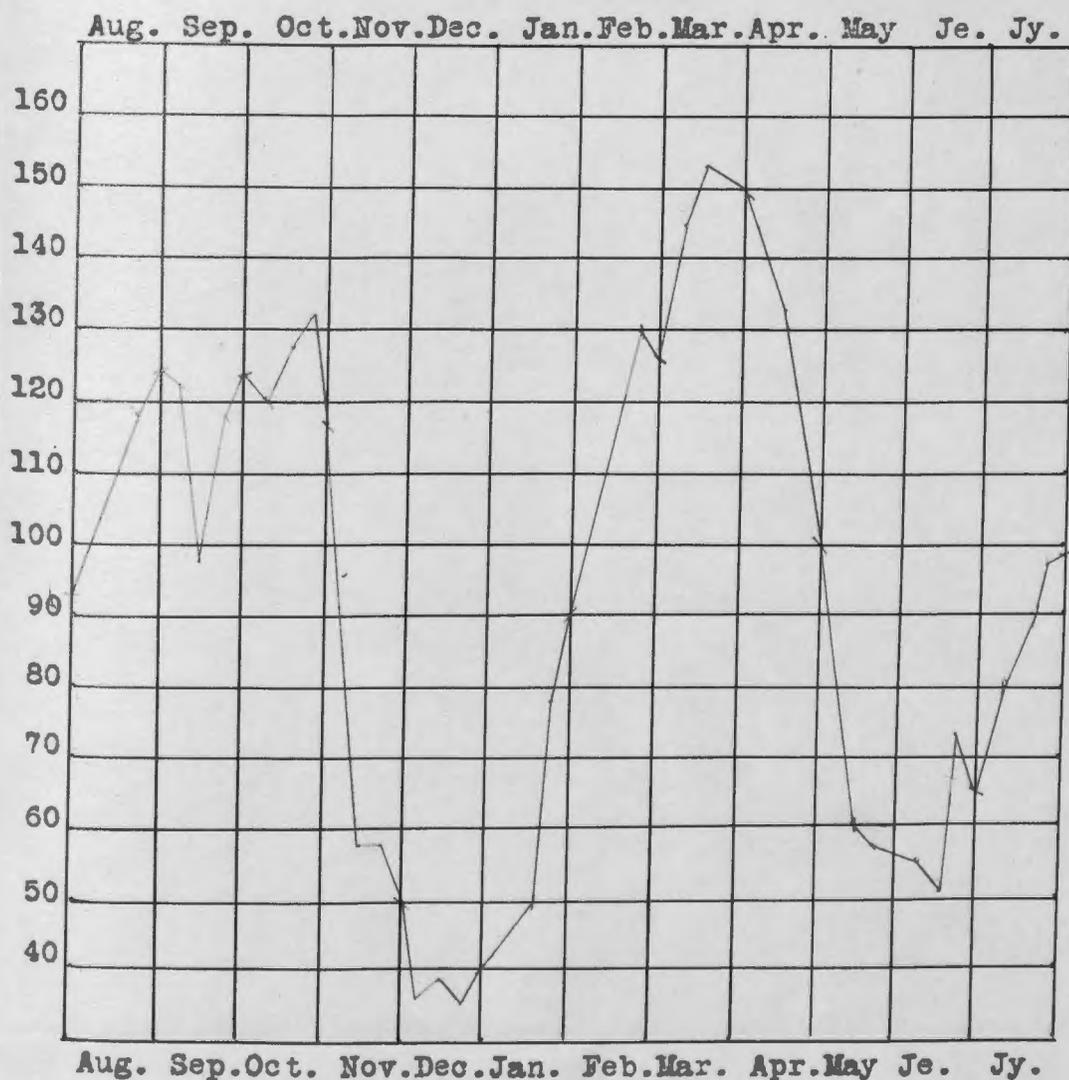
<u>Month</u>	<u>Week Num.</u>	<u>Pay Roll</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Week Num.</u>	<u>Pay Roll</u>
	1	\$97,807		27	\$131,623
August	2	108,268	February	28	127,052
	3	119,427		29	146,148
	4	127,786		30	155,148
	5	125,940		31	152,640
September	6	101,237		32	152,119
	7	120,705	March	33	143,904
	8	126,015		34	134,834
	9	122,968		35	118,227
	10	129,446	April	36	102,869
October	11	133,683		37	82,540
	12	118,942		38	65,845
	13	77,283		39	62,501
	14	62,709		40	62,030
	15	63,264	May	41	61,475
November	16	55,968		42	54,695
	17	42,838		43	47,798
	18	43,109		44	54,125
	19	40,741		45	55,904
December	20	47,271	June	46	69,745
	21	52,042		47	80,141
	22	57,654		48	89,495
	23	82,565		49	83,725
January	24	94,001	July	50	92,937
	25	113,005		51	100,041
	26	124,495		52	100,586

a. Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Whole No., 147, June 13, 1914.

Chart VI.^a

Seasonal Fluctuations of Employment in 75 Association shops in New York City, as shown by weekly pay rolls for all productive labor, August, 1912, to July, 1913.

(Average weekly pay roll for the year -100).



a. Bulletin of the United States, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Whole No., 147, June 13, 1914, Chart, p. 18.

The table and chart presented here show vividly the fluctuating nature of industry, as mentioned previously. We see that the cloak industry experiences, as do other similar industries, two busy seasons and two dull seasons, echoing the summer clothing, winter clothing aspect of life.

To conclude by way of a summary, the statistics given by the various tables and charts show fairly conclusively, first, that there is annually a large displacement of laborers for longer or shorter periods as a result of seasonal fluctuations in industry; second, that these displacements are extremely regular in occurrence; third, that industry as a whole is subjected to a yearly ebb and flow, and that particular industries undergo a similar ebb and flow, or series of them, of greater or less violence; and, fourth, that these seasonal variations tend to emphasize unduly the winter aspect of the unemployment problem. These facts are established the more strongly resting as they do upon data gathered from four widely separated and different sources, viz., from the Federal Census Reports, from statistics of the three State Employment Bureaus of Minnesota taken from the Minne-

sota Department of Labor Reports, from trade union statistics extending over a period of eleven years for the State of New York, taken from the New York Department of Labor Bulletin, and from trade union statistics in a single industry in New York City given in the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletin, and, furthermore, these data come from three different view points; that is to say, from the standpoint of the number of wage-earners, and of the number of positions secured, and of the weekly pay-rolls. The same story is told by all alike. Admitting that the data as touching the whole field of industry are fragmentary, that they are doubtless far from accurate even as far as they go, the conclusion that they rest upon a real situation and not upon mere supposition cannot be gainsaid. They show that business as conducted is a creature of the seasons; that the laborer is subjected to the mercy of climatic conditions and changes for a job; that the wheels of industry, like the sailing vessel of old, run when the wind is favorable, and lie idle and helpless in a calm. Living in an age of the double screw propellor on every side, when we can start when we want to and stop when we please, we are still, as far as protecting the laborer in

the possession of means for a livelihood is concerned, a hundred years behind, in the sailing vessel stage, subjected at every turn to the tyranny of the seasons. In the measure that these difficulties can be speedily remedied, and are neglected, society is not only subjected to burdens and dangers, but is grossly culpable.

IV

REMEDIES FOR SEASONAL FLUCTUATIONS IN INDUSTRY.

If it could be shown that seasonal fluctuations in industry are in large part a matter merely of adjustment, the doing away with an enormous amount of unemployment would appear so imminent as to be almost too good to be true. Yet by what step other than discovery has the whole material progress of mankind been achieved if not by adjustment? All invention is the matter of adjustment and readjustment. The advancement of nations may be epitomized in the measure that they have worked in subjection to or in harmony with their surroundings. As soon as man has ceased looking upon the forces of nature as mysterious and ominous, they have assumed new and undreamed of possibilities. The "Sea of Darkness" becomes a natural highway, the rushing stream a means of production, electricity an ever ready, never wearying help-mate. What was an enemy becomes a

friend; what was a master becomes a servant. The readjustment of man to his environment has proved a virtual coming out of darkness into light. Seasonal unemployment is largely the result of man working at cross purposes with nature. The large amount of seasonal unemployment "stalking abroad" thruout the land is ample proof that we have done little to meet the situation. When capital, i. e. money, is scarce in any locality, steps are immediately taken to remedy the condition. We have been willing very recently to adjust our whole financial system to meet better the financial depressions here and there. But labor we have left to shift for itself. In other words, "while we have taken care of the banker, the manufacturer, and the merchant, the workmen to whom unemployment invariably means hardship and frequently privation, and even starvation, is still left to struggle for himself, with such meagre assistance from society as relief thru soup kitchens, bread lines, and free lodging houses."^a

Above all, the first consideration in dealing with seasonal unemployment is the adjusting of the work to the worker. In this way only, are we striking at causes.

a. N. I. Stone, A National Employment Reserve, The Journal of the Efficiency Society, February, 1915, p. 20.

Heretofore our attempts, with scarcely an exception, have aimed at the remedying of effects; the dealing with temporary superfluities of labor. Says Geoffrey Drage, "Any plan which, dealing along with the existing unemployed, attempts only to remedy results, must necessarily be superficial and temporary,"^a and Dearle, speaking along the same line, says that relief work "can tide a man over a period of shortage of work in his trade, and even save him from the worst effects of it, yet being at best but a palliative and not a cure for the causes of unemployment, it cannot be relied upon to prevent a man from again suffering from the recurrence of any of them. Except, therefore, in individual cases, it is but a stopgap, and one that tends to increase by perpetuating the evil."^b

As a first step in the adjustment of the work to the worker, we must begin with the regularizing or steadying of industry.^c This will tend to remedy the "laying off" of workmen in that large class of industries affected with an ebb and flow thruout the year where "hiring and firing is still the generally accepted rule".^d It will strike a di-

a. The Unemployed, p. 162.

b. Op. cit., p. 175.

c. A. C. Pigou, op. cit., p. 166; W. H. Beveridge, op. cit., p. 193.

d. Burton J. Hendrick, A Scientific Employment Plan, American Review of Reviews, V. 48, Nov. 1913, p. 567.

rect blow at the practice and custom of running feverishly one part of the year, and shutting down, partly or entirely, during the remainder of the year. This can be brot about by cooperation on the part of employers and the authorities, as in fact it has in a measure been brot about in this city of Minneapolis this winter. Here the Civic and Commerce Association concerning itself with the large number of unem- ployed, wrote letters to the factory managers urging that if it were necessary to cut down the total number of work- ing hours they do so by reducing the working time of all the force in some degree rather than by letting men go. The manufacturers responded to the suggestion with the result that an unusually large number of establishments ran thru the winter with their labor force practically intact. The second step is that commonly known as "dove-tailing", by which is meant the employment in as large a measure as pos- sible of the labor force of industries passing thru ebb per- iods in those passing thru busy periods. This would apply to all industries affected with seasonal variations, and espec- ially to those strictly seasonal ones. It must necessarily be preceded by expert investigation in order to discover

just what industries are complementary in this sense, as well as their exact location; and by a certain amount of technical training on the part of the workman,^a resulting in what Carlton calls the "double-barreled man".^b Then, in addition to regularizing and dove-tailing of industry, wise provision must be made for a system of public work so adjusted as to take up the slack in useful, remunerative occupations in times of need, and release it gradually as the times pass by.^c The work suitable for this is myriad. In addition to the large amount of government building and construction work which is being carried on continually, the clearing of "cut-over" land would furnish occupation suitable particularly for winter work. Then the work of afforestation, of reclamation of swamp lands, and of road building might be undertaken. All of these could be done advantageously at times other than during the crowded autumn months. Important as this will undoubtedly prove to be, with the exception of trifling efforts here and there, what has ever been done looking toward the fitting of public work into the interstices of private industries? The fact is that public work

a. N. B. Dearle, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

b. F. T. Carlton, *op. cit.*, p. 441.

c. A. C. Pigou, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

has always been done whenever we got around to do it, entirely unmindful of the fact that it might be so adjusted as to be doubly useful to all concerned. Furthermore, employment creates employment, and the public work begun during the slack periods of the year, would be supplemented by other industries stimulated by it, and these activities would be extended with no end of good. A fourth, and last step, lies in the schooling of the public mind to an adjustment of habits and wants to labor conditions, or, to put it in another form, the remedying of causes from the standpoint of the consumer. There is not a fraction of a reason why we should do certain things when we do, where there is a full reason for doing them at some other time. We have carried down into changed economic conditions practices and customs of former generations. "We make May 1st 'moving day' arbitrarily. The moving germ, which we have inherited from nomadic days, is kept alive and fostered by custom to break out in virulent form at about the same time every year."^a We are doing things now, when it matters whether they are done now or not, the same as they were done years ago when

a. Luke Grant, loc. cit., p. 354.

it did not matter. We are, in other words, doing things in a strictly individual way that have become largely social, and we are doing them largely from habit. The rush of the last week, or of the last day or even of the last hours of the Christmas shopping needs no extended comment in this connection. The urgent "shop early", and "do not open till Christmas" advice of the Post Office Department voices an extreme need. The fact has been that with the introduction of the Parcel Post this practice of delaying purchases almost until the last minute has caused an enormous burden hitherto borne largely by express companies to fall upon the Post Office Department. It is this unnecessary congestion that the Post Office Department has undertaken to create sentiment against. The short surcharged period of Easter activities comes in this same category. In fact, all quasi-seasonal fluctuations and the vagaries of fashion far removed from any casual connection with the seasons serve to speed up industries during certain periods. These will be overcome in a large measure as soon as vigorous conscious efforts bring before the public the resultant hardships and

sufferings of the working man. Something may also be done from the side of the producer who many times fosters these same tendencies.

Along side of, and in connection with, but always considered as secondary to, the remedies for the causes of the displacement of laborers should come such measures as are possible for dealing with the idle workmen themselves, the product of the various irregularities and the variations in industry. Hitherto, these measures have formed in part the main line of effort in dealing with the unemployment situation which, forsooth, has proved a sort of backhanded method. The causes operating untouched have steadily swelled the ranks of the unemployed to such an extent as to render various relief measures wholly inadequate.^a The situation in New York City this last winter definitely illustrates the difficulty. Out of 22,000 applications for work at the public Employment Office only 1400 men and 500 women secured positions.^b Again, out of 2516 applications at the Federal Employment Office in Minneapolis during February and March this year only 158 persons have been directed to employment.^c The second consideration, then, in dealing with seasonal un-

a. Amos Pinchot, Who Is It Up To? Harpers Weekly, May 1, 1915, p. 424.

b. Ibid.

c. Commerce Reports, No. 99, Washington, D. C., Wed., Apr. 28, 1915, p. 470;

employment is that of adjusting the worker to the work. The first step therein is the establishing and maintaining of an adequate system of labor bureaus. There is no one but knows that the antiquated method of hawking labor has no place in modern conditions. The notorious fact of employers looking for laborers, and laborers looking for work in close proximity, reveals the total inadequacy of the old way. One of the commonest observations on every hand is that "seasonal employments constantly throw men out of employment, and that most of them are blind in making connections with new occupations".^a Any plan enabling work people to find out where work is wanted, and facilitating their movement freely toward it, and at the same time serving as a receiving point of request for help will without doubt diminish the volume of unemployment. However, the deception and fraud practiced by private agencies,^b oftentimes, points toward the absolute necessity of close governmental control. As to whether the system of the future should be entirely public and free, time will have to decide, but at present there seems to be ample sphere for any means possible of bridging the gap between

a. W. M. Leiserson, *The Laborer Who Refuses to Invest*, Survey, V. 31, Nov. 8, 1913, p. 165.

b. Congressman Murdock's Speech, loc. cit.; Lillian Brandt, *The Causes of Poverty*, Political Science Quarterly, V. 23, p. 637.

the jobless man and the manless job. For one thing, the private agencies are largely local in their application, while the problem of unemployment is not only a local, and a state one, but a national one as well.² It is mainly for this reason that a nation-wide system of labor bureaus has been established by the Department of Labor in cooperation with the Post Office Department and the Department of Agriculture. According to this plan, the country is divided by the Immigration Bureau into 18 zones with headquarters from which the work is directed, established in each zone. The field officers of the Immigration Service have charge of this work, which was started in January, 1915. In time, this system will be extended to every post office in the land where bulletins will be posted notifying men who want work, and the men who want workers of the fact that blanks may be had of the postmaster, or even of the rural carriers, to be filled out and mailed to the headquarters of the sub-quarters of their own particular zone. This is, without doubt, the biggest step our government has ever taken to bring about the adjustment of the worker to his work. It places our

a. Frances A. Kellor, Unemployment, A Problem of Relief, National Progressive Service, New York City, 1914, p. 5; Percy Alden, The Unemployed, A National Question, p. 48.

country in the class with such countries as England which has already begun "to work her way toward a perfect organization for finding work for every man with the least waste to him and the state".^a The utilizing of the postoffices of the country to which people are already so accustomed to go will undoubtedly add to the efficiency of the plan.

Whether, or not, we shall take the other step which Germany has taken^b of linking this national system up with the telephone and the telegraph remains for the future to decide. We are as yet too close to judge of results, but early reports show much promise. Data for February and March from the office in Minneapolis which is the headquarters of the 11th zone show a total of 2516 applications for employment and information, and a total of 158 persons directed to employment during those months.^c Thus, in the field where we have done the most to relieve the stress and strain of unemployment, we are just getting a start. In the nineteen states that have already established free employment agencies, we find very little effective work being done, mainly from the fact that, with but two or three exceptions, these agencies have been established in the most unscientific, "haphazard

a. J. L. Mathews, *Equity in a Job*, Harpers, V. 127, pp.195-101.

b. *Ibid.*

c. *Commerce Reports*, op. cit., p. 470; *The City Club Bulletin*, Chicago, V. 8, No. 3, Wednesday, Feb. 24, 1915, pp.58-62.

way, usually following some business depression.^a We must understand at the outset that of all things labor is one of the most difficult to transport; that the mere establishment of employment agencies as such will not solve the difficulty. With mind alert, and fixed determination, the aim of the near future should be to work out a system which will develop to an undreamed of degree the highest mobility of labor.

Closely connected with the need of labor bureaus is the second necessary step in adjusting the worker to the work, the need of adequate official statistics^b that will not only show accurately the existing state of labor, but will give indication of coming changes to the end that provision may be made to meet them before they occur, and, furthermore, to the end that the "men of tomorrow" may be given wise guidance in industrial training. We must remember that industry is dynamic, and that data concerning it must be taken continually. The Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor recognized this several years ago in dealing with the extraordinary unemployment situation of the winter of 1908 when no comprehensive statistics

a. Frances A. Kellor, *loc. cit.*

b. Robert Hunter, *Poverty*, pp. 14-15; Dearle, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

were available even for the organized wage-earners of the state. As a remedy a plan was inaugurated, which has since been followed, of taking quarterly statistics of unemployment that in the future some definite basis for determining the proportion of wage-earners unemployed may be had.^a Data of the past have been of the museum sort, valuable only as an illustration of things that have existed in times gone by. Of what good, otherwise than to show what has been, are the unemployment data of the 1910 Census which are not available even yet after half a decennial period has past? Let us have accurate up-to-date labor statistics, the only kind that are worth anything at all in the betterment of the economic and social welfare of the wage-earner and of society.

a. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics, Quarter Ending December 31, 1914, p. 1, Footnote.

V.

CONCLUSION.

The problem of unemployment is a vast problem. It touches annually hundreds of thousands of workmen, and thru them literally millions of the mothers and children of the nation. It appears on the one hand boldly and in full view; on the other hand subtly, undermining the nation's vitality itself and the standards of a thousand years. It is a sort of hybrid, combining far-reaching, deep-seated economic problems, and difficult, vexing social problems. No age has been without its poor and its poverty stricken, yet, while the poverty level remains about the same generation after generation, the standard of living has gradually drawn away, making it stand out the more abject by comparison. Until recently we have looked upon unemployment in

any other way than seriously,^a with the result that it has become full grown before our eyes challenging any remedy that is not as varied and as widely extended as is the problem itself. Many years ago, Drage asserted that the "solution is to be found not so much in any vast remedy as in a series of small remedies, each attacking one or more of the causes which have sufficed even to bring about, or intensify, the present problem."^b If we are to make any headway at all at the present time when the problem has become more varied and complicated still, it is this view that must be taken.

This thesis has dealt with but a small part of the field. It has taken the matter of seasonal fluctuations alone; has shown the influences they have upon the volume of labor employed; and has pointed out the remedies for these particular things. The other factors causing fluctuations in the demand for labor call in a large measure for other specific remedies. Any treatment, adequate in the least degree, of these other important factors would have lead us far afield. The causes of casual fluctuations are subjective

- a. John B. Andrews, A Practical Program for the Prevention of Unemployment in America, First Tentative Draft, American Association on Unemployment, New York City, December, 1914, p. 3.
- b. Geoffrey Drage, op. cit., p. 195.

as well as objective. Effective remedies must take into account the direction of the individual thru training in youth, as well as external matters. This would necessitate careful vocational training and guidance, taking into consideration the natural bent or inclination of the individual, and the general trend of industry. The fluctuations in demand for labor known as cyclical fluctuations are if possible of a still more deep-seated nature. It is these cyclical fluctuations upon which Mr. Beveridge places so much emphasis.^a They seem to be inherent in the industrial system itself. Mr. Charles Booth says that "the modern system of industry will not work without some unemployed margin",^b and Mr. Rowntree maintains that if people shrink from the thought of extended "economic changes, let them remember that the evil to be remedied is very great, that its social consequences are disastrous, and that it will not be possible to arrest it by half-hearted or timid measures".^c

A final point remains to be made. Whatever the weakness of the individual; whatever the fault in his training; or, whatever the defect in our industrial system, the

a. W. H. Beveridge, op. cit.

b. Life and Labor of the People in London, Second Series: Industry, V. 5, p. 75.

c. B. S. Rowntree and B. Lasker, op. cit., p. 145.

succession of the seasons takes place any way causing irregularities in employment, unless provisions are made to meet them. This furnishes us with the logical point of attack.

It takes time to train up a new generation of workers. Our industrial system is a product of growth, not the result of mere conjecture. Seasonal fluctuations in industry causes untold sufferings to hundreds of thousands annually. In their wake, we find misery and crime and death. The remedy that is of immediate application is the only effective one for the present. The severest of all criticisms of industrial society today focuses upon the conditions of unemployment.^a The call to America is the call to battle, the battle, however, of saving men, not of exterminating them.

a. I. M. Rubinow, loc. cit., p. 313.

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