

PORT LABOUR INQUIRY

REPORT

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MINISTRY OF LABOUR

PORT LABOUR INQUIRY
REPORT



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MINISTRY OF LABOUR.

PORT LABOUR INQUIRY.

Terms of Reference.

“ To enquire into employment and unemployment in the port transport services in Great Britain and to make recommendations thereon, with special reference to decasualisation and the administration of the unemployment insurance scheme in its application to port transport workers.”

Membership of the Committee.

The Right Hon. Sir Donald Maclean, K.B.E., LL.D., M.P.
(Chairman).

Mr. Ernest Bevin.

Sir Alfred Booth, Bart.

Mr. T. W. Condon.

Mr. Charles Cullen.

Mr. D. Hillman.

Mr. C. F. Leach.

*Mr. F. J. Leathers.

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Mr. Charles S. Page.

†Mr. S. C. Parkin.

Sir James Sexton, C.B.E., M.P.

Mr. James S. Spencer.

Mr. Benjamin Tillett, M.P.

Secretary : Mr. L. G. Bullock.

* Resigned on 29th September, 1930.

† Appointed on 10th October, 1930.

Note:

The estimated cost of the preparation of this Report (including the expenses of the Committee) is £672, of which £85 represents the estimated cost of the printing and publishing of this Report.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY ON PORT LABOUR.

To the Right Hon. MARGARET BONDFIELD, M.P.,
Minister of Labour.

MADAM,

INTRODUCTION.

1. On 30th May, 1930, you appointed us as a Committee to report to you on the question of labour in the Port Transport Services. The Terms of Reference were as follows:—

“ To enquire into employment and unemployment in the port transport services in Great Britain, and to make recommendations thereon, with special reference to decasualisation and the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme in its application to port transport workers.”

In deference to your request made at the outset of our Inquiry, we have endeavoured to make an exhaustive survey in the shortest possible time. We have sought for information and views in every appropriate quarter and there has been a ready response which has been of the utmost assistance in obviating delay.

2. At the beginning we gave careful consideration to a comprehensive memorandum prepared for us by the Ministry of Labour, which dealt in general terms with the salient features of port employment and the application of the Unemployment Insurance Acts in the case of port transport workers. Our knowledge of these matters was also extended by the oral evidence given by the two official witnesses, Mr. C. W. G. Eady and Mr. P. Y. Blundun. We have taken full advantage of the offer of the Ministry to obtain and present any other data which appeared necessary as our Inquiry proceeded.

Having obtained a general foundation for our survey, we invited evidence from organisations and individuals both within and outside the Port Transport Industry. All sections of the Industry have afforded us their active co-operation, and, as a result, it may fairly be said that the information upon all questions within the scope of our Inquiry is probably more complete than has ever been available before in a collected form. Each Joint Registration Committee has supplied us with comprehensive details of its scheme, as well as interesting statistics. Committees have made special efforts to prepare valuable data at short notice, which have materially assisted our progress. In the case of all the ports included in our survey, we have sought the co-operation of other joint bodies, Employers' Associations, Trade Unions, and the local

officials of the Ministry, as occasion demanded, and have obtained willing assistance from them.

In view of the purpose of our Inquiry, the extent of the information we could obtain from bodies and persons outside the Industry was necessarily limited. The National Confederation of Employers' Organisations, the Railway Companies' Association, and the Dock and Harbour Authorities' Association stated that as their constituents affected by the Inquiry were also constituents of the National Council of Port Labour Employers, the evidence to be given on behalf of the latter body and the local port employers' associations would represent their interests. Certain other organisations, while interested in our Inquiry, did not feel that they were in a position, having regard to our Terms of Reference, to submit relevant evidence. The National Federation of Iron and Steel Manufacturers communicated to us their views on the general subject of port charges, but in the absence of any co-ordinated evidence to show the relationship between this wide question and the subject which we were charged to consider, we decided that it lay outside the scope of our Inquiry. We are indebted to those individuals who presented written evidence, some of whom also appeared before us. The complete list of witnesses is given in Appendix I.

The volume of evidence we have received from these various sources has been considerable, and in view of the fact that it was based upon experience in many different fields we have regarded it as vital to hear oral evidence from a large and representative selection of ports in order to ensure that our knowledge of both the national and local conceptions of the problem is as complete as possible.

3. We have held 24 sittings, 15 of which were used wholly for the hearing of oral evidence. Towards the end of the Inquiry we appointed a Sub-Committee to facilitate the preliminary work of drafting our Report and to make a survey of the evidence received so as to satisfy ourselves that we have left no point without its due measure of consideration. This Sub-Committee has held six meetings.

We regard ourselves as fortunate in the fact that we have been able to make our Inquiry continuous. While we regretted the material loss we sustained by the retirement from membership of the Committee of Mr. F. J. Leathers, rendered necessary owing to the pressure of his own business duties, we were extremely glad to welcome Mr. S. C. Parkin as a member in place of Mr. Leathers.

General Description of the Port Transport Services.

4. The first question which arose for our consideration out of our Terms of Reference was the meaning of the term "Port Transport Services" as it was intended to apply for the purpose of our survey.

These services are not a homogeneous industrial unit. They are collections of numerous industrial undertakings engaged in the large variety of operations which comprise port transport work. It would have been possible for us, at the outset and by careful inquiries, to have drawn up a more or less exact definition of the Service which would have circumscribed the whole of our work. In our opinion, however, it was essential that, while our Inquiry kept within its defined limits, we should not leave unconsidered any part of the Industry with which we could be said to be concerned, or bind ourselves by such a line of demarcation as would leave anyone who could claim to be interested any grounds for complaint that he had not had an opportunity of expressing his views and furnishing us with information.

If we had assumed the extent of the Industry to be that indicated by the scope of industrial agreements, organisations or trade practices, we might have laid ourselves open to the criticism that we had accepted as foregone conclusions matters which were referred to us for inquiry. We therefore kept our minds open upon this question and extended invitations through the Press and by direct communication which ensured that any industrial organisation, port user, employer of labour, trade union or individual who considered themselves interested in or affected by our Inquiry had an opportunity of submitting evidence.

5. In presenting our Report, however, it is clearly necessary that we should describe the nature and extent of the Port Transport Services as we have surveyed them. In so doing we wish to emphasise that this is purely for the purpose of indicating the scope of our survey and Report, and must not be taken to infer that all the recommendations necessarily apply to the whole service as now described.

To obtain an adequate picture of the Port Transport Industry it must be regarded from various aspects. These are geographical, the classes of industrial undertakings, the nature of the operations performed and the classes of workpeople.

6. The component parts of the Industry are nearly always collected at the various docks and harbours situated round the coasts of England, Scotland and Wales. There are, of course, isolated units which give spasmodic employment to an extremely small number of workers, but it would have been difficult for us to include these in the various inquiries we have made. Our inquiries have been confined to ports enumerated in schedules to the Report of the Dock Transport Workers' (Registration and Guaranteed Week) Committee, which was set up in 1924 by the Industry itself to inquire into a material part of the matters with which we are concerned (see Appendix II). These ports are extremely varied both in size and character, and many are in

reality geographical areas, difficult to define in exact terms, which include many other industries and trades. Hence it is often difficult to decide where port transport ends and another service begins, and quite impossible to fix any geographical boundary line. Some ports handle miscellaneous and general commodities, while others serve one or two large industries and specialise in handling certain commodities in large quantities such as coal, iron ore, timber or fish.

7. In most of the ports the traffic is handled by a number of independent industrial undertakings; the principal function of the majority being port transport work and services immediately ancillary thereto. There are, however, many cases of undertakings, principally concerned in other industries, which have an auxiliary establishment, the function of which is to carry out the port transport work for their own commodities and products. We give below a list of the principal classes of undertakings included in our survey as employers of port labour in the ports enumerated. They are as follows :—

(a) Port and Dock Authorities when acting as stevedores, wharfingers, warehousemen, or performing harbour services.

(b) Ocean, Short Sea and Coastal Shipowners.

(c) Master Stevedores, Master Porters and Cargo Superintendents.

(d) Public and Private Wharf, Warehouse and Granary Owners.

(e) Master Lightermen and Barge Owners.

(f) Coaling Contractors, when directly engaged in bunkering or handling coal for import or export.

(g) Railway Companies, when acting as dock owners.

(h) Timber Importers, when directly discharging timber from ships or handling timber in yards within the geographical limits of the port for despatch by rail or road.

(i) Manufacturers, traders or public utility undertakings when handling their own products or goods at the waterside.

Trawler Owners and others engaged in the handling of deep sea fish were invited to give evidence, but were unable to supply us with information.

8. All these undertakings have in their employment workpeople, such as their indoor administrative and clerical workers, whose industrial experiences are in all respects similar to those of workers in other industries. These are not directly concerned in the particular problem which we were charged to examine. We have, therefore, confined our Inquiry to the operational workers, that is, those actually engaged in the work of loading, discharging, and handling cargoes afloat and ashore within the general confines of the ports and also the workers immediately ancillary thereto, such as lighterage, mechanical and maintenance workers.

It is important to appreciate that within the operational grades there are many distinct occupations ranging from unskilled to highly skilled, but the workers are liable to uncertainty in employment through sudden and unpredictable fluctuations in traffic through the ports.

We have had due regard to the important fact that many of the operational workers have permanent or regular employment. They are included in our survey because they are engaged in operations performed also by casual workers, and may become casual themselves without material change of occupation. Our Inquiry has covered workpeople employed permanently, regularly or casually in the ports and by the undertakings referred to above, in the following occupations :—

Stevedores, Ship, Quay, Wharf, Warehouse, Dock and General Cargo Workers.

Coal Porters, Trimmers, Tippers, Heavers.

Deal Porters, Timber Porters, Timber Yard Men, Prop Carriers, Measurers.

Corn Porters, Dischargers, Fillers, Grainweighers, Grain Elevator Hands, Granary Hands, Loaders.

Iron Ore Dischargers, Fillers, Tippers, Shippers, Stowers.

Cold Storage Workers.

Meat Porters.

Fruit Porters.

Fish Transit Workers, Fish Lumpers, Porters, Bobbers.

Cotton Weighers, Samplers.

Coopers.

Tally Clerks, Checkers, Samplers, Delivery Clerks and other outdoor clerical workers.

Foremen. (Ship, Shed, Quay, and Warehouse.)

Lightermen, Bargemen, Roadsmen, Watermen, Tugmen, Boatmen, Hobblers.

Cranemen, Winch Drivers, Jiggermen, Hoistmen, Rope Runners.

Hatchmen, Deck Hands, Riggers.

Gearmen, Gear Makers, Oilers' and other mechanical labourers.

Baggagemen, Passenger and Mail Porters.

Watchmen.

Boiler and Ship Scalers, Chippers, Scrapers, Painters.

Locomotive-men, Drivers, Capstanmen.

9. The above description of the Port Transport Service gives a general indication of the scope of our Report; but it must be qualified by the fact that it takes no account of local deviations from a general practice. There are many local peculiarities which defy treatment under any general line of demarcation. In this matter it must be borne in mind that the practice of one port, or

even individual employer, may differ materially from that of another port or employer. This fact has governed the whole of our Survey.

The Community and the Port Labour Problem.

10. When you appointed us to undertake a comprehensive survey of the problem of employment in the Port Transport Services and the problem of unemployment among port workers you emphasised the far-reaching social and economic consequences of the present situation. We have kept prominently in mind the fact that the general prosperity of the country is directly affected by the manner in which the affairs and operations of such a vital service as this are conducted; forming as it does an essential link in all the over-sea and coastwise trade and commerce of the country. We have assumed as a basic principle that if the Industry is efficiently operated, while at the same time offering stable employment and regular livelihood to a large and constant body of workers, it cannot fail to make an important contribution to the well-being of the community as a whole. In this connection we think it right to record that, in spite of our invitation issued through the Press and addressed to prominent associations of users of the Port Transport Service, no evidence was forthcoming from these sources which pointed to any material criticism of the efficiency of the Industry or its ability to meet the requirements of trade, except in so far as concerns the question of port costs in general; a question which lies outside the scope of our Inquiry.

11. In the course of our investigation of the labour situation, some of the evidence showed that the provision made for expeditious handling of commodities, such as mechanical appliances, modern accommodation and facilities, constitutes in the present trade situation a material factor in the severe under-employment now being experienced by port workers.

Our principal concern has been to study this situation as it affects port labour with the object of ascertaining what features of the present state of the Industry materially contribute to the under-employment so that we can recommend those improvements which are likely to be beneficial to the community as a whole. It must be obvious that a service cannot be wholly efficient in so far as workers experience continual uncertainty in regard to their earnings with its grave social and economic consequences. Intermittent employment creates casual habits and tends to diminish the skill and output of workers.

Hence we feel even on these grounds alone that the real interest of the community in general lies in supporting fully all measures which will have the effect of stabilising port employment to the greatest possible extent.

12. We have the advantage over previous inquiries of being able to examine the practical results and experiences of various concerted efforts to regularise port employment. As a result we are in a position to confirm the generally accepted opinion that it is more in the public interest to provide regular employment for a selected body of workers than to allow the work to be shared indiscriminately by an overstocked and unregulated pool, so that it can only afford the skeleton of a livelihood to all and sundry. It is obvious that such control of the aggregate labour supply has diminished the serious social and economic evils which arose from an almost chaotic uncertainty, and we see no reason why improved regulation and distribution with the object of obtaining greater efficiency and good order in port operation, should not eventually lead to a wider avenue of regular employment for labour of a high standard. Such an achievement would undoubtedly re-act to the advantage of the whole community.

It is necessary to emphasise, however, that such a situation cannot be reached without conscious and determined effort, because it is a natural consequence of the kind of work performed by the Industry that to a large extent port employment should be inherently casual. Here is no well-ordered and continuous process of manufacture which may of itself afford to the individual workers regular employment for lengthy periods. Port work is a vast collection of jobs calling for labour which arise as the result of numerous and varied demands made without material warning by shipping and traders and requiring immediate attention. There are, also the factors of tides, weather and accident which considerably accentuate the casualising influence of the traffic itself. Many of the factors which directly cause casual conditions in port transport work are beyond the control of the Industry. Indeed they are, in many instances, uncontrollable and have to be accepted as an unavoidable feature of port transport work.

13. We emphasise these facts in order to make it clear that the regularisation of port employment cannot be attained in practice by eliminating the basic causes of discontinuity and action of a quite special nature is therefore necessary; a peculiarity which is often outside the experience of other industries. The Port Transport Service is a service of public utility and we are, therefore, on sure ground in asserting that any general disabilities from which it suffers such as those which we are charged to survey, must be of vital national importance and therefore demand the direct attention of the community.

Review of the Port Labour problem.

14. It would be of doubtful value in a general survey such as this to describe the problem of port employment in all its many phases. Nevertheless in order to appreciate the full significance of the

situation as it exists to-day and to permit a well-balanced view to be taken, we desire to place on record certain salient features of the problem before we examine in greater detail the measures so far taken to deal with it.

In essentials the problem of port employment is that of co-ordinating the irregular demands, which are largely uncontrollable, and of regulating the supply of labour. Inevitably the more irregular the demands become the more difficult it is to regulate the supply and maintain its suitability and good order. When this fundamental irregularity of demand is applied to human beings who form the supply, the result, in the absence of any system of regulating the labour, engenders a serious social and economic problem, an outstanding feature of which is uncertainty. A floating reserve of unemployed workers in industry generally is entirely different from a pool of workers whose common experience is continual under-employment. The reserve is a minority; the pool is the majority.

15. For a proper appreciation of the port labour problem it is also important to note that the large variety of commodities handled in the ports, the existence of many different types of mechanical appliances and of special processes connected with loading, discharge and storage of goods all create many varied demands for workers with special knowledge or skill. Thus, while there is always a large demand for unskilled labour, the pool of port labour in the aggregate must include the necessary quota of specialists competent to meet a complex demand and ensure the efficient and expeditious performance of the various types of port work. This definitely precludes the achievement of decasualisation by the simple process of a purely numerical adjustment of the labour supply.

Having in mind the structure of the Industry already described the extreme complexity of the demand for port labour will readily be appreciated.

The difficulty of altering the nature of the demand, however, caused attention to be given to the possibility of achieving some measure of regularity in port employment by the initial step of regulating the supply of port labour.

16. The first measures taken in this direction had as their object the regulation of the supply of labour in the aggregate. In the past the incidence of the numerous separate jobs, each of comparatively short duration, resulted in some labour almost always being in demand. Such a fact proved an irresistible attraction to any unemployed workers in search of odd work and, in such circumstances, individual employers were powerless, even if they appreciated the need, to take any action to prevent a continual inflow of labour far in excess of requirements. The inevitable consequences of such an over-supply of labour for the intermittent work offering were

that all and sundry by the law of averages, obtained some share of the work available, and the majority found themselves hopelessly under-employed. In spite of this fact, however, the continual demand with its chance of a few days' employment was sufficient to maintain the over-supply and continue the casual conditions; always aggravating them at times when general depression was most marked. Such a situation was not a credit to anybody. Nevertheless neither the employers nor the *bona-fide* port transport workers could be held responsible for it and none of them individually could hope to solve the problem.

Many individual employers, however, appreciating the desirability of ensuring a supply of competent labour to cope with regular work, adopted the practice of maintaining a nucleus of permanent or regular workers. With a similar object others kept a list of certain workers as preference men. By this means certain selected men enjoyed the advantage of being engaged before others for work with the particular employer. Such men were in fact only casually employed and their preference did not extend to work with other firms. Thus they were merged in the over-stocked "pool" when their usual employer was unable to utilise their services. A noteworthy example was the system of preference adopted by the various Dock Companies in the Port of London and improved by the Port of London Authority immediately upon its establishment. In addition to a large permanent staff of directly employed operational workers, the Authority kept "B" and "C" lists of workers who had preference in employment throughout the Authority's numerous establishments in the Port of London. This system is still in operation.

A preference system on such a large scale must obviously have been a material factor in emphasising the practical advantages of regularity and in pointing the way towards subsequent concerted efforts based upon the principle of preference. All these attempts at regularity provide sure evidence of the general appreciation of the serious features of those earlier chaotic conditions.

17. The recognition of the evils of this situation and of the inability of individual action to overcome it led to concerted effort by employers and port workers' organisations in some ports to establish registration schemes, the initial objects of which were to regulate the pool of workers who, while adequate in number and qualifications to meet all likely demands, could have a preference, valid throughout a port, over general unemployed and thereby secure greater certainty of livelihood. Registration schemes on these lines were first inaugurated at Liverpool in 1912 and at Bristol in 1916 and are still in operation in those ports. In 1919 a Committee was appointed in London under the chairmanship of the Hon. Mr.

Justice Roche to deal with a situation of extreme difficulty resulting from demobilisation and the change over from war conditions. In accordance with the recommendations of that Committee a scheme was introduced which, with the co-operation of all the port interests in London, has developed to such a degree of efficiency that it may justly be regarded as a triumph of co-operative effort. The Report of the Shaw Court of Inquiry in 1920, emphasised that registration was the essential first step to a solution of the casual labour problem, and as a result most other ports considered or actually introduced schemes of registration and further reference to this matter is made under the appropriate heading (see para. 21).

18. In addition to the inherent problems created by the sudden and violent fluctuations in the demands for port labour as a whole there is the added difficulty of co-ordinating the separate labour demands in ports with numbers of individual employers.

These employers in general have had little concern with the nature and incidence of the demands of their neighbours. It is inevitable that the fluctuating requirements of each exert their full effect in creating intermittent employment for the individual workers. It is impossible under such conditions to take advantage of any compensatory features such as would be the case if the workers being discharged by one employer could be directed to another employer who could make use of their services. Various factors contribute to this difficulty, e.g. the practice of many employers to engage labour at an individual "call-place." It will readily be appreciated that, where there are many "call-places" in a port with no co-ordination between them, the pool of labour is so dispersed that each call-place tends to maintain its own pool. This results either in a larger total pool in a port than would be necessary if the supply of labour was concentrated and could be drawn upon to meet all demands, or in the employment of outside labour, simply because recognised port workers are not at the particular place where the demand arises, though unemployed elsewhere; in either event it results in under-employment for the individual workers.

19. It is recognised that greater mobility among the workers is essential to overcome casual conditions. While the existence of individual call-places must contribute materially towards immobility there are various other causes, all of which prevent a proper relation between supply and demand.

Various attempts have been made to introduce a system of co-ordination for the purpose of improving distribution in connection with registration schemes. In Liverpool, surplus stands with telephones were established when the scheme was first launched with the object of providing employers with a second opportunity of

obtaining registered workers in the event of a shortage at their own call-places. Unhappily this system was not successfully applied.

While practical difficulties have prevented the recommendation or adoption of a uniform method of co-ordinating the engagement of labour, most of the ports have given earnest consideration to this vital question. As a result there has been a general movement towards better organisation and control of the labour supply. In some cases a means of inter-communication between call-places and individual employers has been provided with the object of ensuring that as far as possible the supply of registered workers is utilised before other labour is engaged. In the case of London systems of surplus stands for specified sections of this Port are under active consideration. At a number of other ports, where local conditions permit, all of the employers, or sections of them, have been able to arrange for the engagement of labour to be carried out at a common call-place. In connection with the Registration Scheme at Bristol the call-places at Avonmouth and Portishead are centralised and at the City Docks an effective surplus stand has been in operation for a number of years. In addition a jointly remunerated official is employed who is able to facilitate the mobility of labour.

In some cases, therefore, a considerable improvement has been made in the method of distributing and using the supply of registered workers.

20. It is most important not to under-estimate the difficulties which have been encountered in the pursuit of decasualisation thus far or to overlook the special problems which are peculiar to certain ports, particularly those engaged in a seasonal traffic. In such cases the fluctuations in the labour demands are often cyclical in character so that a measure of unemployment of a type to which all industrial workers are liable is experienced.

There is a vital difference between unemployment caused through a definite and measurable depression in trade and under-employment which is caused by the retention and unorganised use of an excessive pool of labour. If, for example, as in the case of certain industries, systematic short-time working is practised because of some temporary depression and in the hope that the workers can be re-absorbed upon an anticipated early revival of trade there is justification in resorting to this expedient. Where however, as in the case of the Port Transport Industry, through long periods, it is apparent that no such absorption into regular employment is possible for all the workers regarded as attached to the Industry, we cannot help regarding an over-stocked pool as a permanent disability, and source of danger to the well-being of the workers in so far as it restricts the power of the Industry to maintain its efficiency and the opportunity for bona-fide port workers of obtaining an adequate livelihood.

PART I (1)—PORT EMPLOYMENT-REGISTRATION.

The Establishment of Registration Schemes.

21. Among the various measures adopted with the object of overcoming casual conditions, probably none has had such a large effect nor been so generally applied as the system of registration or, as it might be described, the regulation of the supply of labour for port work by granting a general preference in port employment to selected workers, the numbers being determined on the basis of the labour requirements.

As already stated this system was first established in the port of Liverpool and has since been adopted and is now in operation in 31 ports. In the case of 25* ports the schemes are jointly administered by Committees representative of the port employers and the workpeople's organisations, while in the remaining cases they are operated by the employers, usually with some measure of consultation with representatives of the workpeople, (for details see Appendices II and III). These schemes together are supported by over 1,000 port transport undertakings and include nearly 90,000 port workers. In this connection, however, it is important to appreciate that large numbers of other employees of these undertakings, particularly indoor clerical workers and permanent weekly men, are often excluded from the schemes, no doubt because they are regarded as unaffected by the conditions the schemes are intended to rectify. In the case of other ports specified in Appendix II of this Report, the appropriate parties have not been able, for various reasons, to establish registration schemes. It may be said, however, that all told over two-thirds of the port transport workers in the country of the classes concerned are directly covered by the existing registration schemes.

It is not without interest to note that registration schemes are in operation at all the major ports with the exception of Glasgow and the collection of ports generally known as the Tyne and Wear ports.

We have invited and obtained written evidence giving full details of all the registration schemes and, in an endeavour to discover the difficulties which have prevented their establishment, have obtained statements from the responsible employers' and workpeople's organisations in certain ports without such schemes.

In the case of 16 typical registration schemes and three ports without schemes, representatives of the various employers' and workpeople's interests, have given oral evidence before us.

22. Having been able by the above means to make an exhaustive study of the principles and operation of registration, we have no

* Since the hearing of evidence the Registration Scheme at Ardrossan has been suspended.

hesitation in recording our view that it is a satisfactory and essential first step in the decasualisation of port labour. In actual operation it is apparent that it has succeeded in bringing some measure of order out of chaos and that it is a necessary foundation for any other steps which may be taken still further to regularise port employment. We are fully appreciative of the views expressed by the official witness from the Ministry of Labour that, effectively operated, registration schemes can be of material assistance to the Ministry in the administration of the Unemployment Insurance scheme. Indeed, it is extremely important to take note of these satisfactory indirect results when considering whether direct positive results have fallen short of expectations. It is certain that registration schemes have definitely assisted in steadying the employment situation during a period of great difficulty. It is, however, commonly asserted by practically all witnesses that the failure to attain greater positive results has been largely due to the general depression in trade which has dogged most of the schemes since their establishment. It may be safely asserted that the employment situation within the Industry during this trying period would have been far more serious but for their existence.

23. We find that there is general commendation of the system of registration when jointly administered by Committees representative of the port employers and the workpeople and we have noted with particular interest the statement by both employers' and workpeople's representatives in evidence before us that the Committees in working towards a common ideal are able to exert a potent influence upon the maintenance of good relations between employers and workpeople and the general efficiency of the ports.

Of the general good effect which registration has on the Industry as a whole there can be no doubt, and there is much evidence of a will to co-operate on the part of all concerned which augurs well for the future. We feel convinced that those ports at which registration schemes are not operative can with advantage follow this noteworthy example by making a determined effort to overcome the actual indifference or more serious points of dispute which obstruct them. Clearly where the larger ports with their numerous conflicting interests and complex lay-out have succeeded, it should not prove impossible for the smaller ports to succeed, if the same general spirit of co-operation animates their endeavours.

Failure to establish and maintain Registration Schemes.

24. Among the ports which have not so far succeeded in establishing or continuing registration schemes, there are many minor ports, and while it has not been possible for us to ascertain the factors which have controlled the situation in all cases, we have examined witnesses and obtained written statements in respect of ports which

were likely to be able to afford information of general significance about the causes of failure.

25. In this connection we have learned of the refusal of the workpeople at the important port of Glasgow, since the first proposals in 1912, to comply with the consistent desire of the port employers for a scheme of registration under joint auspices. We have received written and oral evidence from both the parties concerned and we feel that the employers' wish to take their part jointly with the workpeople's representatives in regulating the supply of labour is reasonable and that the attempt on the part of the workers themselves to limit the supply in rough approximation to their judgment of the demand, constitutes a definite obstacle to the adoption of other measures which are necessary to ensure more regular employment for the general body of port workers.

26. In the case of the Tyne and Wear Ports and the Hartlepoons, the employers in each case submitted written statements and appointed representatives to give oral evidence before us. We regret that we were denied the advantage of similar evidence on behalf of the workpeople at these ports. To this extent the evidence in our possession is incomplete. Nevertheless we cannot help concluding that the situation in these ports is confused by a lack of appreciation of the advantages of registration made so manifest in other cases and that this has led naturally to the indifference to which one witness attributed failure. The witnesses spoke of the friendly relationship which existed between the employers and the workpeople and of the fact that, in accordance with the common practice, the employers individually have preference systems. It is, however, apparent that nothing is provided in concert to regularise the employment of those workers who are not covered by individual systems and that many of the men must, in consequence, suffer from the full effects of extremely casual conditions. We must give due weight to the topographical and other difficulties which, though not unique, undoubtedly complicate the situation, particularly on the Tyne and Wear, but we consider that, having regard to all the circumstances, there are no factors which cannot be overcome by determined and combined action, and that all that is required is a more concentrated study of the local problem in all its phases, particularly that of the unprotected casuals.

27. We also obtained a written statement from the port employers at Kirkcaldy which unhappily showed that a registration scheme broke down at its inception through a dispute about the place of issue of the registration tokens and on the question of trade union membership. We shall have occasion to refer again to these questions which have arisen also in connection with established schemes.

In the case of the port of Aberdeen neither of the parties concerned was able to furnish us with any information beyond the statement from the employers that no action had been taken or has been contemplated since the breakdown of the original scheme.

The operation of Registration Schemes.

28. During the course of the evidence, we have been made aware of a number of important factors in the establishment and operation of registration schemes which are either worthy of special mention as contributing towards successful achievement or appear to us to constitute or likely to create difficulties which should be carefully examined and removed.

Constitution and appointment of Registration Committees.

29. The Registration Committees in the various ports are composed of members nominated and appointed by the appropriate Associations of Port Employers and Workpeople; the constitution usually being approved by the National Joint Council for the Industry. The Ministry of Labour, as a general rule, has taken no part in the formation of these Committees except in the case of the Bristol Port Labour Committee which has had a continuous existence since its establishment in 1916. In this case the members are appointed by the Minister from nominations submitted by the appropriate interests in that port, and the Chairman is appointed by the Minister after informal consultation with the parties concerned.

The formation of Committees on the basis of balanced panels of Employers' and Workpeople's representatives is the general practice. Such a constitution renders it necessary to obtain decisions by agreement but the evidence we have received shows that these have generally been secured without difficulty. (Recommendation para. 109.)

30. In the case of the Chairmanship there is some diversity of practice. A few Committees have an independent Chairman. Others have joint Chairmen and in some cases the Chairman is elected from among the members for an indefinite period or at each meeting. While none of these methods appears to present any difficulty, we have noted that where there is continuity in office, the Chairmen have been able to exert a very potent influence upon co-operative effort. In the case of the London Committee with joint Chairmen, it has been by the wish of the workpeople's side, for the sake of continuity, that the employers' nominee has acted as Chairman at meetings with notable success. In this case witnesses have spoken with enthusiasm about the influence exerted

by both the joint Chairmen* which has assisted materially in the great progress which has been made.

31. In the appointment of Secretaries there is still greater diversity. The arrangement by which the Ministry of Labour affords secretarial and clerical assistance to approved joint registration schemes has led the majority of Committees to obtain the services of a Ministry of Labour official, usually the local Exchange Manager, as Secretary. Such an arrangement should be advantageous for the purpose of co-ordinating the work of registration with the local administration of the Unemployment Insurance scheme. In the case of London the Secretary appointed by the Ministry is employed solely on the work of the Registration Scheme. In a few cases, however, the Committees have confined their acceptance of departmental assistance to the provision of clerical assistance and stationery. In this event an Employers' representative or Trade Union official acts as Secretary. In such cases there is consultation between the two sides. (Recommendation para. 112.)

Work of Committees and General Administration.

32. The principal administrative duties performed by or on behalf of the Committees are the issue, exchange and withdrawal of tallies or registration cards, the compilation of records, general enquiries into individual cases, the compilation of statistics and other matters affecting the general control of the scheme. In all these matters there is considerable diversity of practice. While in general the Secretary performs all the administrative duties, evidence was given in one or two cases to the effect that important items of work such as the actual issue of registration tokens to the individual workers was carried out either by an employers' or workpeople's representative. The view was expressed generally that this should always be done by the Secretary under directions of the Joint Committee.

An acute situation has arisen in the port of Leith owing to a dispute on this question, while at Greenock the employers have emphasised their preference for the performance of all the administrative duties by the Secretary of the Committee. (Recommendation Para. 109.)

33. Although we shall have occasion at a later stage to refer in greater detail to the subject of co-operation with the Unemployment Insurance administration, we may state in connection with the general work of Registration Committees that they do not

* *Note.*—The Committee have learned with deep regret of the recent death of Mr. C. W. Parsons who gave valuable evidence before the Inquiry and, as Joint Chairman with Mr. T. W. Condon, made a large contribution to the success of the London scheme.

generally appear to have any real concern with the arrangements of the Ministry in connection with unemployment of registered port workers. There is no definite connection between the work of the local 'Employment Exchanges' and the administration of the Registration Schemes. The Registration Committees are not regarded by the Ministry as having any part in the machinery of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme as is the case with Local Employment Committees. Whereas the latter are statutory bodies appointed in connection with the general administration of Employment Exchanges, the former are appointed by the Industry under its own arrangements. In the case of Bristol, however, we were informed that the Port Labour Committee controlling the Registration Scheme has a definite status in the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme.

Scope of Registration Schemes and the extent of Support.

34. The eligibility of employers for inclusion in the registration schemes is invariably determined on the basis of the classes of workers employed. Thus, in addition to those employers whose operations are solely concerned with port transport, a number of schemes include employers principally concerned in other industries who are parties to the schemes in respect of an ancillary establishment, concerned with the import or export of their own commodities.

In all ports where registration schemes have been established, without exception the large majority of port employers support the schemes and failure to become parties is confined to comparatively small firms. In certain cases it is apparent that these small firms are sufficiently numerous to interfere with effective operation, but in most cases the witnesses have stated that their non-compliance is not of serious account. Committees have no powers of compulsion, but in one case it was stated that as all employers supported the voluntary scheme it was regarded by its members as compulsory for that port.

35. Having regard to the voluntary nature of all the existing registration schemes, this question of compulsion has arisen naturally as one which may vitally affect the future. Practically all the witnesses have referred to it, and it is clear that there is a marked divergence of opinion. The representatives of the work-people, who hold that compulsion or some statutory power to enforce the schemes would be advantageous as a means of making them more effective, put forward the argument that such powers would not have any effect upon the large majority who now comply with the rules laid down, but that they would overcome the opposition of the small minority who in some instances reduce the chances of successful working. On the other hand, it is impossible

to overlook the powerful plea against such a vital change from existing practice which is put forward by the representatives of employers in schemes which are working satisfactorily under present arrangements. In addition to their opinion that such powers could not ensure any real improvement, they suggest that they would destroy the present element of free will to co-operate which has been shown to be such a material factor of success hitherto and has had such valuable by-products. It is also pointed out that all the achievement under voluntary arrangements has been attained in the face of an extremely difficult economic situation and that this is not the time to change the arrangements, but rather to put forward a more determined effort which will bring the failing sections of the Industry up to the point of attainment proved to be a practicable possibility. (Recommendation para. 108.)

36. We have particularly noted that there is a wide diversity in the classes of workpeople included in the various schemes. This is to some extent a natural consequence of differences of practice. Most schemes exclude coal-trimmers employed under the National Coal Tariff. (See para. 72.) Other schemes exclude shore gangs, ship and boiler cleaners, etc., although in a few cases some or all of these classes are registered.

In the case of London a very full definition of the scope of the scheme has been drawn up, but in other cases the only guide appears to be the application of the working agreement.

There is also a wide diversity of practice and opinion in regard to the inclusion of permanent weekly workers, and while in some cases they are excluded simply because they are not immediately affected by the casual conditions, in others they are included for statistical reasons and because the nature of their employment may change so that they will require the protection of registration. In the case of London, the difficulty of providing for certain permanent grades and discouraging them from registering themselves as a safeguard for the future has been solved by the provision of a special register, the size of which is not subject to the same adjustment as the ordinary register. Workers in this register have a right to registration, on certain conditions, if discharged from their existing employment. The cases where registration is necessary, however, are stated to be very few in number.

37. There are also variations of practice in regard to the more casual workers or, it may be said, differences of view as to the exact situation of the "ring fence" to which registration may be likened. Provision is sometimes made, for example, at Bristol and Grimsby, for a second group, or reserve, of registered men. All these differences of scope appear to have, *inter alia*, an important bearing upon the ascertainment by comparative statistics of the extent of decasualisation. For example, at Bristol a certain

percentage of employment in respect of Group A men may not indicate the same degree of decasualisation as at another port where the percentage of employment covers permanent, regular and casual workers, and grades of dock workers which, in other ports, are excluded from registration.

These local variations in scope have an important effect on official statistics of unemployment and considerably detract from their value. (Recommendations paras. 109 and 111.)

Labour wastage and Recruitment.

38. The regulation of the supply of port labour by registration necessarily renders the question of labour wastage and recruitment important. In ports where there is no registration scheme, an adequate supply of general labour readily available results, in most cases, in disregard of the sources from which labour is obtained or of the extent of the wastage. These matters could only have become of serious moment if there had been any fear of general shortage of labour. The evidence we have received shows that it has been the almost invariable experience at all ports to have large surpluses of labour, and during the early years of the operation of registration schemes, the question of wastage and recruitment has not received the detailed consideration which, in other circumstances, would have been essential for the purpose of obviating an actual breakdown of their purpose.

In the case of one or two schemes, however, definite provision has been made by which wastages of labour within the registration scheme can be made up, and any general shortage relieved. In any selected body of labour there is bound to be some wastage, and in view of the nature of registration schemes the wastage in these schemes requires particular consideration as it definitely results in a continual reduction in the labour supply. There are no general statistics available to show the extent of wastage, and the usual practice hitherto has been to make up the wastage, as may be necessary, at the time of the revision of the registers, when its amount can be measured.

39. Each scheme applies its local principles for the recruitment of labour, and there are no special sources from which labour is obtained, with perhaps two exceptions. It is interesting to note that in spite of the uncertainties of port employment, port workers throughout the country have strongly supported the hereditary principle, and it is noteworthy that registration schemes have invariably preserved this characteristic by giving a special preference when recruiting to the sons of port workers. This practice is generally commended. Another source from which port labour is recruited is from among seamen. This, again, is a natural source. The Merchant Navy is closely related to the Port Transport

Industry, and it is natural for seamen, in looking for a shore job, to turn to that of which, as seamen, they have the most knowledge.

40. Because of the state of the schemes generally, however, it has been the general experience of registration schemes to have little cause for recruitment. Some recruitment is still proceeding in certain cases; mostly for the purpose of making up wastage. At the same time a number of witnesses have stated that, in view of the serious depression in trade and the over-supply of registered labour, they have strictly curtailed, or completely stopped the replacement of wastage, and have allowed natural wastage to have its full effect and taken advantage of this as a simple means of bringing about a steady reduction in the size of their register. This practice, however, has created a new problem which is rapidly becoming one of serious moment. The body of registered port workers in the course of the years has rapidly increased its average age. Many of the older men are continuing in port work until infirmity or death takes them from the pool of labour.

Certain of the Committees have produced statistics which show that a high percentage of registered men fall within the age group from 45 to 70, and that the numbers of men in the younger groups are exceptionally small. A continuance of this tendency must lead to a gradual falling off of efficiency. Indeed, the present practice of some Committees of recruiting fresh labour at intervals, although the size of their registers would suggest that such a step is unwarranted, is stated to be taken by them with the object of obviating this problem of age before it becomes serious. It has been suggested that an opportunity for the recruitment of younger men can be made by clearing the elderly men from the register. It is, however, natural that registration committees should be unwilling to take such a course, having regard to the fact that these elderly men have put in years of good service for the Industry, and that apart from Old Age Pension there is nothing which they can be offered as an inducement to give up port work.

It is indeed particularly noticeable that port employers as a rule take a good deal of trouble to find work for such men and numbers of them are provided with light work and generally less arduous duties, which they can efficiently perform.

41. Having regard, no doubt, to the general employment situation, registration committees as a rule have not considered it necessary to take any special steps with the object of obtaining a reserve for recruitment. In the case of some of the larger schemes, they obtain a great many applications for registration from outside workers, and it is apparent that they would have no difficulty in obtaining the required number of workers, if need arose for any large recruitment. It is, however, of interest to note that Bristol and Grimsby have, in fact, provided such a reserve by the provision of a second group of registered workers who are offered port work

only when the supply of first group registered men is exhausted. We understand that these reserve groups comprise various grades of workers who are usually employed in and around these ports on duties closely related to those performed by the first group registered port workers. In other cases, however, the view has been expressed that this provision is undesirable, although no specific reasons have been given to support the opinion.

42. In connection with the recruitment of labour, we have had placed before us a number of difficulties which require consideration. It has been pointed out in one or two cases that the establishment of registration schemes has been prevented by the unwillingness of the employers to agree that trade union membership should be a condition in the recruitment of labour.

In many schemes, the rules provide that men accepted for registration shall be eligible for membership of a specified trade union which is represented on the Committee; a provision of which the large majority of workers naturally take advantage. This provision establishes the admittedly desirable principle, implied in all other cases, that all the men included on the register shall be able to obtain the benefit of direct and competent representation of their interests as recognised port workers. There are some registration schemes in operation where trade union membership is compulsory, but this is not a condition precedent to registration. In such cases a fresh entrant to the register is required to become a member of the union on his recruitment.

The principal objection of employers to such a rule in the registration scheme is that if, subsequently, a man is in arrears with his union contribution, they are expected, on the joint committee, to agree to the cancellation of registration in view of a breach of the rules on the man's part; thus the registration committee is placed in the position of exercising disciplinary powers in a matter which the employers consider rests primarily between the man and his trade union. It is clear that employers as a whole are favourable to trade union membership. Employers object, however, to this provision in a registration scheme on the ground that it deprives them in this respect of their proper share of control in a joint partnership. On the other hand the Union witnesses urged that registration schemes should not be used to prejudice any existing agreements between the parties under which preference of employment is guaranteed to Union members.

This question has become more or less acute at the majority of the Scottish ports, either by itself or in conjunction with the question of the place of issue of registration books, and has affected the measure of co-operation between the respective parties or led, as in the case of Ardrossan and Kirkcaldy, to an actual breakdown of the scheme.

Registration Tokens and Employment Records.

43. In the original registration schemes at Liverpool and London the only purpose of the registration token was to provide a means of identity by which employers could ensure that preference in port employment was given to the *bona-fide* port worker. The token issued in such cases was a brass tally, which bore only a registration number. Tallies are still used at Liverpool, Southampton and Garston. In a few cases the token of identity is a registration card or certificate which fulfils the same purpose as the tally but usually bears the name of the holder as well as a number.

At the present time, however, the majority of the schemes use as the token of registration "employment record books," which were first used at Bristol in 1916. The great advantage of such books over the simpler tokens is that they are stamped by employers for each period of engagement and so provide a ready means by which the employment record of the individual holder can be ascertained.

The need of such a record has now been accepted by all registration schemes as it is only by means of such information that proper control over the supply of registered workers can be exercised and other action taken towards the regulation of employment. It is usual in the case of schemes which have not adopted this form of record book to carry out some other procedure with the same object. Thus in Southampton and some of the South Wales ports, the employers render daily returns of engagements from which are compiled employment records of the individual workers. In Liverpool wages statistics are compiled by the clearing houses and, although no time employment records are kept, the wages statistics are regarded as equally valuable.

It is also stated that the present procedure could be amplified without difficulty if occasion demanded.

While it is agreed in London that an accurate employment record would be desirable, there is opposition to its adoption on the ground that the additional clerical work would create difficulty and that in such a large port, it would be impossible to ensure its completion by all concerned. The registration book now used in London in place of the brass tally is peculiar to that port, and provides a cover for the holder's Unemployment Book. In this case the record of contributions at the expiry of the book annually is taken as a rough indication of the worker's record of employment, and in cases of doubt more detailed information is obtained by special inquiry.

44. In this connection witnesses from certain ports have referred to the failure of some employers to complete the record, the consequences of which might be to render the whole of the employment statistics of no value. The employment record is undoubtedly

a vital part of the machinery of registration which requires more careful consideration than appears to have been given to it in the past. Such records if properly compiled are of the utmost value in studying the problem either locally or nationally and individual employment records form the foundation upon which all kinds of information about port work and labour can be built up.

The value of employment records generally is shown by the interesting statistics which have been supplied to us by the Bristol Port Labour Committee and the Employers' Association. The adoption and full use of the record book enables the Port Labour Committee to ascertain at any time the individual worker's record over a period of years and to study fluctuations in the work.

We understand also that the Employers' Association, under its own arrangements, has adopted a system under which each employer renders regular returns, sub-classified into classes of work and showing the numbers of men engaged daily. This information is collated in the offices of the Association, and constitutes a most valuable addition to the information in the possession of the Port Labour Committee. By this means it is possible in the case of this Port to show statistically the nature and extent of the fluctuations in work and generally to study and understand fully the factors in the port labour problem. It is, however, noticeable that some other ports which have adopted a record book, appear to make no attempt to collate or use the information. While, in a few cases, it is apparent that the machinery itself is imperfect for the reasons stated above, in others there appears to be a failure to appreciate its value and make use of it (Recommendation, paras. 109 and 111).

Adjustment of the Register.

45. Generally the statistics submitted in evidence show that the majority of schemes include more workers than are required to meet the present labour demand, and, in some cases more than would cover the maximum demand over recent periods. The apparent failure to adjust the registers so as to bring them within closer relation to the requirements is explained by witnesses on the following grounds; (a) that there has been an exceptional depression in trade; (b) that regard has to be paid to the important question of mobility; (c) that violent seasonal or day-to-day fluctuations would be likely to cause shortages of labour; (d) that adjustment can best be made by natural wastage.

As has already been stated the disinclination to cancel registration, without question, in the case of poor records of work, which would in theory at least suggest itself as an obvious means of relating supply and demand, results partly from the fact that poor records are often produced by elderly men who cannot stand a real chance against the younger and stronger men. Employers, who on personal grounds would like to give this chance, are bound to

consider the possibility of accidents arising from physical decline attendant upon increasing age and the general question of industrial efficiency. Thus, while many elderly port workers can and do obtain regular employment, the consideration of poor records in connection with registration does raise the age question. Registration Committees, however, charged to cancel registration in the case of poor records, are naturally reluctant to face the certainty that they are denying every chance of work and reasonable livelihood to an elderly worker who has given years of service. This method of decasualisation is, therefore, confronted with a serious difficulty.

At the same time, there is evidence that some Committees have exercised the powers of adjusting the registers with unwarranted caution. Faced with a worker pleading extenuating circumstances in excuse for a poor record, they appear to regard the withdrawal of a registration book even temporarily as more drastic than would be the discharge of a worker in other industries from his actual employment. Such timidity must be misplaced when it is realised that failure to act, which results in a definitely excessive body of labour, must be calculated to continue within the registration schemes the very conditions which they were devised to overcome.

46. Cancellation of registration, no doubt, is regarded as drastic because it is looked upon largely as a disciplinary measure. It may, however, be in the interests of a worker to take this course and thus divert him from odd-work to a new avenue which will eventually lead to more stable employment. In certain cases where a poor record appeared to be the result of slackness on the worker's part the threat of cancellation as a disciplinary measure has been shown to have desirable effects. It was stated that a warning of this nature resulted during a succeeding period in a considerable increase in the amount of employment obtained.

Having regard to the remarks made about the completion of records of employment, it has to be noted that some Committees either have no machinery to get the information necessary for the adjustment of registers or have failed to make their machinery sufficiently satisfactory to enable them to act upon the data available.

Many of the views expressed about the supply of labour necessary in registration schemes are clearly based upon general observations. Until such time as the question has been examined with the assistance of carefully compiled statistical data it is difficult to say what measure of decasualisation has been achieved and what are the real needs of the future in the vital matter of the supply of registered labour.

47. In view of the general difficulty which some schemes have experienced in this matter, the achievement of other schemes is particularly noteworthy. In the case of both London and Bristol

there has been steady and continued progress. Indeed the general records of both schemes have been rightly held up to us as examples which prove what is possible by determined effort and the full co-operation of all the parties concerned. (Recommendation—paras. 109 and 111.)

Periodic Revisions of the Register.

48. While the adjustment of the register by the consideration of doubtful cases can, to some extent, ensure that the record of registered men does, in fact, continue to represent the pool of port labour actually available for the work of the port, the changes through wastage and other causes are so considerable that it has generally been found necessary to overhaul the register more completely at specified periods. In the case of the original schemes in Liverpool and London no fixed provision was made for a complete overhaul of this nature and such action was decided upon by the appropriate Committee as occasion demanded. In the case of the Bristol scheme and those schemes which were established after the Reports of the Maclean Committee 1924, the adoption of registration tokens with a fixed date of expiry provided a natural opportunity for a complete periodic revision in compliance with one of the recommendations of that body. The dates and periods fixed by the various schemes for this revision, however, are diverse and determined largely in each case by the locally fixed dates of expiry of the registration tokens. The registers in most schemes are subject to half-yearly revision. In Southampton where brass tallies are still in use it is carried out biennially, while in the case of London, provision has been made since the complete revision of the scheme itself commencing in 1925, for an annual revision of the register coincident with the exchange of the registration and unemployment books.

49. There is considerable diversity both in the method and extent of the revision. In some cases all registered men applying for re-issue are granted new tokens and revision is confined to cancellation of registration in the case of men who fail to apply and are, therefore, presumed to have left dock work. In other cases consideration is given to poor records of work disclosed by an examination of the expired registration books and the worker is required to state his case for continued recognition as a *bona-fide* port worker before a new token is issued. In the case of one port (Garston) the record of "attendance" is taken as the determining factor in deciding upon a re-issue. In such a case there can be no adjustment of the register strictly on the basis of the labour requirements.

50. It has been pointed out to us that a complete revision of the registers is really a more exhaustive form of the adjustment which, in all the effectively operated schemes, is taking place almost from

day-to-day. Its desirability, however, is amply illustrated by the remarkable results achieved by this means over a period of years in three of the most important schemes in the country. In Bristol the war needs of the port and the return of pre-war dockers had so swollen the register that by January, 1921, the register totalled nearly 4,800 men. Since that time, however, regular reductions in the register have been made at the six-monthly revisions, with the result that the total of the present register is under 2,800 men.

In Liverpool, where several complete revisions have been undertaken by the express decision of the responsible Committee as occasion appeared to demand, war conditions rendered it necessary to open the register to every man who appeared suitable for dock work. By revision a total of 35,000 men registered at the end of 1919 has now been reduced to below 21,500 and the Committee is at present engaged in considering the need for a further examination of the register.

In London the scheme was established in 1920 with an original register of approximately 61,000 men; which was steadily reduced by examination of records and the clearance of doubtful cases to 52,000 men at the time the Committee was re-constituted in 1925. From that time probably the largest revision in the history of registration was inaugurated which took nearly three years of concentrated effort to complete. The work of revision, it may be noted, was further complicated by the wholesale entry of a large body of unregistered workers who had succeeded in establishing a serious claim to be regarded as port workers in spite of registration and whose cases had to be considered individually. This onerous task was completed in 1928 and resulted in a register of under 40,000 workers, which has since been further reduced to 37,000 in 1930.

51. Such noteworthy results as these will possibly suggest that there has been some drastic exclusion of bona-fide workers from port work. It is, therefore, important to emphasise that this has not been the case and it may be said that no worker who could prove that he had real ground for claiming port work as his regular occupation has been denied the opportunity of working by cancelling registration. On the contrary, it is apparent that what has been done has given recognised port workers an improved opportunity of obtaining a reasonable livelihood, through the exclusion of those who regarded port work as a stop-gap or a means of supplementing their opportunities of livelihood in other directions.

The general depression in trade might be expected to reduce the number of workers employed even under casual conditions and to diminish individual opportunities. We are, however, assured by witnesses that the reductions in the supply of port labour at these ports have resulted in a marked improvement in the general opportunity of employment for the recognised port workers.

The witnesses who spoke of the situation in Bristol and London pointed out that they had reached the stage when the establishment

of improved methods of labour distribution was becoming vital in order to obviate increased recruitment.

Hence, revisions of the register not only provide a satisfactory means of ensuring that records are a true reflection of the labour situation in the port, but also give an opportunity for an examination by the Committee of the progress towards decasualisation. In the three cases we have quoted the results are remarkable and afford noteworthy examples of positive achievements in this direction in face of a general employment situation which, but for these steps, must have led to a serious flooding of the port labour market. It is interesting to compare such results with the experience of port labour in the days before registration, in similar economic situations. (Recommendation : paras. 109 and 111.)

Disciplinary Powers, etc.

52. To enable registration schemes to operate effectively a high standard of service on the part of the registered workers and of compliance with their provisions on the part of employers must be secured. On this question witnesses have expressed very encouraging views, and it is evident that the number of offences against the rules and general provisions of registration schemes is negligible.

The rules of most schemes give power to the Joint Committees to take disciplinary action on ordinary breaches of the rules, while in many cases this power covers all forms of misdemeanour, such as pilferage, misconduct, and breaches of working rules, etc. In the case of registered workers the penalties range from a simple warning to the temporary or permanent cancellation of registration. It is, however, very exceptional for the Joint Committee to impose a greater penalty than a warning.

The failure of an employer or his representative to give effect to the provisions of a scheme of this nature is of more serious moment than is sometimes appreciated, but no penalty can be imposed, except upon the individual offender. Joint Committees have usually adopted the course of appealing to the principals of the firm implicated. In the few cases where examples of action of this nature could be quoted, it was invariably shown to be efficacious, because the principals exerted their influence over the individual offender ; usually a foreman or other official in direct contact with the port workers.

There has been almost unanimity among witnesses in favour of the exercise of disciplinary power by committees under joint auspices and strong evidence has been given to the effect that registration schemes have an extremely good influence upon industrial relations, and the general working efficiency of the ports.

In this connection it is interesting to note the views of the workers' representatives of the port of Glasgow who object to registration from a fear that among other things it affords a means of

coercion and discipline. Their representatives stated in evidence that they did not oppose the exercise of discipline, but preferred to keep such power in their own hands. The evidence we have received on the disciplinary powers of joint registration committees indicated clearly that such a fear is without justification and we are impressed by the circumspection and humane sense of justice with which all offenders against the good order of the schemes are treated. Indeed, the evidence on this matter is a remarkable record of good behaviour and fair treatment on the part of all concerned.

Local Autonomy.

53. Our examination of the existing registration schemes has necessarily brought out very clearly the effects of the complete local autonomy under which they have operated. The diversity of practice shown by our examination is to be expected under such conditions and it has been necessary for us to consider how far, if at all, it is desirable that there should be a unifying influence. In broad outline all the schemes are similar, while certain local peculiarities are plainly the result of organic difference in the ports themselves and the work they are required to undertake. It is obvious, for example, that a port without tidal difficulties and with regular shipping traffic must present an entirely different proposition from a port subject to seasonal or tramp traffic and marked tidal changes and that these differences must vitally affect the labour arrangements. At the same time there are different degrees of attainment both in establishment and operation of schemes which cannot be attributed to such uncontrollable factors.

Indifference on the part of certain ports or individual employers and workpeople and in a few cases actual opposition have been admitted by certain witnesses and have been shown to be left without treatment. This evidence naturally raises the question whether there is any influence which can and should be brought to bear as a means of securing further efforts.

54. It has been proposed, as a part of other measures, that a new national body should be formed whose principal duty, in so far as registration is concerned, would be to exert this influence. On the other hand other witnesses, while appreciating the need of some central driving force to ensure a common effort, have urged the importance of preserving local autonomy within generally accepted broad principles and have suggested that the stimulus of the present Inquiry and a general call for further effort, combined with definite action by the existing National Joint Council, would achieve all that is necessary or desirable. Witnesses in general set great store upon the principle of keeping registration entirely separate from questions of wages and working conditions. (Recommendation : para. 110.)

PART I (2)—PORT EMPLOYMENT—LABOUR ENGAGEMENT, DISTRIBUTION AND USE.

System of Labour Engagement.

55. It will be evident that a material factor in the achievement of registration schemes in keeping the registers of workers close to the normal labour requirements is the system for distributing and engaging labour. The area of many of the ports is so great that restriction of the registers to the number of men shown statistically to be the number who could obtain regular employment would merely create serious shortages of labour and provide a very big loophole for the engagement of general unemployed, particularly in those cases where there is only one register of port workers. The alternatives in such cases are the retention of a surplus body of registered workers or the frequent engagement of unregistered men. The existence of a second group of men at Bristol with knowledge of dock work has undoubtedly assisted the responsible Committee in relating the body of registered workers to the normal requirements, while avoiding the undesirable attraction of general unemployed. Men registered in the second group are usually also casually employed in work closely connected with port work and, therefore, constitute a satisfactory reserve of qualified labour for emergency use.

56. In connection with our survey of the existing registration schemes we have taken steps to ascertain the general practice at the principal ports in the matter of labour engagement. The Maclean Committee (1924) in a Memorandum issued in February 1928 called the attention of the ports to this question and it appears from the evidence we have received that it is recognised as a problem of serious moment, the solution of which is a vital factor in achieving decasualisation. The evidence also shows that there are still a number of ports with numerous individual and unconnected "call places," and that engagement "at the ship's side" is a common practice.

These "call places" are often merely geographical points such as the dock or wharf gates, the corner of a street, which by common consent or long standing custom have become generally recognised in the locality for the offer of and applications for port work.

Where such a practice exists the general body of workers in a port is dispersed into numerous smaller pools of labour. Experience has shown that certain of these pools are frequently short of requirements and the employer is obliged, having regard to the important time factor, to make up the shortage from other labour, often of uncertain qualifications, while at the same time the other small pools of registered port workers have a surplus at similar local points at which they have applied for work. Though better qualified for the work than the odd labour engaged as an emergency

measure, these men remain unemployed simply because they are not in the right place at the call time. It will also be apparent that under such conditions the responsible authorities cannot exercise control over labour movements or applications for work and this raises an important question in connection with Unemployment Insurance. (See paras. 93 and 94.)

57. With a view to overcoming what must be regarded as a general disability a number of ports have considered or adopted a system of engaging labour by means of either :—

(a) Surplus stands, i.e., by retaining the existing call places and providing stands at which men who had failed to obtain employment at the call places would assemble and from which employers could make up any shortages in their labour requirements.

(b) Central stands, i.e. by the abolition of numerous call-places in favour of one call stand where all labour for the port or section of the port would congregate for engagement by the individual firms.

Proposals for surplus stands are now under consideration in London, where the central stand system is regarded as impracticable.

In certain other cases central stands are already in existence and are reported to work satisfactorily, particularly in Manchester where there is a single employer. It appears, however, that only in one or two cases are any special accommodation or facilities provided for the "calling-on" of labour.

The question whether a central or surplus stand system should be adopted appears to have been decided by reference to the configuration of the particular port. For example, in the case of Bristol, whereas at the Avonmouth and Portishead Docks central stands are in operation, at the City Docks which extend for some miles, the Committee has adopted a surplus stand system. This factor of lay-out appears to have decided the question in the Port of London in favour of surplus stands. Where circumstances permit, however, the view is generally held that the central stand system is naturally simpler and more advantageous than the surplus stand system.

Witnesses before us when questioned upon this important matter have indicated a number of practical difficulties in the way of co-ordinating the system of labour engagement so as to render the most efficient service to all vitally concerned. The principal stipulations which appear to be essential are :—

(a) that the central stand is so situated that the men can proceed to the place of work after engagement and arrive by the time that work is due to commence.

In one or two cases it is alleged that this system causes late starts owing to the distance to be travelled after engagement (see also para. 58);

(b) that where two or more stands are necessary for a port they should be in telephonic communication. This requirement also applies to the surplus stand system ;

(c) that the Ministry should provide at the central stand facilities to enable unemployed workers to prove unemployment. In addition to the convenience to the men of this arrangement, it is necessary in order to ensure that the registered men attend regularly at the place of call (see para. 93).

In one or two cases employers' witnesses have stated that they regard the adoption of a central or surplus stand system as undesirable, but in the case of one port the isolation of numerous surplus pools of labour is overcome by inter-communication between employers, who make it their business to ascertain the possibility of port work elsewhere for men surplus to their requirements. The witnesses on behalf of workpeople as well as many employers, however, are in favour of central calling-on arrangements, where the above conditions are fulfilled. (Recommendations : paras. 108, 111 and 113.)

Call Times and notification of Labour Requirements.

58. The times at which labour requirements are notified and port workers are engaged for employment have an important bearing upon the arrangements for labour distribution. The common practice in the industry of "calling-on" labour only a short time before work is due to commence is a natural consequence of the general uncertainty of shipping movements. Indeed it is well-known that until comparatively recent times labour was often engaged at any time throughout each day just as and when the demand arose. The majority of ports now recognise fixed "call-times" usually at 7.45 a.m. and 12.45 p.m. and, in a few cases, a third call for evening and night work. The times vary from this in certain ports, but follow the same principle.

The period agreed upon for the engagement of labour is usually a quarter of an hour, although it is understood that in the case of a large call an extension of this period is permissible for the purpose of completing the engagements. It has been pointed out that in certain cases where labour is now engaged otherwise than at the place of work men lose time after engagement and do not arrive to start work until after the agreed time of commencing. To obviate what may in the aggregate be a considerable loss to the Industry it is clearly essential that the place of engagement should be so situated in proximity to the place of work or, where centralisation cannot be achieved without some sacrifice of this convenience, that the call-time should be so advanced that the men can arrive at their work by the time that work is due to begin.

59. It is known that where possible individual employers give some prior notification of their requirements especially in the case of preference men. Men warned for work the following day as they leave work at night can "walk in" direct to their jobs. We have raised this question with a number of witnesses with a view to ascertaining whether an extension of the practice of prior notification would be possible and desirable. Employers who have been questioned assert that they are usually so uncertain of their requirements beforehand that they would not like to accept the responsibility of giving any kind of warning, in case their expectation was not fulfilled, with the result that men who had been specially encouraged to attend for work were disappointed. Other witnesses have suggested that because of this uncertainty, a prior warning which has not the effect of a binding engagement would be of little or no value in assisting distribution. Doubts as to the practical advantages of this prior notification are emphasised by the statement of nearly all witnesses that the large majority of port workers do in fact get to know where work is most likely to be available. In several ports, the men are entitled and are required to retain their employment until the job is finished; in such circumstances it is unnecessary for these men to attend the call-place except on the starting day.

Engagement of unregistered men.

60. The evidence shows that in all cases where the registration schemes are effectively operated, there is only a small amount of unregistered labour employed. Such engagement as is necessary appears usually to be caused by the non-availability of registered labour through the lack of co-ordination in the system of engagement and occasionally by a refusal of registered men to accept the work offered (see para. 62). In the former case, the necessity for engaging unregistered men is often obviated by the retention of a larger surplus of registered labour than would otherwise be required; a fact which emphasises the important bearing which the system of labour engagement has upon the casual labour problem and its solution.

Provision is usually made for the services of unregistered men to be dispensed with as soon as registered men are available, and it is stated to be very rare for these men to be employed in one spell for a longer period than one or two days. In two cases, as already stated, the ports maintain a definite reserve group over and above the ordinary adjusted register, which still further reduces the necessity for engaging any unregistered men.

It may be said that the inherent fluctuations in port work are too great to permit the employment of unregistered workers to be entirely eliminated.

When it is possible for a registration scheme so to limit its register that practically all the registered workers obtain fairly regular employment and the necessity of engaging unregistered workers still arises only occasionally, it may fairly be said to have reached the limit of practical possibilities in the regularisation of port employment. Even this high degree of achievement is beyond the reach of a few ports where much of the employment is seasonal and the fluctuations of work are so severe that there is in fact no normal requirement which can be used as a basis for adjusting the size of the register. Such cases must always present a special difficulty only to be overcome by local treatment.

Port Labour Inspectors.

61. The evidence given from the Port of Bristol included particulars of a jointly employed and remunerated official known as a Port Labour Inspector. It was stated that although at one time several other ports had such an official who was paid by the State, Bristol is the only port in which the post has been retained. The duties, carried out on behalf of both sides of the Committee, are to assist the distribution of labour, to ensure compliance with the scheme by all parties, to exercise control over discipline and generally to facilitate the work of the port in so far as labour is concerned.

The representatives of the Bristol Committee considered that the services of this official are a great advantage and assist materially in the successful working of the scheme.

Mobility of Labour.

62. With the general acceptance of the theory that regularity of employment depends upon the port workers being as mobile as possible throughout the whole area of a port, and between the various occupations, the evidence we have received has shown that there are various essential or customary practices in most ports which have tended to render port labour immobile, and thus have set a definite limit on the possibility of taking steps to reduce the total pool of labour in closer relation to the normal labour requirements.

The system of labour engagement, to which reference has already been made, is of course an important factor in mobility and the habit of immobility has, no doubt, been fostered where the places of engagement are widely scattered.

The size of certain ports definitely limits the extent to which individual workers may be used throughout the area.

The principal factors which operate against mobility were summarised for us as follows:—

- (a) The desire of the employers and men to seek in the same market, the employer because the men have become accustomed to the requirements of his work and premises, and the

men because they know these requirements, and because they consider that, by keeping to the same employer, they have a better chance of work.

(b) The reluctance of the piece-workers to accept employment on a time-work basis.

(c) Men avoid a job of short duration in the hope of getting a job for a longer period.

(d) Over-specialisation in certain classes of work.

Witnesses have pointed out that these and similar factors are either to some extent justified by the requirements or result from the human element which cannot be left out of account.

Most witnesses agree that, while a certain measure of specialisation must be accepted as inevitable, greater attention to the regulation and distribution of labour with the consequent greater measure of certainty for all concerned will provide the conditions under which greater mobility can be encouraged.

In this matter the witnesses of the workpeople emphasise that immobility has become a habit, justified by the casual conditions, and they hold the view that this habit can only change when the casual conditions are eliminated.

Port Operations and the effect on Employment.

63. It has been stated in evidence that the reduction in trade experienced within recent years by most of the ports, the introduction of mechanical appliances and changed methods of handling cargoes have combined to reduce the amount of employment. Thus, although some of the registration schemes have attempted to regularise employment by adjustment of the registers, these other factors have acted to maintain the former equation between the available work and the labour supply, though on a proportionately lower scale.

Wages and Hours.

64. We have not regarded it as germane to our Inquiry to study the rate of wages in the Industry or the hours of work, except in so far as the practice has been shown directly to affect the problem of casual labour.

The working conditions at present in use were determined by the Docks Agreement of 1919 and the National Agreement following the Shaw Report of 1920. While on time-work the practice is national in its general features, there are numerous differentials and piece-work rates fixed in the main locally. Some of the ports are almost wholly or principally operated by piece-work; in others the work is principally conducted under time-work conditions.

From the point of view of our Inquiry these varying practices have special significance in relation to Unemployment Insurance;

but in so far as they affect port employment their bearing is not so apparent. Some of the evidence we have received, however, suggested that both wages and hours militate against the achievement of more regular employment.

65. Witnesses on behalf of the employers have stated that they would be encouraged to increase their permanent staffs but for the fact that the casual rate of wage would still have to be paid. It is also stated that many of the men earning piece-work rates prefer casual conditions and some feeling of independence to permanent employment at lower weekly rates. In one case the objection of the men was based upon a wish for all to be on the same footing, as, in their view, increased permanent staffs would accentuate the casual conditions for the remainder.

Having regard to the arduous nature of some piece-work jobs, witnesses doubted whether the men could stand the strain of whole-time employment on such duties, and suggested that the scale of rates is fixed with due regard to this circumstance. In such a case the question naturally arises as to whether such employment is casual in an undesirable sense. It might be regarded as concentrated effort followed by necessary periods of leisure.

Again, the employment of individual men for excessive hours reduces the number of men required. Although a more equitable distribution of the work between the available labour might assist decasualisation, the workers themselves often object. It was stated in some instances that a rota system is worked, or that the men share out their earnings under their own arrangements with the object of levelling out inequalities of opportunity. (See para. 72). Certain witnesses have pointed out that the continuity of a job would be seriously interfered with if it was necessary to engage fresh labour at specified periods, and that excessive hours or "double-shift" work are sometimes unavoidable owing to the impossibility of obtaining other workers to carry on.

Witnesses have also stated that piece-work by increased output reduces the number of men required.

Payment of Wages.

66. The payment of wages, either daily or at the termination of the job, is still the common practice, but weekly payment is the practice at Liverpool, Manchester, and to a large extent in the South Wales ports.

Most witnesses are agreed that the weekly payment of wages would be of advantage to all concerned if it could be arranged. The principal difficulties at the present time of making weekly wage payment the practice are that it entails a change from a long-standing habit, and also that men would have to go to considerable trouble each week to collect their wages from the individual

employers. This is obviated at Liverpool by Clearing Houses, and at Manchester by the fact that there is only one employer. In South Wales payment is made by the individual employers.

Witnesses pointed out the practical difficulty of establishing clearing-houses in a port like London, having regard to the number which would be necessary to cover the whole area.

Government assistance to the Port Transport Industry in connection with Registration Schemes, etc.

67. In connection with the survey of the port labour problem it is desirable to state the nature and extent of the administrative assistance already afforded by the Department to the Industry in the establishment and operation of registration schemes and systems for co-ordinating the engagement of labour for port work.

The first assistance of this kind was received by the Industry in 1912, when the Port Employers of Liverpool, the Trade Union, the Board of Trade and the Treasury co-operated to bring into existence the Liverpool Dock Scheme. So far as concerned the central payment of wages, stamping of Health Insurance cards and later of Unemployment Books, the expenses of administration were, and are still, recovered from the employers. The administrative cost of registration and the charges for the maintenance of the surplus labour stands at Liverpool were borne by the Department, and expense incurred on these services in the Liverpool and later schemes has generally been met from Public Funds.

Such assistance as is now afforded continues in virtue of an agreement between the Minister of Labour and the National Joint Council for Dock Labour, made after the issue of the interim reports of the Maclean Committee in 1924. In accordance with this agreement, the Ministry assists, as described below, any Port Registration Committee whose constitution receives the Minister's approval. Before, however, such approval is granted, it is the practice of the Ministry to consult the National Joint Council in each case.

68. The nature of the assistance given is, subject to certain limits, then determined by the Committee's demands. The extent and nature of the assistance given to approved Registration Committees thus varies considerably. It usually takes the form of placing the services of an officer of the Ministry at the disposal of the Committee for the secretarial work, providing clerical assistance for the keeping of records and the tabulation of statistics, the supply of registration cards or books and other items of stationery and the use of official premises for meetings. In the case of the Port of London Registration Scheme, for example, the Ministry provides an office especially for the use of the Committee, a full-time Secretary, and staff which varies in numbers throughout the year according to the requirements of the work. The necessary

equipment, stationery and printing, etc., are also supplied. In the smallest ports, departmental assistance may be confined to the occasional supply of stationery. The cost of this assistance has been met from a grant made by the Treasury, which is subject to a triennial review.

69. Following on the recommendation made by the Maclean Committee in 1928, the Ministry has favourably considered requests for assistance in schemes for the closer co-ordination of labour engagement at ports with registration schemes, usually through the special office normally provided for proof of unemployment by port workers in accordance with the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme. To this end, in one or two cases, telephone facilities for inter-communication between the various offices have been provided for labour control, but no special expenditure has hitherto been incurred for the purpose. Two schemes in the London area, however, involving the provision of premises, staff and stationery for labour control, as distinct from insurance administration, are now under examination.

It may be stated that under the Labour Exchanges Act, 1909, it is the function of the Ministry of Labour to provide Employment Exchanges for dealing with labour demand and supply in the interests of employers and workpeople in any industry. The ordinary Employment Exchange is seldom fitted by its situation or its procedure to deal with the engagement of labour in the Port Transport Industry, owing to the peculiar employment conditions. The assistance given in administering Registration Schemes may, therefore, be regarded as an attempt to adapt the principles of the Labour Exchanges Act to the peculiar needs of the Industry. (Recommendations paras. 111, 112, 113.)

70. The Department has hitherto attached no special conditions to the grant of assistance, which is given to Committees on the general understanding that each Committee, within its sphere, will endeavour to give effect to the recommendations of the Maclean Committee in favour of decasualisation. In connection with this question of departmental assistance, it has been urged by certain witnesses that the position of the departmental secretaries should be carefully defined in relation to the schemes and the committees. It has been pointed out that in the past some difficulties have appeared to be due to misunderstanding in this respect. On the other hand many Committees speak of the happy relations which have existed.

71. Closely related to this question of assistance with registration is the matter of co-operation between the departmental machinery for Unemployment Insurance and the Registration Committees. In many cases the secretary of the Committee is the local

Exchange Manager. There are, however, only a few cases where there is any definite form of co-operation and this has usually been due only to the fact that one official in his dual functions quite naturally forms a co-ordinating link. The position is one of some difficulty if there is to be an avoidance of overlapping. At the same time it is obvious that each organisation possesses information which would be of value to the other and is to a large extent mutually complementary. It has been strongly urged in connection with both registration and unemployment that a carefully defined form of co-ordination and co-operation should be a feature of future arrangements. (Recommendation para. 107.)

Wage Pooling Schemes.

72. As they constitute a considerable variation from the general types of registration schemes, we have received with particular interest evidence in respect of Wage Pooling schemes established in certain ports for Coal Trimmers. In the fact that the total supply of labour is regulated and that some adjustment of the register is made when occasion demands they appear to be similar in principle to the general run of registration schemes. The main point of peculiarity, however, is that the men are exclusively employed in gangs by a rota and that a bulk payment for wages is made by the employers to the responsible trade union, for subsequent share-out by that organisation. We understand that there are a number of schemes of this nature all of which are applicable to coal trimmers. We received both oral and written evidence from the Employers and Union concerned in the Cardiff, Penarth and Barry scheme.

In the actual engagement of labour, the supervision of the men while at work and other matters, the scheme is conducted by two sets of supervisors, representing the employers and the men respectively, while the recruitment of labour and its distribution is largely undertaken by the Trade Union. Membership of the Union is compulsory.

We were informed by the witnesses that in this scheme the average amount of employment obtained by each worker in recent months was about $27\frac{1}{2}$ hours per week, while the earnings provided a weekly share-out which averaged 89s. 10d. per week during the same period. It is apparent that there is virtually no problem of casual employment in this scheme of the kind which is the common experience in the general cargo ports and that the adjustment of the labour supply on a largely numerical basis, having regard to the more or less single occupation, becomes a matter of practical policy. The real significance of these schemes for our survey appears to be in their relation to Unemployment Insurance, to which reference is made in a later paragraph (para. 89).

General Summary on Port Employment.

73. While much of the evidence we have taken has concerned the operation of registration schemes we have been careful to obtain the necessary information to enable us to form general conclusions in respect of other matters affecting the control and use of port labour applicable to all the ports included in our survey.

In dealing with the subject of registration in our Report, we have necessarily touched upon the situation as shown to us in the evidence we have received in respect of certain ports where registration schemes have not been established. It is quite apparent to us that these ports have an extremely difficult employment situation in which, though not in any marked degree, there may be hidden many of the worst features which characterised port employment generally before the establishment of such schemes. Nevertheless, it must be admitted, even in these cases, that what registration itself has not achieved has, in a small measure, been brought about by the natural progress of industrial organisations of the port workers themselves, and by the growth of port work generally into a recognised and increasingly skilful occupation. It is undoubtedly true to say that the stigma once attached to port work—that it was the last resort for the unfortunate—is now, and has been for some years, absolutely unwarranted. If there are still ports which do provide such a refuge, they are definitely exceptional.

It is obvious, however, that the real progress has been due to effective registration, which has erected a barrier against these undesirable classes of persons.

In our opinion no port can hope to make any real progress towards regularisation of port employment without a registration scheme. It is clearly impossible for the most satisfactorily conducted workers' organisation alone, as it is for the individual port employers among a number operating in a port, to create an organisation by themselves for the engagement, distribution and general control of the pool of labour so as to meet the just needs of both the employers and the workpeople. Experience has clearly shown that this can only be done by an organisation operated by all the parties concerned. We have no hesitation, therefore, in re-affirming that a jointly administered registration scheme is the only satisfactory foundation upon which to build hopes of eventual decasualisation.

74. The answer to any claim that registration schemes are to the advantage only of the workpeople is that the output of the regularly employed port worker, as well as his knowledge of the work and the employer's requirements, must be far superior to that of the casual seeker after port work and many of the employer witnesses have readily acknowledged this to be the fact.

Witnesses on behalf of the employers have also stressed the value of some personal knowledge and relationship between the employers and the workpeople. In port work this is only usually possible in the case of the permanent or preference workers so far as the individual employers are concerned. Registration schemes have preserved and extended this desirable feature as a collective advantage. Many of the witnesses from the registration committees have spoken most encouragingly about the value of this good feeling which, it must be recognised, is of as much value to the employer as it is to the worker. These indirect advantages must undoubtedly receive their due measure of consideration in any attempt to assess the positive achievement of decasualisation.

75. Furthermore, it is necessary to pay regard to any advantage which may accrue to the community in general from such schemes. It is clearly better to pay wages in return for efficient service to a limited number of workers than to distribute the same amount of wage indiscriminately over a larger number, as in the latter event there must be a loss both in the efficiency of the service as a whole and to the individual worker.

76. In view of the fact that registration schemes and other measures for the regularisation of port employment have only been partially established throughout the Industry, and that they have achieved varying degrees of success, it is impossible to assume universal progress in the Industry towards decasualisation. It is no doubt this fact which has had a material bearing on the form of the proposals which have been submitted to us on behalf of the employers and workpeople in the Industry as a whole.

77. The general purport of the evidence submitted by the National Council of Port Labour Employers is that there have been noteworthy successes achieved under existing conditions, particularly bearing in mind the depressed state of trade, and that these successes have been achieved at just those ports which are most seriously affected by the basic causes of the casual labour problem. For example, it may be said that the ports of London and Bristol, where the registration schemes are obviously very effective, experience all the complexities of other ports. In these circumstances the employers express the view that in material respects the existing principles have been proved satisfactory and that with the impetus given by the present Inquiry they should be applied by more determined efforts on existing lines.

Particular emphasis was laid upon the success which has directly resulted where there has been whole-hearted and voluntary co-operation between employers and workpeople.

78. The representatives of the Transport and General Workers' Union, who submitted general evidence on behalf of the port workers, took the view that the existing registration schemes and

systems for labour engagement should be embodied in an all-embracing statutory national scheme (see also para. 105) which would provide, under the control of one statutory body, for registration, labour engagement and distribution, the payment of unemployment benefit or maintenance allowance under entirely new conditions, adapted to meet the needs of the Industry, and also pensions to cover compulsory retirement of port workers at 65 years of age. In making these proposals it was urged that they would solve the problem of decasualisation and the application of the Unemployment Insurance scheme to port workers and also eliminate other unsatisfactory features of the present situation which have been referred to elsewhere in our Report. They expressed the view that these problems are largely complementary and that they would be unlikely to react fully to separate solutions.

(Recommendations, paras. 108 to 113).

PART II—UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.

Unemployment in the Port Transport Services.

79. According to official statistics issued by the Ministry of Labour, out of approximately 168,000 insured persons estimated to be employed in the "Dock, Harbour, River and Canal Service," 63,400 persons, or approximately 37 per cent., were recorded as unemployed at 27th October, 1930.

It is, however, necessary to appreciate the full significance of such statistics, having regard to the peculiarities of port employment to which reference has already been made.

In the first place it has been pointed out to us by the Ministry that any insured persons on the wholly unemployed register who may have performed port transport work, in the absence of employment which would afford ground for classification in another industry, are classified for statistical purposes as attached to the Port Transport Industry however small the amount of port work performed. We understand that there is no provision in the official statistics for workers to be classified as within the general labour market. This circumstance is of unusual importance in the case of this Industry where it has been shown that the conditions render the occasional employment of general unemployed workers more common than is the case with most other industries. While registration schemes, where they are established, have to some extent checked this tendency, occasions arise when the increase in work is so sudden and marked that the engagement for a day or two of some general unemployed workers is necessary.

We may assume, therefore, that a very casual fringe of workers, which the Industry would not regard as port transport workers, are included in the statistics and serve to raise the percentage of unemployment. Moreover, the official classification of the Industry appears generally to cover a wider field than that of the

Port Transport Industry which we have described elsewhere. We are also informed that the statistics of unemployment are recorded weekly. No doubt in the majority of industries where a week is often the minimum period of employment this count gives an accurate indication of the employment situation. It is known, however, that the large majority of recognised port workers obtain some employment during the weeks in which they are recorded as unemployed. A good illustration of this fact may be given in the case of the Cardiff Coal Trimmers' Pooling Scheme. This covers approximately 1,500 men and we were informed that about 10 per cent. were absent at any given time through sickness etc. Out of the remainder who share more or less equally in the work and wages each week, over 600 are recorded on a weekly average as unemployed. Thus when 63,400 insured persons in this Industry are included in the "wholly unemployed" figures it would be erroneous to deduce from that statement that this number of persons represented a standing surplus of labour with whose services the Industry could dispense. Having regard to the present labour arrangements in the Industry and in spite of the depression from which it is suffering as a natural consequence of the depression in trade, it is doubtful whether more than a small minority of these unemployed workers are, in fact, wholly unemployed.

80. As an indication of the financial experience of the Unemployment Insurance Fund in the case of port transport workers, the Ministry of Labour submitted to us a statement regarded as a rough estimate of the contributions received and benefit paid by the Fund in respect of workers in the "Dock, Harbour, River and Canal Service" in Great Britain. This statement showed that during the period of nine years from 1921 to 1929 inclusive the sum of approximately £6,000,000 had been contributed by employers, employees and the State, while the total amount of benefit paid was nearly £22,000,000. Having regard to the considerations already stated which affect the measurement of the amount of unemployment in the Industry it is reasonable to assume that benefit figures are inflated by the inclusion of the very casual fringe which the Industry itself would not regard as port transport workers, and who would naturally constitute an abnormal drain on the Fund. At the same time, this casual fringe must be a fairly small proportion of the total number of workers in the Industry, and it is unlikely that their exclusion from the figures would reduce the adverse balance very largely. In these circumstances and in connection with our general survey of port employment we have examined the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Acts as a whole, and in particular their application to port transport workers for the purpose of discovering the nature of any anomalies and difficulties which might explain the situation disclosed by the statistics.

The application of the Unemployment Insurance Acts to Port Transport Workers.

81. The principal evidence given on this matter was submitted to us by the Ministry of Labour and by the official witnesses from that Department who elucidated for us the main provisions of the Acts and the procedure applying to benefit claims by port transport workers, set out in a memorandum of evidence.

We were charged to examine any anomalies and difficulties in the application of the Unemployment Insurance scheme in respect of port workers. We have understood that the existence of such anomalies and difficulties had not been proved by any direct evidence in possession of the Ministry, but rather inferred from the statistics already referred to. Beyond a brief indication of certain points which might create anomalies, the official witnesses were unable to assist us in our examination, because much of the information necessary to show whether such anomalies exist would not normally come into the possession of the Ministry.

In the course of the evidence we subsequently received from representative Port Registration Committees and other local bodies, statements were made which led us directly to the features of the Scheme requiring particular examination, and we have thereby been enabled to concentrate our survey upon these details and to obtain from the Ministry, by subsequent inquiry whatever additional information was available.

82. We have not regarded it as within the terms of our Inquiry, or indeed necessary to examine closely some of the provisions of the Acts which cover port transport workers in exactly the same way as other classes of insured persons and produce the same general effects.

Briefly, these provisions may be stated as follows :—

- (a) The rates of contributions.
- (b) The rates of unemployment benefit and dependants' benefit.
- (c) The method of making a claim to benefit.
- (d) The machinery for the examination and determination of claims.
- (e) The arrangements and conditions for the receipt of dependants' benefit.

In other respects the provisions of the Acts and the arrangements made under them produce certain effects when applied to port workers which are unusual and worthy of special examination.

In these circumstances it is desirable that we should briefly review the application of the Unemployment Insurance scheme to this class of worker, whose experience of unemployment, as we have already stated in our survey of employment, has certain essential points of difference from that of workers in industries

with more stable employment who form the large majority of the insured contributors under the Scheme.

83. Port transport workers were brought within the classes of insured persons by the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1920, and, in the beginning were subject to the customary arrangements for the application for and receipt of benefit.

In 1922, however, it became apparent that certain modifications of the arrangements were desirable and a radical change was made in the procedure for proving unemployment. At the same time, arrangements were made by which port workers retained their unemployment books when unemployed and did not, as is the general practice, lodge them at the Exchange when claiming benefit. This latter modification was necessary in view of the suddenness of engagement and the short period of employment and of the statutory obligation upon employers to collect and hold the unemployment books during employment. When provision was made for the extension of benefit by means of "uncovenanted", later defined as "extended" benefit a special rule was laid down by the administration with the object of ensuring that such benefit should not be paid to persons employed casually or on short time, who, during such employment, were earning over a certain amount; regard being had in all cases to the total family income and expenditure. This rule lapsed on the abolition of extended benefit and the official witnesses pointed out that the amount of wages earned during employment in any week was and is now immaterial in considering a claimant's title to benefit in respect of days of unemployment.

84. The special features which were apparent in the application of the Unemployment Insurance scheme to port workers received consideration during the inquiries of the Blanesburgh Committee. In the evidence given before that Committee the fact was stressed that, owing to the Unemployment Insurance scheme not being appropriately adapted to this Industry, port workers earning comparatively high wages during short spells of employment were able to obtain benefit, while other port workers less well situated were ineligible for benefit. In the Committee's Report, while they recommended the withdrawal of the power to form special schemes, which was subsequently given effect to in the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1927, they referred to the special requirements of certain industries, including the Port Transport Services, and recommended that the Minister "in cases in which he is satisfied that the variation sanctioned will tend in no way to the prejudice of the fund should have power to vary certain benefit provisions and, in particular, the rules as to the recognition of unemployment and partial unemployment, in the interest of particular industries or other classes of insured persons".

We understood from the official witnesses that the Ministry has not been in a position to take any action on the Blanesburgh Report, in so far as particular reference was made to this Industry. It may therefore be said that the modifications which have been made have not changed any of the main provisions of the Acts and that the original principle is still applied of treating all insured persons on a similar footing for both contributions and benefit, whatever may be the nature or extent of the risk of unemployment.

The official memorandum of evidence explained the application of this principle and its general effect as follows:—

“ Except in those industries where organised short-time is generally practised, or in industries such as the Port Transport industry which is carried on on a casual basis, only a small percentage of workers are in general employed less than a week at a time. In the Port Transport industry employment for shorter periods than a week is the common experience for large classes of workers. This under-employment has an effect both on Unemployment Insurance contributions and benefits.

“ So far as contributions are concerned it has the effect that, as contributions are paid weekly in respect of any period of employment from half a day upwards, the amount of contribution paid is sometimes high in proportion to the amount of work done. On the other hand, industries carried on on a casual basis have a much higher rate of unemployment than those providing regular employment, with the result that the latter industries pay a higher rate of contribution than is required by their low rate of unemployment and the former pay a lower rate than is required by their high rate of unemployment ”.

Unemployment and Under-employment.

85. In studying the experience of the Unemployment Insurance Acts as applied to port workers, it is apparent that a material responsibility must rest upon the provisions of the Acts themselves, because of the manner in which they operate to recognise unemployment and particularly partial or under-employment for the purpose of paying benefit.

In this matter it is vital that the facts should be clearly stated and emphasised. Port transport work is not a continuous succession of operations which are portions of a process carried out under a unified control, but a vast aggregation of comparatively small jobs, often unrelated to one another and discontinuous, which arise suddenly and are usually of short duration; so short that they do not provide even a whole week's employment for many of the workers, and in some cases only a half-day. Most port workers are subject to engagement and discharge day by day. In consequence, it is common for individuals to find themselves in the state of being employed on one day and unemployed the next.

Those who experience this under-employment, however, have no definite periods of unemployment which may be attributed to some obvious contraction in the amount of work and which, in the case of most other industries, would lead to a more or less continuous period of unemployment for discharged workers or, as an alternative, the adoption of systematic short-time working. Workers in these circumstances may be regarded as a measurable unemployed reserve of labour. Port transport workers, casually employed, on the other hand, form a pool of labour in which it is impossible to distinguish between the portion employed and the portion unemployed except on a day-to-day basis. The large majority have had some employment during weeks in which they are recorded as unemployed under the provisions of the existing Acts.

86. The Ministry presented to us the results of a special investigation of the insurance experience of registered port workers in London, which strikingly illustrate the important bearing which benefit payments in the case of partial unemployment have upon the present difficulties of the Unemployment Insurance scheme in its application to port workers.

Statistics obtained by a direct count show that out of a total of 34,315 insured port workers in the London Registration Scheme, 28,761 had 40 or more contributions out of a possible maximum of 52 in the Insurance Year 1929-30. In a large proportion of cases it is shown that the contributions were paid in respect of less than a whole week's employment and a number of the men were employed for a day or a half-day only.

The results of a 10 per cent. sample analysis are as follows:—

Averages for the total sample.

| | |
|---|----|
| Average days of unemployment proved during the year | 52 |
| Average days of benefit paid | 47 |
| Average number of contributions | 46 |

The analysis shows that 50.9 per cent. of all the workers in the sample drew benefit at some time during the year; the average amount drawn by these workers being 92 days, but that only a small proportion registered as wholly unemployed during any week in which benefit was drawn.

With these general considerations in mind we have surveyed the local experiences presented to us by the various witnesses, and examined the principal anomalies and difficulties.

The receipt of benefit by better paid casual workers.

87. Having regard to the provisions of the existing Acts and in particular to the operation of the continuity rule which is dealt with in the succeeding section of our Report, we were not surprised to find that a number of witnesses from the ports were able to

produce statistics of certain selected individual cases in which men earning sums of £4, £5, £6, or even more, during two or three days' or nights' work, had also claimed and received benefit during the same week. It is necessary to point out that the statistics were only examples, and do not represent an average experience for the whole body of port workers. Statistics which were produced from a number of ports are summarised in Appendix IV, and witnesses from other ports stated that they had a similar experience. It would be impossible under present conditions to make anything like an exhaustive examination of this feature or to estimate its financial effect. Nevertheless, the fact has to be recorded that it is possible for a certain number of port workers regularly obtaining comparatively large earnings to make a practice of claiming benefit, although their weekly earnings are greater than those of many workers wholly employed who obtain no benefit. No witness before us has attempted to defend this practice except on the ground that it was within the law.

Certain witnesses stated that the uncertainties of port work acting with the conditions now and formerly governing the Unemployment Insurance scheme have practically forced port workers to exercise their full legal rights.

88. In this connection it may be appropriate to refer to the discontinuance of the provisions of Section 25 of the U.I. Act, 1920, for the refund of certain contributions with interest to a contributor on attaining the age of sixty years. It was pointed out to us that the contributor no longer had the satisfaction of knowing that in paying contributions to the Fund he was adopting a form of saving and, to that extent, is encouraged to claim benefit on every possible occasion.

In one port with exceptional working conditions it was stated that certain workers, owing to the imperfect arrangements for distribution of labour, are called upon, on occasions, to work double-shifts. By this means they may work what is regarded as a normal full shift-week in three calendar days. During the remainder of the week, if unemployed, these men are entitled to claim benefit, although if the same amount of work and wage had been spread over the whole week they would have been regarded as fully employed.

89. In connection with the Coal Trimmers' Wage Pooling Schemes, to which some reference has already been made (para. 72), we received evidence of the systematic receipt of benefit by certain workers in weeks in which they obtained a share in the pooled total of wages. The agreed statistics show that the 1,374 men in the various sections of the Cardiff scheme taken as a whole received weekly wages averaging 85s. in 1930 and 99s. in 1929, and that during the four weeks ended 3rd October, 1930, when the wage average was 89s. 10d., an average of 548 men

also drew Unemployment Benefit, the average weekly payment ranging from 12s. 6d. to 18s. In evidence dealing with this point the workpeople's representative claimed that such workers were obtaining what they were legally entitled to as contributors, and pointed out that marked fluctuations in the work and share-out from week to week created a situation of sufficient uncertainty to justify the workers in this practice as a safeguard against the future.

In this matter it is of importance to remember that these better paid casual workers are industrially efficient and capable workers and regular and current contributors to the Fund. They claim that they are, therefore, entitled to regard the benefit they receive as pure insurance benefit, paid, not because they are the victims of some hardship to be met by a form of relief, but in fulfilment of a contract into which they have been compelled to enter against a risk which does not depend for its establishment upon any proof or even general assumption of hardship.

In the course of our survey, it has become apparent that this feature in the application of the Acts to port transport workers is closely connected with and affected by the rule relating to continuity of unemployment.

The Continuity Rule.

90. Practically all the witnesses who gave evidence before us, when asked as to any experience they might have of the application of the Unemployment Insurance Acts, referred either in specific terms, or by inference, to the operation of the Continuity Rule for Benefit. This rule provides :—

(a) that any 3 days of unemployment within 6 consecutive days are to be regarded as continuous ;

(b) that any two periods of 3 continuous days are to be regarded as continuous with one another if they are not separated by more than 10 weeks.

It is obvious that among casual workers periods of 10 weeks' continuous employment are so unusual that they are seldom required to serve a waiting period.

We may assume from the study we have made of the structure of the Acts that the continuity rule is largely, if not wholly, based upon the fact that the week is the standard measurement both in the case of contributions and benefit, and that this rule made provision for payment of benefit after the waiting period for shorter periods of unemployment than the week. In the case of intermittent employment, however, the evidence received shows clearly that the present rule presents no real obstacle to the receipt of benefit by port workers in respect of short periods of unemployment. Some of the anomalies caused by this rule are of serious moment to the Industry in connection with the regulation of the

labour supply. One effect is that it tends to encourage absenteeism on the part of certain port workers (see also para. 94). We have no means of ascertaining the extent to which absenteeism is now prevalent. Throughout the Inquiry the statements which have come from almost every port have not been seriously challenged, and examples have been given which must be regarded as strong circumstantial evidence that the practice exists. This practice is invariably attributed to a worker's desire to keep himself in benefit and it is adopted principally by workers who find themselves in the following circumstances:—

(a) When port workers, during two or three days' work, have earned good wages, usually as the result of some strenuous effort or continuous period of employment under "piece-work" conditions, it is probably correct to say that there is no pressing need or inclination to take a further engagement on a less remunerative basis. This disinclination is encouraged if they know that by remaining out of employment they will preserve continuity and supplement the wages they have earned by benefit from the Unemployment Fund.

(b) Those port workers who habitually experience short recurrent spells of employment and unemployment are continually placed in a situation which leads them to weigh the possibility of a further engagement, which may result in only a half-day's work, against the risk of breaking continuity. It is important to realise that the breaking of continuity may cause the loss of three days' benefit and, therefore, result in a loss of income by the acceptance of work.

91. In order to emphasise still further the unsuitability of the Continuity Rule in the case of port transport workers, it has been definitely shown to us in evidence that there are actual cases where two workers with the same number of days employment in a period, and the same amount of wages, received different benefit treatment. While the one was able to obtain benefit for every day of unemployment, the other was completely ineligible. The only circumstance which affected these cases was that employment had occurred on different days. We have also had cases cited where certain workers have been employed for 4 days in a number of successive weeks and have been able to keep themselves eligible for benefit in respect of 2 days' unemployment in each week. This again is entirely governed by the particular days in which employment occurs.

It will be appreciated that in other industries, where specific individual offers of employment can be made, any definite refusal of such employment can be noted and the worker concerned suitably dealt with under the provision of the Acts (see para. 102). In the case of the Port Transport Industry, where selections are made from a general body of workers, it is possible for the worker

who desires to preserve continuity under the above rules to render himself inconspicuous when the engagement of labour is taking place, and it has been suggested to us that this is the form which such "absenteeism" takes. While, as a general rule, this practice cannot be positively detected because there is often a considerable surplus of men, instances have been quoted where it has forced the employers to engage unregistered labour. In such cases the matter is one of serious moment in connection with the operation of registration schemes.

The two points referred to in the preceding paragraphs undoubtedly form the most serious difficulties in connection with the application of the Unemployment Insurance Acts to port transport workers.

In the course of our survey, however, a number of other points have arisen, affecting either the provisions of the Acts themselves or the administrative arrangements made under them, which we consider should be referred to in our Report.

Unemployment Insurance Contributions and the Method of Payment.

92. In general, the evidence we have received shows that there was no particular difficulty in this matter. We noted with interest, however, the special arrangements made under Section 31 of the 1920 Act in the case of the Scheme established under that Section at Liverpool in connection with the Docks Scheme. Under this arrangement the Employers pool their contributions and the Unemployment Books are stamped on their behalf at central offices.

Proof of Unemployment.

93. We have received evidence on this subject both from the Department and from the local organisations. Unlike most other insured persons, unemployed port transport workers are required to prove unemployment as a general rule twice daily, immediately after the morning and afternoon calls for work. We understand that this modification of the general arrangements in the case of port transport workers was initiated about 1922, and that it is a recognition of the fact that two "calls" for work in each day are customary in the Industry, and that the minimum period of employment is generally a half-day. This is a peculiarity of the Port Transport Industry which is quite foreign to the experience of the majority of other industries and trades. In the few cases where port workers are engaged once a day, or some alternative safeguard is provided we are informed that signing once daily is still in vogue. It appears that in this matter the Department has attempted to adapt the general provisions of the Scheme to suit local circumstances. We were also informed that in some cases the Department has provided special offices for proof of unemployment by port workers in close proximity to the various places

at which it is customary for engagement of port labour to be made ; for example, in the London Docks Area there are thirteen special premises, other than the ordinary Exchanges, provided for this purpose. It is understood that the special provisions are made with the object of obtaining some assurance that the claimant :—

(a) has applied for work at the recognised times and places, and in accordance with the usual practice.

It should be pointed out that since the passing of the U.I. Act, 1930, there is no onus placed upon applicants to prove that they have applied for work in order to satisfy the conditions for the receipt of benefit (see paras. 100 and 102). Nevertheless the special signing arrangements which were established in 1922 and have operated without material alteration up to the present date were designed both to give a general assurance that such applications were made and to facilitate proof of unemployment by unsuccessful applicants. It is necessary, therefore, that we should consider these arrangements and the objects they were designed to achieve, having regard to absenteeism which interferes with satisfactory labour control arrangements under the registration schemes.

(b) has not had a spell of work during any period in respect of which he is proving unemployment.

In connection with (b) it may be pointed out that a port worker proving unemployment only once daily might be engaged for employment on any day after he had proved unemployment and draw benefit to which he was not entitled by failing to cancel his declaration to the effect that on the day for which he signed he had been unemployed.

94. We have taken the opportunity of questioning representatives of Registration Committees and other local organisations as to their experience of these arrangements in practice. It appears from this evidence that, in actual use, they are not entirely satisfactory. Among other things, it is pointed out in the case of many ports that there is no means of ensuring, when workers prove unemployment that they have actually attended the call for work. In a few cases there is some measure of assurance through the fact that the special offices provided are immediately adjacent to the call-places. There are numerous instances, however, where port workers prove unemployment as much as half a mile to a mile from the call-place, and in such cases there is no chance of checking wilful absenteeism or failure to apply for work. To some extent this unsatisfactory state of affairs is due to the impracticability of providing special offices at all the call-places now in existence. For example, the thirteen special offices in London serve an area in which there are stated to be over 200 call-places. From this it will be apparent that the Ministry alone cannot make these safeguards water-tight. At the same time, there are instances where

the special offices could be better situated and it is interesting to note that those ports which have the reduction of the number of call-places under consideration have included, as part of their proposals, the provision of special offices which can be used both for the purpose of proving unemployment and also for labour control. Proposals of this character are now under consideration by two sections in the Port of London and elsewhere.

95. In connection with the safeguard against claiming benefit whilst in employment certain witnesses have pointed out that this often breaks down in cases where there is a third daily call for work, or overtime and night work are common. It has been suggested that this safeguard could be considerably improved if some satisfactory form of co-operation could be established between the authorities concerned respectively in Unemployment Insurance and registration schemes. This matter suggests the desirability of closer relationship between these two parties. As has already been stated, there is much information in the possession of each of these authorities which would be of considerable value to both. (Recommendation: para. 107.)

Permanent Conditions for the Receipt of Benefit.

96. The Ministry of Labour, in the memorandum of evidence they submitted to the Committee, set out in full detail, with explanations, the permanent conditions for the receipt of benefit which apply to all unemployed insured persons. In many respects these conditions have not created any particular difficulty when applied to port transport workers and it would be unnecessary for us, as we are largely concerned with the examination of anomalies and difficulties, to specify in any particular detail how these conditions operate. It will, therefore, be sufficient if we indicate any points in the fulfilment of these conditions by port workers which appear to us to alter the basis of the title to benefit.

First Statutory Condition.

97. The first point for examination arises in connection with the fulfilment of the First Statutory Condition, that not less than thirty contributions have been paid in respect of the two years immediately preceding the date of the application for benefit.

In most industries it is no doubt true to say that the large majority of workers and their employers pay a contribution in respect of a whole week's employment, and that such workers cannot usually fulfil this Condition with much less than thirty weeks' whole time employment. As already stated, however, among casual port workers, it is not the usual experience to obtain a whole week's employment. They may be employed in one continuous spell for from three to four days, or they may only be engaged for a half-day. As a general rule, casual port workers are regarded as

subject to engagement and discharge day by day. Official statistics have been presented to us which show that among port workers in receipt of unemployment benefit not less than 93 per cent. fully satisfy this Condition, whereas in other industries the percentage is only 72. But for the knowledge we have of the intermittent employment experienced by casual port workers, these figures would suggest that they are more regularly employed than workers in all other industries. The explanation, of course, is that they are required to pay a contribution in respect of a spell of employment, however short, if a contribution has not already been paid in the week concerned. The payment of this weekly contribution out of a small amount of wages is undoubtedly by itself a proportionately heavy payment towards the Insurance Fund. It counts, however, as a full contribution for the satisfaction of the Condition, and in return for the proportionately heavy payment the port worker does, in fact, more easily satisfy the Conditions and receive benefit than the more regularly employed workers. There is, we feel, an important psychological effect produced by this situation. The port worker satisfies the Condition fairly easily. Nevertheless he is paying, as a class, a proportionately high contribution to the Insurance Fund, and he is, therefore, convinced that when he is drawing benefit, often in the same weeks in which he has paid a contribution, he is actually receiving something for which he is fully and currently subscribing.

Second Statutory Condition.

98. The application of this Condition regarding proof and continuity of unemployment is fully dealt with in so far as it applies to port transport workers in the appropriate paragraphs of our Report. (Paras. 90 and 93.)

Third Statutory Condition.

99. In connection with the fulfilment of the Third Statutory Condition, that the claimant is capable of work and available for work, it has been suggested to us in evidence that certain peculiar customs of the Port Transport Industry render the determination of the question of availability an exceptionally difficult matter. There are occasions on which a port worker may not be available for port work, but because he can show that he is available for other kinds of work, however small the likelihood of his obtaining it, he is regarded as having fulfilled this Condition, and is therefore qualified to receive benefit.

Fourth Statutory Condition (repealed).

100. The Fourth Statutory Condition, to the effect that the claimant must prove that he is genuinely seeking work but unable to obtain suitable employment, was repealed by the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1930.

Transitional Conditions.

101. Under the U.I. Act 1927 a claimant who cannot satisfy the First Statutory Condition may satisfy modified conditions, the principal part of which provides for eight or more contributions in the two years before the date of the claim or 30 or more contributions at any time.

From the facts recorded above in regard to the First Statutory Condition, it will be apparent that a very small minority of unemployed port workers claim benefit under these conditions, the cost of which is now borne by the Exchequer. The cost of this "transitional" benefit is, therefore, small in the case of port workers, and our principal concern is with the benefit provided out of the Unemployment Fund itself.

Disqualifications for the receipt of benefit.

102. The only disqualification which appears to be of particular interest in connection with our survey is that contained in Section 4 of the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1930, which provides that—

"If on a claim for benefit it is proved by an officer of the Ministry of Labour that the claimant, after a situation in any employment which is suitable in his case has been notified to him by an employment exchange or other recognised agency, or by or on behalf of an employer as vacant or about to become vacant, has without good cause refused or failed to apply for such situation, or refused to accept such situation when offered to him, or if it is proved by an officer of the Ministry of Labour that a claimant has without good cause refused or failed to carry out any written directions given to him by an officer of an employment exchange with a view to assisting him to find suitable employment (being directions which were reasonable having regard both to the circumstances of the claimant and to the means of obtaining that employment usually adopted in the district in which the claimant resides) he shall be disqualified for receiving benefit for a period of six weeks or for such shorter period and from such date as may be determined by the court of referees or the umpire, as the case may be."

Having regard to the peculiar employment conditions in the Port Transport Industry, it is very seldom possible for the Industry to make use of an Employment Exchange in fulfilling the labour requirements. It is, of course, open to an employer to inform the Exchange of any workers who specifically refuse an offer of employment. This refusal has to be proved by an officer of the Ministry of Labour, and, having regard to the existing arrangements for labour engagement, it would appear extremely difficult for any disqualification to be imposed for the reason that, in the normal course, engagements of port labour are not observed by an official and therefore the proof of a refusal would depend entirely

upon an employer's statement, usually nullified by the rebutting evidence of the worker. Furthermore, it is often the case that employment is offered to a group or gang of men, and we understand that certain test cases of refusals by such a group of men have resulted in no disqualification being imposed on the ground that a specific offer of employment has not been made. Thus, even where the spirit of this Section has been carried out, a refusal under such circumstances is not regarded as sufficient to justify disqualification.

Proposals and Recommendations on Unemployment Insurance.

103. Among all sections within the Industry there has been general agreement that the present application of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme in the case of port transport workers is unsatisfactory. The view is commonly held that the whole structure of the Scheme is upon an unsuitable basis for dealing with the particular problem of under-employment as distinct from the more general problem of unemployment. In subscribing to this view, however, the employers particularly emphasize that many of the present anomalies arise from the various amending provisions made to the original Scheme in consequence of which the actuarial basis upon which it was first established has disappeared.

In view of the general agreement that vital changes of some kind are necessary, our principal concern has been to examine the possible directions in which alterations could be made to the general advantage.

104. The National Council of Port Labour Employers dealt fully with the Unemployment Insurance Scheme in the evidence they presented. They suggested that a reduction in the present expenditure should be brought about by the return of the whole Scheme to a strict actuarial basis, and that special provision should be made to deal with those who exploit the Scheme and those who though casually employed are in receipt of reasonable wages. They regard it as fundamentally wrong that men who are largely in regular employment or are earning high wages should be legally entitled to qualify for unemployment benefit for any of the days on which they are idle. In their evidence they also quoted various examples of the illogical way in which the Continuity Rule operates. The Council urged that no added financial burdens on the Industry should be entailed by any adjustments to be made and expressed the view that any changes should apply alike to casual labour in all industries under the General Scheme.

105. On the other hand, the Transport and General Workers' Union, while equally emphatic about the unsatisfactory features of the existing provisions, regarded it as impossible to provide

satisfactorily for the peculiar problem of under-employment in a Scheme which was based upon the conception of unemployment as it is generally known. They pointed out that on the passing of each Insurance Act they have indicated the possibility of anomalies and difficulties in applying the provisions to port transport workers, and have constantly pressed for special provisions. They expressed the view that the Scheme is entirely inadequate and does not afford the correct method of distributing unemployment benefit if it is to assist decasualisation. The Union contended that more satisfactory provision could be made through a Special Scheme.

In the circumstances, the Union made no proposals for alterations to the existing Scheme, but submitted details of an all-embracing Special Scheme to which some reference has already been made (para. 78). In effect, under these proposals, use is to be made of the existing insurance contributions as well as revenue obtained by levies on goods and passengers to provide a fixed minimum wage or maintenance allowance, in lieu of the existing unemployment benefit, for all workers recognised by means of registration as *bona fide* port workers who are necessarily retained at the disposal of the Industry. In these proposals provision is also made for the payment of pensions under certain conditions to workers to be compulsorily retired from industry at sixty-five years of age. One of the objects of this latter provision is to overcome the difficulty in connection with labour wastage and recruitment. A Report by the Government Actuary on this scheme is set out in Appendix V.

106. The divergent views expressed to us by two such important organisations necessarily render our duty of recommending what changes shall be made one of particular difficulty. The changes shown to be desirable by the evidence we have received from all quarters must be so drastic that they raise important questions of principle. Certain administrative variations from the general practice have already been adopted in an endeavour to adapt the General Scheme to the special needs of this Industry. We understand that these and many other changes of a similar character are legalised under Regulations which it is within the power of the Minister to formulate. It must be quite clear, however, that such adaptations of existing provisions leave the main problem unsolved.

We are obliged to present our recommendations in connection with Unemployment Insurance in separate memoranda.

107. We consider, however, that certain features of the administrative machinery for Unemployment Insurance could, with advantage, be improved. The appointment of a Standing Advisory Committee by the National Joint Council for Dock Labour (see Recommendations in connection with Port Employment.) (para. 110) should, in our view, provide the Ministry with a valuable

medium for the exchange of views with the Industry on special adaptations of the machinery of the Unemployment Insurance scheme rendered necessary by the peculiarities of the Industry. Consultation will, no doubt, result in improvements in procedure and general simplification.

Recommendations in connection with Port Employment.

108. We regret that we have found it impossible to reach agreement in recommending measures which would by themselves constitute a solution of the problem of decasualisation of labour in the Port Transport Industry. Upon certain fundamental points we are, therefore, obliged to record our separate views. These differences do not affect our unanimous belief that registration schemes and measures taken with the object of improving the system of labour engagement and distribution have proved in practice of great advantage not only to the Industry itself but to the community in general. Although they cannot be regarded as an end in themselves, they are a vital means to the end in view.

Without prejudice to the views expressed in our separate memoranda we are unanimously agreed that immediate steps should be taken to ensure the continuance of the above schemes and their development where possible on existing lines.

109. The main administrative principles upon which registration schemes should be operated are set out as follows :—

(a) Registration Schemes should be administered jointly, and the constitution of Committees should be on the basis of balanced panels of employers' and workpeople's representatives.

(b) The Secretary of the Committee and his staff should perform all administrative duties under the direct instructions of the Joint Committee.

(c) The scope of each scheme in regard to grades of workers to be included should be carefully defined by the Registration Committee and the scope of the scheme should be made known to all concerned.

(d) The registration token used for each register should be distinctive and, either by itself or in conjunction with other returns, provide a record of the holder's employment. The token should be subject to a fixed date of expiry to coincide with the date fixed for the periodic revision of the register.

(e) At each exchange of tokens, arrangements should be made for the compilation of statistics about employment during the expired period, and for a complete revision of the register.

(f) Each Registration Committee should regard the constant adjustment of the register to keep it in close relation

to the requirements as one of its first duties, with the object of ensuring greater regularity of employment for the *bona-fide* port workers and should examine the cases of men whose employment records do not show a reasonable amount of work.

110. The evidence we have received has emphasised the need of some organisation, representative of the whole Industry, which can act on its behalf to encourage and assist a common effort. With this object we recommend that a new Standing Advisory Committee composed of representatives of the employers and trade unions in equal numbers should now be established by the National Joint Council for Dock Labour.

111. We consider that the Chairman or Chairmen should also be appointed by the above parties but recommend that, as in the case of the Maclean Committee (1924), the Ministry of Labour should supply the Secretariat and all other assistance required by the Committee to carry out its work. We recommend that the Committee, acting in the light of our Report, should encourage and assist the development of all measures calculated to regularise port employment.

We consider that the Committee should establish and maintain direct contact with the responsible parties in each port and give particular attention to the following objects:—

(1) The establishment and development of joint registration schemes in all ports.

(2) The systematic and regular revision of registers and arrangements for regular consideration of employment records.

(3) Provision for the recruitment of labour.

(4) The establishment of uniform methods of compiling statistics from all ports, and the collection of information showing accurately the progress of decasualisation in the Industry as a whole. Representations to the Ministry of Labour, with the object of securing accurate official labour statistics relating to the Industry.

(5) The establishment and development of systems of central or surplus stands or other means of securing the best use of available registered labour in all ports, in accordance with local needs.

(6) Detailed observations of the operation of schemes with the object of making local experience available for general use.

112. We consider that the assistance now given by the Ministry of Labour to the individual Registration Committees in respect of Secretariat, supply of stationery and otherwise is in the public interest, and recommend that it should be continued in accordance with existing arrangements with the National Joint Council.

113. We recommend, in all suitable cases in connection with labour engagement and proof of unemployment, that the Ministry should provide, as an adaptation of the Employment Exchange service, in consultation with the Standing Advisory Committee, all reasonable facilities necessary for the proper conduct of these systems and for the convenience of employers' representatives and workpeople making use of them.

CONCLUSION.

114. The results of our Inquiry fully support the view, already widely held, that everything possible should be done as a matter of vital public interest, to render the Port Transport Industry a means of regular livelihood for a properly established body of workers.

We therefore venture to hope that our work will assist materially in improving the methods by which this desired end may be attained.

Finally we would express our deep appreciation of the able and devoted assistance which throughout the Inquiry we have received from our Secretary, Mr. Leslie Bullock.

His remarkable knowledge of the whole subject has been unreservedly at our service individually and collectively and whatever merits our Report may possess is due in no small degree to his assistance. His heart is in this work and the Ministry is fortunate that it has one so skilled and enthusiastic in this subject at its service.

(Signed) DONALD MACLEAN (a)
(Chairman).

ERNEST BEVIN (b).
ALFRED BOOTH (c).
T. W. CONDON (b).
CHAS. CULLEN (c).
DAN HILLMAN (b).
C. F. LEACH (c).
D. W. MILFORD (b).
CHARLES S. PAGE (c).
S. C. PARKIN (c).
JAMES SEXTON (b).
JAMES S. SPENCER (c).
BEN. TILLET (b).

L. G. BULLOCK (Secretary).
26th March, 1931.

(a) See also p. 64.

(b) See also p. 65.

(c) See also p. 68.

MEMORANDUM ON THE REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN.

A material part of the port labour problem dealt with in this Report has been the subject of consideration by myself and five of my present colleagues, at intervals, since 1924. Every aspect of this problem has been subjected to a close and intensive examination by the present Committee, which you appointed on the 30th May, 1930. During the whole of this time from my detached and, I hope, impartial standpoint I have been able to observe the great and continuous efforts made by my colleagues who represent the employers and the workpeople in the Port Transport Industry, and I have been impressed deeply by the wealth of good feeling and sense of partnership in a great national undertaking which has been displayed by them all. There have been differences of opinion, but an entire absence of hostility. I am also happy to note from my own observations during our recent intensive inquiries that this spirit prevails largely throughout the Industry. Witnesses from many ports representing employers and workpeople have made joint appearances before us, displaying in a marked degree the spirit of mutual helpfulness by which they are actuated.

Realising as I do the vital necessity of an effective scheme of Registration in all Ports (except in the smallest of them), I am of the opinion that after a term of five years from the beginning of 1931, a fresh Inquiry should be set up by the Ministry, and if a Registration Scheme is not being operated effectively in all Ports (except as above), statutory powers should be sought to attain that end.

On the question of unemployment and the Unemployment Insurance Scheme, the Report and Appendices we have submitted set out clearly the need for drastic changes.

The practice of applying for and receiving unemployment benefit where an adequate wage for the week has already been earned is by no means uncommon, and may become general. I am aware that the practice is within the law. I do not know of any other defence.

I commend this matter to your notice with the knowledge that the subject is part of the general examination of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme, which is now being made by the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance.

(Signed) DONALD MACLEAN.

26th March, 1931.

Memorandum on Recommendations by Messrs. Ernest Bevin, D. W. Milford, T. W. Condon, D. Hillman, Sir James Sexton, M.P., and Mr. Ben Tillet, M.P.

Notwithstanding the measure of agreement reached on registration, which is embodied in the main Report, in our view the evidence clearly establishes that registration schemes alone will not provide a solution to the problem of casual employment at the docks. Whilst registration tends to check any inrush of unemployed from other industries, it does not provide an adequate means for dealing with under-employment among dock workers, or for the organisation and distribution of available employment.

The Industry is so peculiar in character that it cannot be likened to any other class of employment. Men are in continual attendance for work, and are expected to be ready to answer any call made by the employers without warning. This makes it imperative that there should be some comprehensive scheme in the case of dock workers for dealing with both employment and unemployment together as one problem.

We are satisfied that recognised port workers have a legitimate claim upon the Industry for the service they render in keeping themselves available for immediate engagement, and are strongly of the opinion that the Industry itself does not discharge its responsibility by contribution to the ordinary Unemployment Scheme.

We therefore recommend the adoption of the comprehensive Scheme submitted by the Transport and General Workers' Union as, in our view, it offers a complete solution of the casual labour problem in this Industry. It will be noted that the Scheme provides for a minimum weekly income, pensions, registration and distribution of employment under one statutory authority, while the provision for revenue has proper regard to the responsibility of all the parties.

We have studied the Report made by the Government Actuary on this Scheme at the request of the Committee (Appendix V). The Actuary examined the Scheme on the somewhat meagre data now available, and states that this only enables him to give a broad indication of the probable costs. He accepts as reasonable the estimated cost of maintenance submitted by the Union, but we wish to emphasise particularly that the amount estimated for maintenance benefit is that regarded as necessary in the early years of the Scheme, as it must be apparent that its objects cannot all be achieved at once. Therefore, whenever a solution of this problem of casual labour is found, it must cost proportionately larger sums in the early years pending the transformation of what is a casual labour condition into a guaranteed week condition. The Actuary indicates that a change in the nature of the provision for unemployment may produce wide variations in the distribution of employment, which will have an important effect on the

question of costs. Equally if nothing is done and the present situation is allowed to continue, the question of cost is a serious matter on the Insurance Fund and also on Public Assistance and other Authorities. But it is this fact to which we desire to draw particular attention in commending this scheme to your notice. An important feature of the Scheme proposed is the provision for the more equal distribution of employment among the available workers by the Joint Committee, which, by spreading the earned wages more fairly among the workers, will result in large reductions in the fund necessary to provide a guaranteed maintenance for all dock workers, and thereby contribute materially towards a solution of the port labour problem by a most economical method. In our view, one of the principal causes of the present unsatisfactory situation is the fact that there is an unfair distribution of the available work, which creates unnecessary unemployment. No doubt the Actuary has been unable, in the absence of data, to make any calculations which would show the extent of the savings which may be effected through the more equal distribution of employment. On the other hand, a very important matter arises in connection with the Scheme, that the so-called "abuse" by men drawing high wages and unemployment benefit at the same time would be for ever removed; at the same time the scheme would secure justice for those inadequately paid at present either by Insurance or wages.

We also draw attention to the effect a Pensions Scheme would have in assisting a solution of the problem. The evidence clearly establishes the necessity of keeping the average age of port workers to a level consistent with the laborious nature of the work. At present, however, the older men are compelled, owing to the inadequacy of the present Old Age Pension Scheme, to struggle on to the very end, in the hope of securing some wages, however small, to supplement the inadequate pension. The Union's proposals, which provide for compulsory retirement on reaching the age of 65 years (subject to a minimum record of service in the Industry), would greatly assist in recruitment, and where it is claimed that the register is inflated it would give an opportunity of bringing the number in proper relationship to the requirements of the particular port.

In his examination of the Pension proposals, the Actuary asserts that the expenditure increases until, in ten years, it approaches £1,250,000. In our opinion, however, the fact ought to be recognised that this pension will enable port workers to enjoy advantages in their older years approaching those which are now provided for large bodies of other workers in the United Kingdom, and that the withdrawal of these men from the Port Transport Industry will provide an increasing avenue of employment for younger workers, and so relieve the unemployment problem. These are facts which ought to be taken into full account in considering the cost of such a

scheme. The Union's representatives stated in evidence, that whilst no proposals were actually in the scheme for contributions from the men, if a satisfactory pensions scheme was proposed which would achieve the same end the men would not be averse to a joint contributory scheme. We regard the provision of pensions as a natural part of the comprehensive Scheme submitted, and one which can be supported by the fact that not only the State and municipalities themselves, but a large number of public corporations and private companies have adopted similar schemes.

Finally, we have noted that the Government Actuary, in making his Report on this Scheme, regarded it as his duty to point out its possible repercussions, and the questions of public policy likely to be involved. We would point out that it has been the policy of Dock undertakings, large firms, etc., already to employ proportions of their employees on terms of weekly wages, such as Office Staffs, Permanent Staffs on Docks, Maintenance Men, etc., and their wages in many cases are raised by means of the sums paid in dock dues, which is a levy similar in form to that suggested for the provision of the pool to meet a proportion of the cost of this Scheme. We should, moreover, strongly object if a proposal so eminently suited to solve the port labour problem, which has baffled sociologists ever since the inception of the Port Industry, were put on one side simply on the ground that it was likely to call forth similar proposals on behalf of other casual workers. We should hope that if such schemes were submitted they would be examined on their merits, as we trust this Scheme will be, having regard to the historical problem it is intended to solve.

If action is taken to give effect to the foregoing recommendations it is essential they be adopted as a whole; if not, we should strongly oppose any proposals which would place the port workers in a less favourable position under the Unemployment Insurance Acts than workers employed in other industries. It is common knowledge that port workers are compelled to pay full contributions to this Scheme when employed for less than a week's duration, and oftentimes when only employed for a day or a half-day. They also have imposed upon them the duty of signing twice daily to prove unemployment, and, in the case of thousands of them, they incur the expense of travelling to attend stands twice daily, and, in some cases, three times daily, in the hope of getting employment, however small.

(Sgd.) ERNEST BEVIN.
D. W. MILFORD.
T. W. CONDON.
JAMES SEXTON.
BEN TILLETT.
DAN. HILLMAN.

26th March, 1931.

Memorandum on Recommendations by Sir Alfred Booth, Bart., Messrs. Chas. Cullen, C. F. Leach, Charles S. Page, S. C. Parkin and James S. Spencer.

DECASUALISATION.

We are convinced that the decasualisation of dock labour can be accomplished only step by step by the application and development of the principles set out in the foregoing recommendations. Success depends upon the whole-hearted co-operation of workers and employers, which we believe can be secured only by voluntary efforts on both sides. The proposals submitted by the Transport and General Workers' Union in their evidence would involve a rigid statutory system of registration and control applying to employers and workers alike, which would destroy the initiative and goodwill necessary for working the machinery created.

We consider that the engagement of men on a weekly basis by individual employers should be encouraged. The transfer of even small groups from a casual engagement to a weekly engagement is a definite step in the right direction. We hope the proposed Standing Advisory Committee will seriously consider the possibility of encouraging such engagements specially in the case of employers who have a certain number of men regularly employed day in and day out. We believe this to be a natural development which should follow better organisation in the Industry.

The question of Trade Union membership is, in our judgment, a matter between the individual worker and the Trade Union, and Registration Schemes should not be used by either party as a medium for strengthening or weakening Trade Union organisation.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.

According to the estimate submitted to us by the Ministry of Labour, the benefit paid in respect of insured persons in the " Dock Harbour River and Canal Services " during the year 1929-30 amounted to at least £2,000,000, whereas the total contributions to the Fund by workers, employers and the State amounted only to £540,000. While these figures no doubt require some qualification owing to the fact that the classification of the Ministry includes a number of workers who would not be recognised by the Industry as port transport workers, it is clear that there has been a heavy drain on the Fund which cannot be allowed to continue. It is important to point out that the amount of benefit drawn by port transport workers is due largely to the way in which the existing Acts and Rules, in particular the Continuity Rule, enable the worker who is under-employed but not unemployed to qualify for benefit. For this the Industry is in no way responsible. Either the total amount of contributions to the Fund must be increased or the total amount of benefit must be reduced, or finally a balance must be obtained by a combination of both methods.

The Transport and General Workers' Union in the memorandum which they have submitted in evidence propose to solve the problem by making a separate statutory scheme for port transport workers. Benefit would consist of a make-up of wages to a minimum of 50s. per week, and there would be pensions (supplementary to the State Old Age Pension) of 25s. a week for all workers with a record of 15 years' service on attaining the age of 65. The Government Actuary in his Report (Appendix V) estimates that the cost of these benefits would be about £5,000,000 per annum, as compared with the sum of £2,000,000 drawn in benefit during the year 1929/30. In order to provide for these benefits the proposal is that the existing weekly contributions of employers, workpeople and the State should continue as at present, that the State should supplement these contributions by paying an amount equal to the present deficit and that the balance should be made up by a levy on all goods and passengers entering or leaving the ports. It is clear to us that the imposition of such a burden upon the trade of the Country must inevitably lead to increased unemployment, and that benefits on the scale proposed could not be granted to one trade without their extension to all. The Government Actuary states in his report (Appendix V) that the application of such a scheme to the whole of the male industrial community would involve a charge on the State (on the present volume of unemployment) in the region of £150,000,000 a year.

In our opinion the weekly contributions now made for Unemployment Insurance are as great as the trade of the Country can afford and it is only by the revision of the Acts and Rules which determine the amount of benefit that the drain on the Fund can be checked.

We consider that the principle of separating Relief from Insurance is the only basis upon which an Insurance Scheme can be kept solvent and therefore make the following recommendations which are of general application.

1. A rule similar to the original one in six rule should be imposed, coupled with a limit to the number of weeks benefit payable in any insurance year, and the rates of benefit should be revised to the extent required to make the Scheme actuarially sound.

2. A clear distinction in the payment of benefit should be made between unemployment and under-employment, in order to equalise the risk as between workers on a weekly engagement and workers on a daily engagement.

For the former class benefit should be paid at the weekly rate for complete unemployment only. For the latter class benefit should be paid at 1/6th of the weekly rate for each day's unemployment in excess of two in any insurance week without waiting time or any continuity rule. This provision would not deprive the casual worker of any right to benefit in total as provided by the conditions

imposed by the preceding recommendation but would spread the receipt of benefit over a longer period. It would, however, ensure that casual workers who earn high wages in a few days do not draw benefit immediately they are unemployed, and would remove the present inducement to evade employment in order to maintain continuity of unemployment.

3. Transitional benefit at the direct charge of the Exchequer should be paid for a limited period only, on the basis of family needs, with strict conditions with regard to the acceptance of suitable work or training.

(Signed) ALFRED BOOTH.
CHAS. CULLEN.
C. F. LEACH.
CHARLES S. PAGE.
S. C. PARKIN.
JAMES. S. SPENCER.

26th March, 1931.

APPENDIX I.

PORT LABOUR INQUIRY.

List of Witnesses.

1. Those who have given oral evidence:—

Representatives of the following organisations:—

National Council of Port Labour Employers.

Transport and General Workers' Union.

North-East Coast Council of Port Labour Employers.

South Wales Federation of Port Employers.

Glasgow Shipowners and Dock Labour Employers' Organization.

Hartlepool's Dock Employers' Association.

Tees Wharf Owners' Association.

Manchester Ship Canal Company.

Watermen, Lightermen, Tugmen and Barge-men's Union (London).

Shipping Federation, Ltd. (Cardiff).

Cardiff, Penarth and Barry Coal Trimmers' Union.

Representatives of Joint Registration or Port Labour Committees at:—

Barry, Bristol, Cardiff, Garston, Goole, Greenock, Hull, Leith, Liverpool, London, Middlesbrough, Newport (Mon.), Port Talbot, Southampton and Swansea.

Representatives of the Manchester Area and Glasgow Branch Committee (Transport and General Workers' Union).

Mr. W. G. Day, O.B.E.

Mr. C. W. G. Eady (Principal Assistant Secretary) and Mr. P. Y. Blundun (Assistant Secretary), Ministry of Labour.

Mr. D. Ross-Johnson, C.B.E.

2. *Those who have submitted written evidence:—*

The Joint Registration and Port Labour Committees (see Appendices II and III).

Dock and Harbour Authorities' Association.

National Federation of Iron and Steel Manufacturers.

London, Midland and Scottish Railway Company (Garston and Goole).

Southern Railway Company (Southampton Docks).

Kirkcaldy Port Employers' Association.

Transport and General Workers' Union (Great Yarmouth).

Milford Docks Company.

Mr. R. Lee Barber, (Great Yarmouth).

Mr. Percy Ford, B.Sc., University College, Southampton.

Sir Alfred W. Watson, K.C.B., Government Actuary.

3. A large number of other communications was also placed before the Committee.

APPENDIX II.

PORT LABOUR INQUIRY.

List of Ports and Groups of Ports included in the General Survey of Port Employment.

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Aberdeen. | Hartlepoons. |
| Alloa. | *Harwich. |
| *Ardrossan. | *Hull. |
| *Ayr and Troon. | *Ipswich. |
| *Barrow-in-Furness. | Irvine. |
| *Barry. | King's Lynn. |
| Boston. | Kirkcaldy. |
| *Bristol. | *Leith. |
| *Cardiff and Penarth. | *Liverpool. |
| *Cumberland Ports. | Llanelly. |
| Workington. | *London. |
| Whitehaven. | Lowestoft. |
| Maryport. | *Manchester. |
| Harrington (closed). | *Middlesbrough (Tees Ports). |
| *Dundee. | *Newhaven. |
| Falmouth. | *Newport, Monmouthshire. |
| *Fowey. | Penzance. |
| *Garston. | *Plymouth. |
| Glasgow. | Poole. |
| *Gloucester and Sharpness. | *Port Talbot. |
| *Goole. | *Preston. |
| *Grangemouth and Bo'ness. | *Southampton. |
| Great Yarmouth. | *Swansea. |
| *Greenock. | Tyne and Wear Ports. |
| *Grimsby and Immingham. | *Weymouth. |

* For particulars of registration scheme see Appendix III.

APPENDIX III.

PORT LABOUR INQUIRY.

Record of Registration Schemes Based on Reports from Joint Registration Committees.

| Name of Scheme and date of Establishment. | Details of administration and composition of committee. | No. of Employers. | | No. of Registered men and scope of Scheme at date of return. | Rules affecting Recruitment and present position. | System of Registration, Employment Records, and arrangements for revision of register. | System of Labour Engagement. | Remarks. |
|---|---|-------------------|-----------------|--|---|--|------------------------------|----------|
| | | Supporting. | Not Supporting. | | | | | |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |

Schemes assisted by the Ministry of Labour.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|------|---|--|--|--|---|
| Ardrossan* 18th Nov., 1924. | Joint. M/L Secretary and clerical as- sistance. | 3 | Nil | 134 casuals. | General industrial qualification for dock work. T.U. member- ship compul- sory. No re- cruitment last year. | Book with daily employment re- cord. Revision half-yearly but very little ad- justment con- sidered neces- sary. | One central call- stand. | It is considered that the number of men is adjusted to meet the normal re- quirements. <i>Daily average of men employed</i> (1930) 93. |
| Ayr and Troon, March, 1925. | Joint. Six members each side. M/L Secretary and clerical as- sistance. T.U. issues books to workers after prepara- tion by Secre- tary. | 6 | Nil. | 156 casuals. (excludes coal trimmers). | T.U. membership compulsory. Recruitment has been re- stricted to men previously em- ployed. | Book with daily employment re- cord. Revision half-yearly. Registration is cancelled in the case of poor re- cords of work, where no ex- tenuating cir- cumstances exist. | At the ship's side. (Not regarded as satisfactory and the Committee are now con- sidering im- provements). | Committee comment upon large number of elderly dockers. Over 100 are over 40 years of age, and 60 over 50 years of age. <i>Employment for first 6 months, 1930.</i> Maximum 98. Minimum 21. |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| Barrow, April, 1925. | Joint. 4 mem- bers each side, M/L Secretary and clerical as- sistance. | 3 | 2 have special arrange- ments. | 123 (permanent and casual). | Recruitment restricted to industrially qualified and T.U. members. No recruitment taking place. | Book with daily employment re- cord. Revision and cancellation not systematic. | Two call-stands. | Committee are allow- ing register to decrease by natural wastage as there is depression in the trade. |
| Barry Docks, 28th April, 1924. | Joint. 4 mem- bers each side. Employers' Secretary and M/L assist- ance. Books issued by Em- ployers and T.U. in con- sultation. | 10 | Nil | 268 registered. 44 Supple- mentary. (excludes coal trim- mers, shore, gangs, etc.) | Recruitment from supple- mentary list. Engagement confined to T.U. members. No recruitment taking place and work is very low. | Book with daily employment re- cord. Revision half - yearly. No definite action taken to cancel in case of poor records, but records are examined and statistics com- piled. | Central call-stand. | |
| Bristol, June, 1916, reconsti- tuted in Feb., 1919. | Joint, with In- dependent Chairman. 5 members each side and Port Labour Ad- viser (jointly remunerated). M/L. Secre- tary and cleri- cal assistance. | 100 | Nil | Group A 2,788 casuals. Group B. 383 (includes casual car- ters and warehouse- men). | Preference to sons of deceased dockers. T.U. membership compulsory. Recruitment in general closed for some years, except for certain special cases. | Books with daily employment re- cord in two classes. Revision half-yearly and full statistics taken. Poor records dealt with on their merits by a Joint Sub-Com- mittee. | Avonmouth and Portishead. Central call- stands. City Docks. At ship's side with sur- plus stand. Also a Labour Ad- viser to assist both sides. | Principal difficulty is geographical which affects mobility. Committee also concerned at age increase in register. <i>Employment Re- cord</i> (1929). Maximum 2,930 men. Minimum 533 men. Average 1,738 per day. |

* Scheme temporarily suspended on 15th December, 1930.

| 1. | 2. | No. of Employers | | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
|---|---|------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | Supporting. | Not Supporting. | | | | | |
| Name of Scheme and date of Establishment. | Details of administration and composition of committee. | | | No. of Registered men and scope of Scheme at date of return. | Rules affecting Recruitment and present position. | System of Registration, Employment Records, and arrangements for revision of register. | System of Labour Engagement. | Remarks. |
| Cardiff and Penarth, January, 1924. | Joint. 5 members each side. Employers' Secretary and M/L clerical assistance. | 60 | Nil | 1,572 (practically all casuals). | No special arrangements for recruitment which has been confined to issue of temporary cards for seasonal work. | Book with daily employment record. Revision half-yearly and statistics taken. Registration is cancelled in case of poor records. | Individual call-stands. Action taken only in case of shortages by issue of temporary cards. There is no provision for co-ordinating the engagement of labour but this is under active consideration. | Work records (1930). Last 6 months to April, 1930 shew 50·3 per cent. worked 50 per cent. or more of "Possible" days. 49·7 per cent. worked under 50 per cent. 21·3 per cent. worked 25 per cent. or less. |
| Cumberland ports (see Working-ton). Dundee, July, 1924. | Joint. 3 members each side. T.U. Secretary M/L assistance T.U. issues books. | All | Nil | 466 permanent and casual. | T.U. membership compulsory. Extra men recruited for busy season and to replace cancellations. | Book with daily employment record. Revision half-yearly. Men under 30 per cent. of work have book withdrawn. | One central stand. No other facilities required. | The central stand has reduced number of men with poor records and no further decasualisation is considered possible. <i>Employment</i> Maximum 650. Minimum 100. |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------------|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| Fowey, 19th August, 1924. | Joint. 3 mem- bers each side. Employers' Secretary and M/L clerical assistance. Employers issue books. | 7 | Nil | 215 registered, and 54 Supple- mentary men. | No special ar- rangements. Re- cruitment from the supplemen- tary list is con- fined to re- placements when older men retire from work. | Book with half- daily employ- ment record. Revision half- yearly. Regis- tration is not cancelled in case of poor records. Employment is fairly regular. | Call-stands at G.W.R. jetties. Supply of labour usually adequate. | <i>Employment during 1927 worked out at 37.8 weeks full time per registered man. Employment during 1929, em- ployed during any one week. Maximum 345. Minimum 156.</i> |
| Garston, 1st October, 1925. | Joint. 1 mem- ber each side. M/L Secre- tary and clerical assist- ance. | 1 L.M.S. | 10 Ship- per's Agents who employ check- ers. | 900 approx. (Casuals only). | Scheme confined to members of the T. and G.W. Union. | Tallies and record now kept by Em- ployment Ex- change but sta- tistics not com- piled. Provision for cancellation in case of poor record i.e., less than 60 per cent. "attendances" if no extenu- ating circum- stances. | Central call-stand. | 80 of the registered workers are em- ployed on sidings about one mile from the Docks. (These are not available for work at the docks). Temporary permits issued for banana boats to unregistered men. |
| Goole, 25th May, 1925. | Joint. 5 em- ployers, 4 workpeople. M/L Secre- tary and clerical assistance. | 5 | Stev- edores and coal trim- mers. | 486 casuals. | No special stip- ulations. recruitment taking place. | Book with daily employment re- cord. Revision half-yearly and men under 25 days work are reported to Committee. No statistics avail- able. | Individual call- stands for each firm. No other facilities. | Lack of facilities for engagement is under consideration. |

| Name of Scheme and date of Establishment. | Details of administration and composition of committee. | No. of Employers. | | No. of Registered men and scope of Scheme at date of return. | Rules affecting Recruitment and present position. | System of Registration, Employment Records and arrangements for revision of register. | System of Labour Engagement. | Remarks. |
|---|---|-------------------|-----------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | Supporting. | Not Supporting. | | | | | |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
| Grange-mouth, July, 1926. | Joint. 5 members each side. M/L Secretary and clerical assistance. | 24 | 1 | 550 (permanent and casuals) (Coal trimmers, etc., excluded). | No special stipulations. All new entrants eligible for T.U. membership. Only recruitment is in replacement of wastage. | Book with 3 shift employment record. Revision half-yearly and statistics compiled but no adjustments considered necessary. Registration cancelled in case of poor records. (20 per cent). | Central call-stand. | The port is seasonal in respect of timber and for 5 to 6 months the demand exceeds the supply of registered workers. |
| Greenock, 2nd November, 1925. | Joint. 5 members each side. M/L Secretary and clerical assistance. Books issued by T.U. | 16 | Nil | 355 Casuals. | Restricted to sons of deceased dockers, and re-admission, T.U. membership compulsory. Some recruiting still taking place. Register being gradually increased to 400, the number of men required to man the port in ordinary circumstances. | Book with special employment record covering ordinary hours and overtime. Statistics on hours basis quarterly. Books exchanged quarterly. No adjustments made to the register. Cancellation in case of poor records in certain cases (25 per cent.) | Recognised call-stands and employers report expected requirements to T.U. Office. These facilities are fully used. | Unregistered workers were employed for 25,462 hours during 6 months ended 28/3/30. |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| Grimsby and Immingham, 7th September, 1925. | Joint. Chairman (Employer) Vice-Chairman (T.U.) 9 Employers, 8 T.U. M/L Secretary and clerical assistance. | All except Fish Docks. | Nil | 1,896 casuals. Two Groups. | Restricted to dockers' sons employers' nominees and some ex-service men. A little recruitment as above taking place. | Books with daily employment record in two classes. Revision half-yearly and Committee fix a minimum record for re-qualification. Work is largely seasonal. | Three call-stands of which one is centralised. | The port is largely seasonal and at the peak period all men are stated to be employed. <i>Employment Record</i> (1929).— Minimum 900. Maximum 1,700. |
| Hull, 1st October, 1925. | Joint. 4 members each side. M/L Secretary and clerical assistance. | 252 | Master Stevedores only partial. | 7,804 Practically no permanent men. | Preference to sons of dockers and ex-service men. Small recruitment taking place. | Books with half-daily employment records. Statistics not complete owing to non-compliance. Books exchanged half-yearly but no cancellation in case of poor records. | At ship's side. Certain telephone facilities are available for labour distribution but not used. | |
| Leith, 8th March, 1926. | Joint. 4 members each side. M/L Secretary and clerical assistance. Books issued by T.U. | 38 | Nil | 1,417 Permanent and Casuals. | Nominations by employers and trade union. No recruitment has taken place for over 2 years. | Book with daily employment record. Statistics taken but registration is not cancelled in case of poor records. Revision is merely confined to exchange of books half-yearly. | Three recognised stands at Leith and Granton Dock. Some unregistered men find employment while registered men are unemployed owing to lack of facilities. | General trade situation and unregistered labour have created difficulties for the scheme. Nearly 1,000 of the men over 40 years of age. <i>Employment</i> .— First 6 months 1929. Maximum 1,690 Minimum 430. |

| Name of Scheme and date of Establishment. | Details of administration and composition of committee. | No. of Employers. | | No. of Registered men and scope of Scheme at date of return. | Rules affecting Recruitment and present position. | System of Registration, Employment Records and arrangements for revision of register. | System of Labour Engagement. | Remarks. |
|---|---|-------------------|--------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| | | Supporting. | Not Supporting. | | | | | |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
| Liverpool, July, 1912. | Joint. 12 members each side. Employers' Secretary and M/L assistance through Clearing Houses, etc., (also Area Committees). | 52 | Certain special classes. | 21,500 (quota). | Preference to sons of dockers and previous tally-holders. Recruitment has only been undertaken to fill vacancies in the quota. Otherwise tallies are granted when "permanent" men are discharged. | Tallies and record on Insurance Card. Statistics available through clearing houses. U.J. contribution cards as well as record of wages are used to detect men with poor records. Registration is cancelled in case of poor record at the discretion of each Area Committee. Several complete revisions have been carried out by special arrangement. | Mostly individual call-stands with one or two central call-stands. | The lack of facilities militates against decasualisation. A reduction in the number of tally-holders is now under consideration. |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| <p>London, 23rd February, 1920. Re-consti- tuted, Sept., 1925.</p> | <p>Joint, 7 mem- bers each side including Joint Chair- men. M/L Secretary spe- cial office and all assistance.</p> | <p>350</p> | <p>Very few. Mostly small firms.</p> | <p>37,118 (Permanent and casual).</p> | <p>Preference to sons of dockers, em- ployers' nomi- nees and cer- tain special classes such as licensed lighter- men. Only special individ- ual cases being dealt otherwise recruitment - is closed.</p> | <p>Special registra- tion book with U.I. book at- tached. Revi- sion annually when statistics are taken. Can- cellation of reg- istration is dealt with on the basis of the U.I. contribu- tion record, the worker stating his individual record where required on a special form. Otherwise no individual em- ployment re- cord.</p> | <p>Individual and Common call- stands in var- ious parts of the port. Some steps being taken to estab- lish systems of surplus stands.</p> | <p>The size of this port presents special difficulties which preclude adoption of central call- stands.</p> |
| <p>Middlesboro' and Tees Ports, December, 1924.</p> | <p>Joint. Func- tions as two Joint Sub- Committee Employers' Secretary. M/L assist- ance. Books are issued by Employers.</p> | <p>25</p> | <p>4</p> | <p>1,900 (permanent and casual). Several registers are kept to sub-divide the workers and form classes.</p> | <p>Only stipulation is an age require- ment in the case of Hatchway- men. Sons of dockers are given prefer- ence when vac- ancies occur. Very little re- cruitment taking place.</p> | <p>Book with half- daily employ- ment record. Revision half- yearly and ad- justments are made on the basis of statis- tics. Inquiries are made in case of poor records. (50 per cent. for "attached" workers).</p> | <p>Individual call- stands with a central "mar- ket" in respect of the Dock. (L.N.E.R.) sub- divided into sections.</p> | <p>It is not considered that the lack of "clearing houses" militates against decasualisation and last year it is stated that even the "un- attached" regis- tered workers were fairly regularly employed.</p> |

| Name of Scheme and date of Establishment. | Details of administration and composition of committee. | No. of Employers | | No. of Registered men and scope of Scheme at date of return. | Rules affecting Recruitment and present position. | System of Registration, Employment Records, and arrangements for revision of register. | System of Labour Engagement. | Remarks. |
|---|---|------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|------------------------------|---|
| | | Supporting. | Not Supporting. | | | | | |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
| Newport, (Mon.) 1st Oct., 1917. Revised 1926. | Joint. 4 members each side. Employers' Secretary and M/L clerical assistance. Books issued jointly. | 22 | 1 | 1,011 | Recruitment from boy labour. No recruitment has taken place for some time. | Registration Cards and daily employment returns from employers. | Central call-stand. | <i>Highest number employed in any 1 day during period ended 28/6/30 451. Average 199.</i> |
| Port Talbot, 29th July, 1924. | Joint. 4 members each side. Employers' Secretary and M/L clerical assistance. Books issued jointly. | 4 | 1 | 84 Gangmen, 44 Hobblers (casuals only.) | No stipulations for recruitment. Only recruitment now taking place is in replacement of wastage. | Registration certificate and employers' returns. (Record book being adopted). Statistics last taken relate to 11 weeks period. Register revised every three months upon the basis of employment record. Registration cancelled when not following dock work regularly. | Central call-stand. | <i>Average Shifts per week (1930)— Gangmen 3.5 shifts Hobblers 2.5 shifts.</i> |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|-----|---|--|---|---|--|
| Preston, 20th June, 1916. Revised. | Joint. 4 mem- bers each side. M/L Secre- tary and cler- ical assistance. | 8 | Nil | 775 Permanent and casuals. | Physical fitness is only stipulation All new entrants eligible for T.U. membership. Recruitment stopped until October 1930. | Book with 3 space daily employ- ment record. Percentage check applied half-yearly when books are exchanged. Datum line 750 reached by was- tage. Power to cancel in case of poor records 20 per cent. | Two recognised call-stands. No other facilities appear neces- sary. | Trade Union stipu- late that all their members must be included in the register. |
| Southamp- ton, 1916, revised 14th August, 1925. | Joint. 5 mem- bers each side. M/L Secre- tary and cler- ical assistance. | 14 | Nil | 2,888 Casuals (not coal porters) | Employers' re- commendations and physical fit- ness. Recruit- ment only at biennial revi- sion. | Brass tallies and record from em- ployers' returns of engagement. No statistics available. Tal- lies withdrawn at revision only. | Individual call- stands, but co- operation be- tween employ- ers where neces- sary to obviate engagement of unregistered men. | |
| Swansea, February, 1927. | Joint. 4 mem- bers each side. Employers' Secretary. M/L keep re- cords and give assist- ance. Books issued jointly. | All general cargo. | Nil | 1,119 (first and se- cond prefer- ence men) (excludes coal trim- mers). | Recruitment into second prefer- ence. No re- cruitment tak- ing place. | Registration certi- ficates and em- ployment re- turns. (Record book being adopted). Sta- tistics show that some unregis- tered labour is employed al- though maxi- mum employed is less than No. of registered men. No action to cancel in case of poor records. | Central call-stand. | Highest No. em- ployed during quarter ended 29-3-30 881 Average 522 |

| Name of Scheme and date of Establishment. | Details of administration and composition of committee. | No. of Employers. | | No. of Registered men and scope of Scheme at date of return. | Rules affecting Recruitment and present position. | System of Registration, Employment Records and arrangements for revision of register. | System of Labour Engagement. | Remarks. |
|--|--|----------------------|-----------------|--|---|---|------------------------------|--|
| | | Supporting. | Not Supporting. | | | | | |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
| Weymouth, 1925. | Joint. 3 members each side. M/L Secretary and clerical assistance. G.W.R. issues books to men. | 1 (G.W.R.) | 8 small firms. | 177 casuals. | Recruitment from members of T.U. only. Recruitment is confined to make-up of wastage. | Book with daily employment record. Revision half-yearly. Registration is cancelled in case of poor records (30 per cent.). | Central call-stand. | The chief difficulty is the seasonal character of the traffic which militates against closer adjustment. <i>Average employment 6 months to June, 1930. Regular casual 4½ days per week. Casual casuals 3½ days per week.</i> |
| Workington, (Cumberland Ports), 10th December, 1924. | Joint. 9 members each side with Joint Chairmen. M/L Secretary and clerical assistance. | All principal firms. | Nil | 180 casuals. | No special stipulations. Only recruitment is in replacement. | Book with half-daily employment record. Revision half-yearly and adjustments made on the basis of statistics. Inquiries are made in case of poor records, but no fixed basis. | One call-stand at each port. | Tidal nature of the ports creates rushes of work but there is some interchange of labour between ports which obviates the engagement of unregistered labour. |

Other Schemes of Registration.

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|-----|---|--|---|--|---|
| Manchester, 1919. | Operated by M a n chester Ship Canal Co. in con- sultation with Transport and General Workers' Union. | 1 | Nil | 3,000 (excludes weekly supervisory grades). | T.U. membership compulsory ex- cept for tem- porary registra- tion. | Number cards and T.U. member- ship cards. No fixed revision and cancella- tion only when absent from calls for 8 con- secutive weeks. Full statistics kept by Canal Company. | Centralised call- stands. | Work record (1929) in any one day. Maximum ... 3,087 Minimum ... 1,430 |
| Plymouth, January, 1923. | Joint. 5 Em- ployers, 3 Trade Union. No official assistance given. Em- ployers' Secretary. | Practi- cally all employ- ers. | — | 550 and supple- mentary list. | No special stipu- lations. Recruit- ment is from supplementary list. | Book with half- daily employ- ment record. Registration cancelled for poor records in extreme cases. Register revised half-yearly. | At wharves. No centralised stands. | Seasonal work affects adjustment of registers. |
| Gloucester and Sharp- ness. | Two Joint Sub- Committees. No official assistance. Joint Secre- taries. | All ex- cept Timber Im- porters. | Nil | Grade I. Sharpness 280 Gloucester 70. Grade II. 30 Total 380. | Nomination by Trade Union but no occasion for recruit- ment. | Cards subject to half-yearly re- issue and ex- changed by the Union on lists agreed jointly. Temporary per- mits to deal with seasonal Timber Work. | Individual call- stands. | Centralisation under consideration for Sharpness. |

| Name of Scheme and date of Establishment. | Details of administration and composition of committee. | No. of Employers. | | No. of Registered men and scope of Scheme at date of return. | Rules affecting Recruitment and present position. | System of Registration, Employment Records and arrangements for revision of register. | System of Labour Engagement. | Remarks. |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--|---|---|------------------------------|----------|
| | | Supporting, | Not Supporting. | | | | | |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
| Ipswich | Operated by Port Employers without consultation. | — | — | About 250. | | (no details). | | |
| Harwich. Newhaven | L.N.E.R. Southern Railway | men are registered with the Company. | | | | | | |

APPENDIX IV.

PORT LABOUR INQUIRY.

Information and Statistics received regarding the receipt of Unemployment Benefit by better paid casual workers (see para. 87 of the Report).

The large majority of witnesses from the various ports in the country have stated, in giving evidence, that a certain proportion of port transport workers, obtaining comparatively large earnings during casual employment legally claim Unemployment benefit. Witnesses have produced particulars of individual cases either as specially selected examples or as samples regarded as representative of the whole. These cases show either that the men draw wages as well as benefit in the same week or that over a period the total income was derived from both, though not necessarily in the same weeks. Each port which produced such statistics did so largely on its own initiative and in the form it considered most suitable. The information in possession of the Inquiry, therefore, cannot be collated to give a representative picture of practice in the industry as a whole. It is apparent that the experience in the various ports differs materially in this matter, as they are governed to some extent by the particular wage system and method of work in operation. The following information is based upon data which, with the exception of Liverpool and London, have been agreed by the employers' and workpeople's representatives in each port.

Bristol.

Detailed particulars and summary covering 146 Port Workers for the period from 4th November, 1929, to 1st March, 1930. These cases are stated to be representative of a larger number.

The following weekly averages are quoted for all the cases given:—

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|----|----|
| | | | | | | | | | £ | s. | d. |
| Wages | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 16 | 10 |
| Unemployment benefit | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 0 | 6 | 5 |
| Total income | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4 | 3 | 3 |

The summary also shows the total wage and benefit payments and also Unemployment Insurance contributions.

Cardiff (Dockers).

Particulars of the total wages and benefit received during a period of 35 weeks ended 31st August, 1930, by 129 port workers. The cases were selected as a 10 per cent. sample of the whole of the registered workers (casual).

The weekly averages for the cases over the period taken are:—

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| | | | | | | | | | £ | s. | d. |
| Wages | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 4 | 9 |
| Unemployment benefit | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 0 | 12 | 8 |
| Total income | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | £2 | 17 | 5 |

Cardiff (Coal Trimmers).

In view of the Wage Pooling Scheme it may be said that all coal trimmers on the average obtain the same amount of wages.

Particulars produced in respect of four weeks ended 3rd October, 1930, for the 1,374 workers who shared in the wages produce the following averages:—

| | £ | s. | d. |
|-----------------------------|----|----|----|
| Wages | 4 | 9 | 10 |
| Unemployment benefit | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| Total income | £4 | 15 | 4 |

Information in respect of previous and subsequent weeks showed that the above is fairly representative experience in connection with this scheme.

The average weekly wage for the year 1929 was £4 19s. 2d.

Garston.

Particulars of the amounts of wages and benefit received during varying periods of eight consecutive weeks by 26 port workers whose cases were selected for test at random.

Owing to the differences in the periods taken in each case, an average for the whole of the cases cannot be strictly accurate.

As a rough indication of the general result, however, the weekly averages may be quoted as follows:—

| | £ | s. | d. |
|-----------------------------|----|----|----|
| Wages | 4 | 13 | 3 |
| Unemployment benefit | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Total income | £4 | 18 | 3 |

Liverpool.

Information in respect of this port was contained in the Report of an Inquiry instituted by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool into Casual Labour in the Merseyside Area.

This Report contains Tables which give the results of a one in twenty-five sample. A copy of one table is attached (Schedule I).

London.

Particulars were furnished of a number of cases selected to show examples of claims for benefit known to have been made by men drawing high wages. These cases must be taken to be isolated in view of the method of selection. Having regard to the size of this port it is not considered practicable to obtain more representative details.

Manchester.

Two statements were submitted giving individual examples covering periods of four weeks in 1930, in which workers had drawn during the same weeks.

(a) Wages and Unemployment Benefit, and

(b) Wages, Compensation and Unemployment Benefit.

The statements gave 16 and 17 cases respectively, but it is claimed that they are representative of a larger number and that the period taken was normal.

Middlesbrough (Tees Wharves).

Particulars of seven cases are given which were selected at random and covering varying periods. The highest case showed the following weekly averages:—

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| Wages | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | £ | s. | d. |
| Unemployment benefit | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 0 | 15 | 9 |
| Total income | | | | | | | | | £4 | 9 | 5 |

The lowest case showed:—

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| Wages | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | £ | s. | d. |
| Unemployment benefit | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 0 | 11 | 8 |
| Total income | | | | | | | | | £1 | 13 | 3 |

It was also stated at this port that the average weekly wages paid during the 12 months ended 31st March, 1930, for all casual port workers registered at the Tees Wharves was as follows:—

| | | | | |
|---|---------|----|----|----|
| Above 40 per cent. of possible engagements | 588 men | £ | s. | d. |
| 40 per cent. and less of possible engagements | 157 men | 3 | 19 | 1 |
| | | 1 | 15 | 8 |
| Average for ... | 745 men | £3 | 9 | 10 |

The above figures do not include any earnings which the men may have obtained at Middlesbrough Dock. Separate figures for Unemployment Benefit are not available, but it may be stated that the total benefit paid in respect of all registered dock workers at Middlesbrough (1,833) during the year 1929 was £9,827; the average weekly payments being 253 in number and the average payment 15s.

Newport (Mon.).

Particulars of the total wages and benefit received during a period of 27 weeks by 49 port workers. The cases were selected as a 5 per cent. sample of the whole of the registered workers (casual).

The weekly averages for the cases over the period taken are:—

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| Wages | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | £ | s. | d. |
| Unemployment benefit | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 13 | 3 |
| | | | | | | | | | 0 | 10 | 9 |
| Total income | | | | | | | | | £3 | 4 | 0 |

Port Talbot.

Particulars of the total wages and benefit received during a period of 26 weeks by 11 port workers selected at random.

The weekly averages for the cases over the period taken are:—

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| Wages | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | £ | s. | d. |
| Unemployment benefit | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5 | 9 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| Total income | | | | | | | | | £5 | 16 | 1 |

Swansea.

Particulars of the total wages and benefit received during a period of eight weeks by 58 port workers. The cases were selected as a 5 per cent. sample of the whole of the registered dockers (casual).

The weekly averages for the cases over the period taken are:—

| | £ | s. | d. |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Wages | 2 | 18 | 5 |
| Unemployment benefit | 0 | 6 | 11 |
| Total income | £3 | 5 | 4 |

Schedule 1.

TABLE XXIV.*—One in Twenty-five Sample.

Amount of Wages received by selected Tally Holders at Liverpool during quarter ended 28th March, 1930, related to amount of Unemployment Insurance Benefit received.

| Amount of Wages received in Quarter ended 28/3/30. | | Amount of Unemployment Insurance Benefit payable during Quarter ended 26/3/30. | | | | | | |
|--|------------|--|-----------|------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Amount earned. | Total. | Nil. | Up to £3. | Over £3 up to £6 | £6-£9. | £9-£12. | £12-£15 | Over £15. |
| Nil | 105 | 70 | 14 | 4 | 11 | — | 4 | 2 |
| Up to £12 ... | 164 | 24 | 15 | 20 | 34 | 33 | 26 | 12 |
| Over £12-£24 | 173 | 27 | 9 | 35 | 51 | 34 | 15 | 2 |
| Over £24-£36 | 172 | 31 | 21 | 56 | 43 | 16 | 5 | — |
| Over £36-£48 | 138 | 73 | 27 | 30 | 6 | — | 2 | — |
| Over £48 ... | 74 | 63 | 1 | 9 | 1 | — | — | — |
| Total ... | 826 | 288 | 87 | 154 | 146 | 83 | 52 | 16 |

* Report of Enquiry into Casual Labour in the Merseyside Area. Page 92.

APPENDIX V.

MAINTENANCE AND PENSIONS SCHEME FOR DOCK WORKERS SUBMITTED BY THE
'TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION.

Report by the Government Actuary.

The Secretary,
Ministry of Labour.

SIR,

1. In compliance with the request conveyed in Mr. Bowers' letter of 13th ultimo (E.T. 8094/1930) I have examined the scheme for Maintenance and Pensions for Dock Workers submitted by the Transport and General Workers' Union to the Committee appointed by the Minister of Labour to enquire into employment and unemployment in the port transport service in Great Britain.

2. It is proposed that, in substitution for the present insurance under the Unemployment Insurance Acts, workers in the industry shall be entitled, under a separate and self-contained scheme, to a weekly allowance of the difference between wages earned and 50s. a week. In addition retirement from the industry at age 65 is to be compulsory and the worker is to be entitled to a pension of 25s. per week provided he has served 15 years in the industry and ceases to be a wage-earner. This provision is to be subject to modification during the first five years of the currency of the scheme.

3. The data available will not provide a basis for more than a broad indication of the probable cost of the scheme. Their principal defect is that, except in the case of Liverpool, there is no detailed information as to the wages earned by the workers. The information furnished in respect of that port includes for each week of the year 1930 the number of registered workers receiving no wages and those earning up to 24s. per week, from 24s. to 36s. per week, etc. From these particulars it has been possible to estimate for each of these groups of workers the corresponding days of unemployment. The accuracy of this estimate has been tested by comparison of the resulting number of benefit payments and amount of benefit with those actually paid. In the case of London, the data consist of a sample of approximately 10 per cent. of the registered workers and comprise particulars of the days of unemployment, and it has been necessary to make certain assumptions as to the corresponding wages earned based on the limited information available. For the remainder of the ports in respect of which particulars have been furnished, the data consist merely of the total number of insured persons and the amount of unemployment benefit paid in the six months May to October, 1930. An examination of these particulars indicates that the rate of unemployment at these ports is somewhat in excess of that obtaining at London and effect has been given to this feature in the estimates.

4. My calculations indicate that, on the present volume of unemployment in the industry, and on the present incidence of its distribution between individuals, the Union's estimate of £3,900,000 as the yearly cost of maintenance benefits under the scheme is not unreasonable. For the purpose of my subsequent calculations I have accordingly adopted this estimate. I am, however, compelled to point out that, in practice, the change from a scheme under which benefit is dependent simply on days of unemployment to one wherein the basic factor determining the benefit is the wages earned, may produce wide variations in the distribution of employment, and that an estimate based on present conditions may be substantially exceeded especially if the present volume of labour remains attached to the industry.

While no measure can be placed on the variation of cost which is likely to arise from this cause the point is one to be kept in mind.

5. The estimated number of workers to be included in the scheme is 150,000 and a yearly charge of £3,900,000 for maintenance benefit therefore requires a contribution of £26 a year for each worker. The ordinary unemployment contribution of 1s. 10½d. a week, suspended wholly or partly in periods of unemployment and sickness, is equivalent to about £4 7s. 0d. a year. Further contributions to the extent of, say, £21 13s. 0d. per worker per year would therefore be required. In effect the scheme provides that these contributions shall be provided by the Exchequer, the bulk of the resulting charge being met by special duties on Imports and Exports and by a *per capita* tax on passengers entering and leaving the country.

6. As regards the proposed retirement pension, an estimate has been made of the cost in certain future years on the assumption that the scheme begins on 1st January, 1932, and that in the first five years, as proposed, workers will be compulsorily retired on a graduated scale as to age, i.e., as and when they reach age 70 or over (in 1932), age 69 (in 1933), and so on to age 66 in 1936; from 1937 onwards it is assumed that the permanent condition will apply and that retirement will take place at age 65. The grant of pension at age 65 is to be subject to the completion of 15 years of consecutive service in the industry, reduced in the first five years of the scheme by a graduating rule to 10 years at age 70 or over in 1932, but it has been assumed for practical convenience that all those reaching the qualifying age will thereupon be entitled to pension under the rule as to years of service. The resulting over-estimate of the cost of pensions is probably very slight.

7. On this basis it is estimated that in the first year (1932) the annual cost of pensions will exceed £200,000; by the third year (1934) it will have been more than doubled; and by the sixth year (1936) it will have been at least quadrupled. After ten years (in 1942) the cost will approach £1,250,000 and thereafter it will increase slowly.

8. It is noted that the scheme appears to contemplate investing the governing body with power to make special arrangements for pensioning workers who became incapacitated but since no details are given it is impossible to estimate the additional cost involved. If the special arrangements provided for the definite retirement of workers who became incapacitated before the normal pension age it is probable that the pension charge would be substantially increased.

9. The continuous rise in the pensions cost over a long period is due to the fact that, whereas at the outset the number of pensioners would comprise only such persons over 70 as were still engaged in the industry at those ages, in due course the pensioners would consist of all the survivors ~~from age 65~~ to the end of life of persons who had been engaged in the industry at age 65 and for 15 years before attaining this age.

10. In estimating the contribution necessary to support the pension it is assumed that entry to the industry after the initiation of the scheme would take place at the age of 18. I refer later to the probable effects of departure from this condition. In the absence of information on the subject it has been assumed that withdrawals from the industry would be negligible. Whatever may have been the position in this respect in the past it is highly probable that under the operation of a scheme providing practically a guaranteed minimum wage of 50s. a week during working life with a pension of 25s. a week at 65 the number of withdrawals would in fact be negligible. In any case the liability cannot be regarded, on balance, as overstated since in the circumstances indicated in paragraph 8 above no provision has been made for the additional charge that would arise from

the grant of pensions or allowances in cases of incapacity before age 65. The contribution so estimated on a 4 per cent. interest basis, and assuming rates of mortality such as are experienced by dock workers, is £2 a year.

11. It has been assumed that this contribution would be paid in respect of the workers at present in the industry. These are of all ages from 18 upwards and many, obviously, have entered the industry at ages much in excess of 18. It follows that the produce of a contribution of £2 a year would of itself be quite insufficient to support the pensions to the existing body. I estimate the future pensions to be of the "present value" of £24,300,000 and the contribution of £300,000 a year to be of the "present value" of £3,300,000. The difference between these sums, namely £21,000,000, represents the fund which ought to be provided at the beginning of the scheme or the equivalent in present value of the further annual sums to be provided (hereinafter called the "deficiency charge") in order to place the scheme on a sound basis.

12. The source of the further income required by the scheme, as contemplated by its authors, is evidently the Exchequer. A charge to meet present liabilities cannot well be spread out in perpetuity; the usual course in such cases, e.g., in the provision made by local authorities for "back-service" on the establishment of Superannuation Funds for their staffs, is to spread the charge evenly over a series of years. In the present case if the liability were spread over 20 years the annual charge for this period would be £1,500,000. If spread over 30 years it would be £1,200,000.

13. The following is a summary of the annual charges falling on the Exchequer under the scheme, in addition to the normal Exchequer contribution for unemployment benefit, which may be taken at about £200,000:—

| | | | | £ |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------------|
| In respect of "maintenance" benefit, | | | | |
| 150,000 x £21 13s. 0d. a year, say | ... | ... | ... | 3,250,000 |
| In respect of Pensions, | | | | |
| Ordinary Contributions, 150,000 x £2 | ... | ... | ... | 300,000 |
| Deficiency Charge, for 20 years | ... | ... | ... | 1,500,000 |
| Total | | | | £5,050,000 |

After 20 years the charge would fall to £3,550,000 a year. Alternatively, if the deficiency charge were spread over 30 years the total annual charge for that period would be £4,750,000, also falling, after 30 years, to £3,550,000 a year.

14. None of the foregoing estimates provide for the cost of administering the scheme. The authors apparently contemplate that the whole cost of administration would fall upon the Exchequer. In view of the complication of the scheme, especially with reference to maintenance benefit, this cost would be considerable, and I assume it to amount to £250,000 a year. The aggregate Exchequer subvention with a deficiency charge extending over 20 years would thus be £5,300,000 a year, or with 30 years for the deficiency charge, £5,000,000 a year.

15. As stated in paragraph 4, the foregoing estimates include provision for unemployment on its present level, while it is indicated that the scheme itself might have such effects upon the distribution of the available work as to produce a material increase in the charge. On the other hand, it must be recognised that a substantial improvement in trade, resulting in a decrease of unemployment, would operate in the contrary direction. What might be the net effect of a considerable reduction in the volume of unemployment in the industry, combined with such a tendency to divide the workers into "fully employed" and "unemployed" as the scheme might be expected to produce, it is impossible to estimate.

16. There remains an element of potential addition to the charge which would certainly need attention should the scheme be put into force. It has been assumed for the purpose of the estimates that all future entrants to the industry would be taken in at the age of 18. It is, however, clear that in the past a large proportion of the entrants have come in at ages 20 to 45, and if this should continue, the suggested Exchequer contribution of £2 a year in respect of pensions would on the average be much too low for future recruits. I am not in a position to estimate the extra liability that would arise under this head, but it cannot be regarded as unimportant.

17. It is observed that the authors of the scheme propose specifically that the pension of 25s. a week is to be additional to any amount to which the recipients may be entitled under State or other pension schemes. This proposal seems to call for consideration. Under the Act of 1925 the dock worker, like any other wage earner, is entitled to a pension of 10s. a week at 65 and his wife, when she also is 65, is entitled to the same amount. Although these pensions are "contributory" the greater part of the cost of providing them is borne by the Exchequer. With the addition of the benefits under the scheme the married docker of 65 and upwards would be entitled in the normal case to a pension of £2 5s. a week or 90 per cent. of his guaranteed wage under the scheme when at work, this pension being provided, to an overwhelming extent, from public funds.

18. I have examined the Revenue Account for the first year of the scheme submitted by the Transport and General Workers' Union. I do not propose to comment at length upon this statement. So far as Pensions are concerned it obviously conveys a very inadequate view of the ultimate position. Even so, it contemplates an Exchequer charge of over £5,000,000 a year for the benefit of one industry covering but one-sixtieth part of the total number of male workers insured against unemployment. It is not to be supposed that other workers would submit to such a measure of preferential assistance to the Docks Industry. The application of such a scheme to the whole of the male industrial community, assuming that the general rate of unemployment is less than one-half of that of dock workers and that women could be left out of consideration, would involve a charge on the State (on the present volume of unemployment) in the region of £150,000,000 a year.

19. In regard to the proposal to assess a levy on imports and exports and a tax on passengers to or from the ports, while I see no reason to doubt the estimates, I presume that the Committee would not desire me to comment at length upon a proposition that the receipts from particular taxes (and taxes of a highly controversial character) should be earmarked to finance a scheme for benefits for a specific industry. A proposition that the workmen who handle goods and commodities on their arrival in, or departure from, the country have some special claim upon them (to the exclusion presumably of those engaged in their transport, in their manipulation and in their ultimate distribution) obviously raises questions of public policy of the highest importance.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) ALFRED W. WATSON.

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19th March, 1931.