

SNIPPETS FROM TALKS

Unemployment—Like Rheumatism

Everyone Has a Cure, But Somehow it Never Gets Cured—Travelling Through Europe by Motor-Cycle—"A Castle on the Banks of the Rhine" Every German's Ambition.

MR. LEICESTER WEBB (3YA).

UNEMPLOYMENT is like rheumatism—everyone has a cure for it, but somehow it never seems to get cured. There has been acute unemployment in every country in the world since 1929, and thousands of millions of pounds have been spent on its relief. It is staggering to reflect, for instance, that in the last three years New Zealand has spent more on unemployment than it has on education. Yet despite this vast expenditure it cannot be said that any country is much nearer solving the problem of unemployment than it was in 1929. The sad truth is that most governments find it much easier to spend huge sums on palliatives and relief measures than to undertake the far more difficult task of finding a cure for unemployment. Yet if industry is to be relieved of the staggering burden of taxation which has been imposed on it during the depression some cure must be found. To-night I want to deal very briefly with some of the cures that have been suggested.

THERE is no reason why we should accept the need for unemployment on the present scale, provided we don't just sit back and expect that the process of recovery will reduce unemployment to its normal proportions. Recovery is rather an unfortunate word really, because it encourages people to believe that sooner or later we will get back to the status quo, ante 1929. We must face the truth that there will never be recovery in that sense. The depression has produced, or rather accentuated, profound changes in the economic structure of society, and it is no use hoping to undo those changes. It is particularly in regard to unemployment that this idea of a return to pre-1929 conditions is misleading. We must realise that even if prices and trade return to their pre-depression level in the next few years unemployment will not return to its pre-depression level.

IF you want to know the extent to which a reduction in the hours of work would reduce unemployment I would refer you to the International Labour Office publication on "Hours of Work and Employment." It is estimated there that the introduction of a 40-hour week would in the great majority of countries mean a 10 per cent. increase in the number of workers employed. The introduction of a 36-hour week would mean an increase of at least 17 per cent. in the number of workers employed.

OF course, the problem of reducing hours of work is not at all simple. It involves, necessarily, extensive re-organisation of factories; it involves perhaps some wage adjustments; and in industries which are not protected from foreign competition it involves

some measure of international agreement. Despite these difficulties, some progress has been made since the depression in the reduction of hours of work. The most notable progress has been in the United States of America, where, under the code system, there is a 40-hour week in the coal, textile

and only once was I unlucky, but that is scarcely a radio story.

SWITZERLAND is by far the most beautiful European country I passed through, and motoring along good roads was a delight. After running round Lake Geneva, I turned north to Bern. The Swiss towns are the most prosperous-looking and scrupulously clean I have ever seen. Of course, they use a great deal of electricity, and most of their trains are electric, which must lessen the dirt problem for them, but their trams, buses, and railway stations all looked as if they had just been freshly painted that morning.

MR. IRVING SLADEN (3YA).

I LEFT Victoria Station, London, with my wife and daughter one morning early in August; in due course we found ourselves herded like so many cattle, on the Belgian channel steamer bound for Ostend. There were over 1000 of us on this small boat, with standing room only. However, all arrived safely, and then came the wildest scramble I can ever remember, when those 1000 people all rushed the Customs officials. Only those of you who have been there can realise what this means. Eventually we fought our way through, and staggered on to the train, carrying our own luggage, as the porters were quite inadequate. In the train we passed through very rich agricultural land, well worked, and particularly noticed that invariably the cattle occupied the basement portion of the farmhouse, and the family the rooms overhead. One can imagine the flies, and smells, in summer.

WE spent some time in Cologne, and were impressed with its fine 13th century cathedral, said to be one of the finest Gothic structures in Europe. We crossed many of its fine bridges, including the famous bridge occupied by our troops in 1918, at one end of which is an equestrian statue of the Kaiser. I was much annoyed at having to pay 3/- for a bath at the hotel, this over and above the already high tariff, and later in the day heard that another Englishman had had to pay 1/9 for a cup of coffee at other than a meal time. It certainly appeared as though English tourists were looked upon as being rich, if they could travel during the present times. From Cologne we passed on to Frankfurt, 150 miles by train, and for the most part along the banks of the Rhine. One sees endless rows of well-laden barges, towed by tugs, proceeding both ways along this very fine waterway, and also numerous well-filled passenger steamers. The most pleasing features, however, were the quaint villages at frequent intervals, each with its castle perched on the top of a hill, and a German civilian on the train told me that the highest ambition of his countrymen was to own a castle on the banks of the Rhine.

New Zealand Press Has Been Cool

But Dunedin Slum Story
Gets Applause Abroad

The author of "Children of the Poor," the Dunedin slum story which was reviewed in the "Radio Record" of December 14, still prefers to remain anonymous, but in a letter to the Editor of the "Radio Record" he says:

The extracts from your review of "Children of the Poor" were well qualified to excite attention. The New Zealand newspapers have been cool with the exception of the "New Zealand Herald," "Radio Record," "Truth," "Worker" and "Tree Lance." But the great New York dailies were generous and lavish in space, the British radical papers generous, the Tory papers a line or two. This morning I am in receipt of a magnificent page and a half from "Het Volk," a Dutch paper with a very large circulation. They set up the review with four splendid illustrations.

In literary rather than reader circles the book has been warmly welcomed. The reader takes time to reach. It is questionable whether a first book from New Zealand has ever received simultaneous publication in New York and London.

and steel industries; a 36-hour week in the shipbuilding, ship-repairing and electrical industries; and a 35-hour week in the automobile industry.

MR. A. H. WILLIS (3YA).

THE idea of travelling through

Europe by motor-cycle appealed to me for the reason that I could leave the beaten track when and where I liked, instead of being whisked by train from one large city to another and gaining little idea of the surrounding country. To be able to stop off at minor villages, for example, gives you the opportunity of studying the peasant people, and also has the advantage of cheapness. I didn't have to pay more than 1/6 to 2/- for a bedroom in any Austrian or German country inn. These inns are usually scrupulously clean,