

THE PROBLEM OF THE UNEMPLOYABLE.

By Mr. ANDREW M'CRACKEN, Glasgow.

THE word "unemployable" is a popular expression and not a scientific term. It may be accepted as describing those who are unwilling or unable to do a fair day's work in quantity and quality.

There are various classes among the unemployable—the vagrant, best known in country districts in summer, but who winters in town in night asylums, shelters, and models; the "ins and outs" of the poorhouse; the sub-let and farmed-out house *habitué*, who pays dearly for his shelter; the lad who sells papers and tosses for pennies; the corner-boy, who develops into the hooligan; the idler and loafer, who is content with 1s. a day and the model; and other weary Willies. Last of all, there is the old man and woman who have brought up children, but now either don't know where they are or explain they "hae eneuch tae dae wi' themselves."

The causes which produce the unemployable are numerous—alcohol, gambling, sensualism, misfortune, ill-health, bad home training or bad surroundings, mental or physical incapacity, want of thrift, lack of ambition and self-respect, lack of energy or perseverance. New causes have arisen during the last few years chiefly of an economic kind, by which men, especially elderly men, with slight defects, have had difficulties thrust in their way in obtaining or retaining work.

In the West of Scotland, especially in the coal and iron districts and in Glasgow, our population is continually being increased by immigrants from the

country and from the Sister Isle. Many of these are candidates for the lowest class of work, for which competition is already too keen, and from which it is an easy step down to the condition of the "unemployed" or "unemployable." It will likely be our experience now, as it has been in the past, that "relief work" leaves a residuum of workers who do not return to their ordinary occupation. I have the testimony of employers to the fact that labourers have preferred the shorter hours with the unemployed in winter to the longer and the earlier morning hours of their ordinary work. Thereafter, as members of the unemployed, they have applied for charity, in the shape of clothes and food for their children, which in other days they had provided themselves. It has been shown that such men do not rise above casual labour when trade is good, and become unemployed or unemployable when trade is bad.

The following, which was written about thirty-five years ago, may still be profitable for us to remember:—
"First and foremost, the most prolific root of all this vagrancy stands that mean and slovenly, disloyal and pernicious vice variously characterised as indiscriminate almsgiving, indiscriminate, promiscuous, or bastard charity and dole-giving, the standing temptation and main support of the mendicant and vagrant community. It is this pernicious practice which attracts people who have an innate indisposition to work, an innate fondness for a roving and reckless life, and it is the experience of it that supports these people and keeps them idle."

"Indiscriminate almsgiving is the main support of vagrancy . . . in most cases the vagrant does no work. . . . It is the ease of obtaining charity that enables him to continue in his life of vagrancy" (p. 104, Report of Vagrancy Com., 1906).

The most systematic attempts in more recent years to deal with the "unemployable" have been made on the Continent. Holland and Belgium led the way. Ninety years ago General Van der Bosch founded the Society of Beneficence, which undertook as part of its work to place destitute families as liferenters in small holdings on land in Friesland, North Holland. Too little public attention has been drawn to this Willemsoord Colony, especially in these days when the cry is "Back to the land." Some interesting facts may be stated. The colonists have been almost entirely unskilled labourers from Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague, and other large towns in Holland. The entire population—men, women, and children—was 2179 in 1827, but in 1902 it was 1460 only. The maximum number of "free farmer" families was reached in 1892, when 214 were on the colony; in 1902, 148 only. As a further sign of decadence and lack of attractiveness, there were 44 families placed in farms in the thirteen years preceding 1902, but only 14 of these were sent during the later ten years of this period. The farms contain about 6 acres; the rents vary from about £3 to £6 annually. In addition to the colonists or free farmers, labourers are engaged on the farms belonging to the colony, but although opportunity is offered, no labourer has been promoted to be a farmer since 1894. In 1859 the Dutch Government took over the penal colony for men at Veenhuizen, and that for women at Hoorn. A full account of these Dutch colonies was printed in 1828. This early report speaks enthusiastically in favour of them, representing that everything is to be reformed by this means. In 1889 Mr. H. G. Willink, a person of large experience in social work, visited the Dutch colonies and reported, "The best that can be said for such an institution is that it keeps decently out of sight, and in a condition

of animal wellbeing, a class of men who, if not in its keeping or under some other kind of restraint, would, as in England, be a public disgrace and shame, and would also be raising up children to succeed them." In 1905 he confirmed this opinion, which shows that a considerable time must be allowed to elapse before a true estimate can be formed of the value of an enterprise such as this.

In Belgium there are two institutions for dealing with vagrants and out-of-works. The first is the penal or beggar colony at Merplax, near Antwerp. On 1st January, 1905, 5110 persons were in residence; all are committed for periods of from two to seven years. Special quarters are provided for a class who would be found in prisons in this country, but these are entirely separated from the others, who are habitual vagabonds, mendicants, inebriates, &c.; in addition, there are a few who would be found in a poorhouse with us. The means of employment are an iron foundry, a pottery, brickworks, a cement tile work, separate shops for mat making, spinning, and weaving, making pearl buttons, and printing; a carpenter's shop, shoemaking for the army, a tannery, &c.; indeed every kind of industry is represented. Each colonist may thus remain in touch with his own trade, if he had any. About 90 per cent. of them are chronics of weak moral fibre, who cannot keep from drink when at liberty. "The cost of maintenance is less than if they lived outside on charity or in gaol. The only good done through this colony is that moral inefficients are prevented from propagating their kind, tramps are cleared from the roads and beggars from the streets, and they are compelled to work." There is a similar, but much smaller, colony at Bruges for women.

The second institution is a labour colony at Wortel.

The inmates are admitted under orders made by justices of the peace for periods of not more than one year, but the same persons are sent back several times. "It cannot be said that more than 2 per cent. leave the colony with their character permanently reformed."

The 34 German labour colonies are under the management of a charitable association called "The Labour Colony Central Board." The first was founded by Pastor von Bodelswingh in 1882 at Bielefeld, in Westphalia. The colonies provide accommodation for 4000 persons. The total number admitted during 1903 was 10,307; of these, 7949 were single men; 1851 divorced, widowed, or separated; but only 482 were married; 19 not stated. The average stay was about three months, but 18.55 per cent. remained from six months to over twelve months. In June the average admissions was 599; in November, 1253; of the total admissions for the year, 2081 were twenty-one and under thirty-one years of age, and 5263 were between thirty-one and fifty-one years. It is said that, "except in dire distress, the self-respecting workman never crosses the threshold of a German labour colony." The director of the Berlin Town Colony says that, "Employers will not, if they can help it, take a man from the colony, while no man who has been in the colony will, if he can help it, allow it to be known that he had ever been compelled to enter its walls."

The workman on tramp in Germany must carry with him papers which afford means of identification, and the "German Travellers' Homes Society" has organised 466 homes (Herbergen) throughout the German Empire, to which these men may resort. They contain in all accommodation for 20,000. The number of travellers who visit these homes has increased; in 1902, 2,101,281 paid for their own entertainment; the

number of non-paying was 834,788. This class is required to perform a task of work in the relief station in lieu of payment.

Relief stations (Verpflegungs Stationen), about 1300 in number, are widely spread over the Empire, and are maintained by the local public authorities; they offer accommodation to about 10,000 on a given night upon payment of a small sum or the performance of a task of work. At noon, on the day following his arrival, the traveller's pass is stamped, and he continues his journey, but it must be on the line or lines of road mentioned on the map displayed at the relief station. If found on any other road or locality he is liable to find himself punished as a vagrant and sent to the workhouse (Arbeiter-Haus) for a period not exceeding two years. The workhouse is really a kind of prison conducted under military discipline. Accommodation in these is provided for 14,836 persons. The men are compelled to work, generally at industrial rather than agricultural work, skilled teachers supervising their work. The net cost per annum is from £2 10s. to £3 10s. per head of the inmates. The effect has been to diminish vagrancy. Very little is accomplished in restoring men to self-help, self-respect, and independence in Belgian, Dutch, or German labour colonies. More satisfactory results follow in Switzerland, because the number of inmates is smaller, and the gangers, by working alongside their men, encourage them to active work by their example. The German system has thus been summed up—"The community practically says to the culprit, you can make use of our relief stations, where you can work for your lodging and meals and have also a half-day to search for work, if you can identify yourself as a seeker of labour. We not only offer you this, but also attempt to guarantee to you, through our philanthropists, a casual refuge in the

homes for travellers while you are out of work. If, through untoward circumstances, or through your own carelessness or weakness, you have fallen so low that these cannot take you in, because your identification papers are irregular, and you appear more of a vagabond than an unfortunate labourer, we then invite you into the labour colonies, founded also by our philanthropists, where you can remain until you have earned good clothes and proved yourself worthy. But if we catch you begging we will punish you as a vagrant; consequently, you would do better to make use of all the privileges we offer and thus break no laws. This is the theory, . . . but the man who will not work passes through these institutions as the man who will, owing to the lack of determined discrimination on the part of the officers and the desperate cleverness of the offenders." The director of the Berlin Town Colony says, "It has been our constant task to combat untruthfulness, drunkenness, and other vices, and also laziness; the majority of the inmates of the colony were casual labourers or unskilled labourers in factories, but we have also had tradesmen, waiters, artisans, clerks, University men, and, not altogether rarely, the type of the prodigal son, broken down members of aristocratic or middle-class families of the highest respectability. We have learned by experience that on Saturdays there was always a rush of that class of person that goes out again on Monday, and, in fact, only wants shelter for a couple of days."

"The great majority of the inmates of the colony have themselves to thank for the wretched position in which they find themselves. Many of them have either never learned a regular trade of any kind, or else have no desire to work, and no capacity for it, are

drunkards, idlers by profession, quarrelsome fellows, or devoid of all earnest purpose."

At a meeting of the German Labour Colony Central Board, it was said, "The men obtain admission at the beginning of winter, and, as soon as the song of the lark is heard again in the land, start on the tramp once more with joy in their hearts, with a good suit of clothes on their backs, with stomachs put into complete order, and with the money they have earned in the colony in their pockets, leaving the colony authorities, who are anxiously thinking how they are to get their sowing done at once, and, later on, to get in as big a harvest as may be, with nothing but a lot of cripples remaining in the institution. In the autumn, and when winter is drawing near, these swallows fly back to their old nests, and, of course, the colony cannot be so cruel as to refuse admission to these men who come with profound professions of repentance and of disgust with all evil ways of life. Accordingly, the men are re-admitted, only to play the same old game again next spring. Really, we have been a patient lot of people. For twenty years we have put up with this state of things."

In December, 1898, the Executive Committee of the Labour Colony at Hamburg bought an estate of about 900 acres at Schäferhof, near Pinneberg, in Holstein, with a view to solve the problem of the "ins and outs," who remain only a short time in a colony. Each man on entering agrees to stay at least two years. At 31st December, 1907, there were 127 men in residence; 97 of these were there under one year, 16 from one to two years, 14 from two years and upwards.

A similar attempt was begun near Bremerhaven in 1886. The success has not been conspicuous. The progress of the Hamburg effort may be watched with interest.

The problem which we have to face in this country, in some of its aspects at any rate, is exactly the same as in Germany and elsewhere abroad, and the results obtained are not much, if any, better.

At the Salvation Army Colony, Hadleigh, during the two years ending September, 1904, 484 men left the colony; 239 left of their own accord; 100 were dismissed for bad behaviour, incapacity, or ill-health. In the same period 523 were received; of these, 121 left within two weeks; 88 left within a month; 55 within two months; in all, 50 per cent.; and 158 remained over six months. There were 92 re-admissions in these two years, 60 of whom had been previously discharged as "satisfactory," and 32 as "unsatisfactory." The average number of inmates was 250, but accommodation is provided for 400 colonists and 30 families, including employees. The net cost of the colony is £5600 annually, exclusive of any charge in respect of capital expenditure, which amounts to £140,000. The Army does not keep in constant touch with those who leave the colony, and for whom situations have been found by the Army or who find situations for themselves; it is supposed that if the men do not return, all is well. It is premature to say what may be in store from the endeavours being made at Hollesley Bay, Laindons, and elsewhere.

At Lingfield (Church Army Colony) provision is made for 55 men. These are trained with a view to being sent to Canada. During 1903-4 121 men were received and 110 left, 46 went to situations found for them in Canada, 1 was promoted within the colony, 63 were more or less unsatisfactory.

The Scottish Labour Colony Association reports that of 86 men who left during 1906-7, 44 might at once be termed unsatisfactory, 28 left for situations, 2 for

Canada, 1 for New Zealand, 11 with prospects of situations.

A widespread belief prevails that a penal or compulsory labour colony is not merely an essential, but must be one of the first steps to take in dealing with the unemployable. As notification of infectious disease is required, and infected persons are generally isolated, a similar policy must be pursued in this social problem. Powers should therefore be obtained to prevent men and women using the streets in towns for begging, and the country roads for begging and terrorising the neighbourhood. Full information should be obtained through the police and poor law authorities regarding every man or woman of the vagrant or vicious classes who are without obvious and legitimate means of earning their living. Larger areas of poor law administration might be necessary to effect combination, or some other means adopted whereby poorhouses in country districts could be set apart for compulsory or penal labour colonies. They might be enlarged so that each could lodge about 200 persons, the staff could be retained and increased where necessary, and the whole scheme placed under a central authority. It is to be noted that there was vacant poorhouse accommodation for over 4000 persons at 31st December, 1907. As a portion of this was in country districts, an experiment could be made with little expense. Men and women should be cared for separately, and the children could be dealt with as orphans, and boarded out or placed in cottage homes.

Classification could be adopted so that men could be occupied in their own trade, if they had any, or in such as they might choose, so that, if it were possible to send them back into society, they would not be unfitted to return to their trade, but retain some industrial efficiency. As it has been found in

Germany that the period of residence—three to four months—in the voluntary colony is much too short, the compulsory period of detention should not be less than one year, but experience proves that two years should be the shortest period.

Quite naturally the question of cost arises. The following figures may suggest some basis for calculation. The Departmental Committee on Vagrancy requested that a census should be taken by the police forces in England and Wales of persons without a settled home or visible means of subsistence (*a*) in common lodging-houses, and (*b*) elsewhere than in common lodging-houses or casual wards; this was taken on 7th July, 1905, with the result—

In common lodging-houses there were	47,588
Elsewhere, - - - - -	14,624
In casual wards, - - - - -	7,478
	69,690
The return for Scotland under the usual formula was - - - - -	9,784
Total, - - - - -	79,474

If we take but 60,000 of these persons at an estimated cost of 4d. per day for enforced maintenance, this is equal to an annual cost of £365,000 a year, drawn directly or indirectly from the country by vagrants and idlers at present; hence, whatever might be the cost of a new method of treating this class, a very considerable sum would be saved by the clearing of our streets and highways. If we did not succeed by this means in reforming the vagrants and less hopeful of the unemployable, the clearing of our streets and highways would be a gain, and what remained of the problem would be less difficult.

We could then consider more calmly the real or

apparently real cases of distress which invite our attention, and we should make ourselves acquainted with such, and be accessible to them. We must get, first of all, a correct diagnosis of each case we take up, and deal with causes and not with effects—that is, we must strike at the root of the disease. If it be drink, gambling, carelessness, &c., in the man, if it be a dirty house, dirty children, a “thowless” wife, who, through ignorance or other cause, does not spend the family income economically, or whatever be the disturbing factor in the family life, this must be dealt with. Charity, so-called, in the shape of doles, will hinder our efforts in building up the family which God and Nature meant to go, not on the crutches of misplaced charity, but on its own legs. Character is more potent than environment; the maxim is old but true, “Man does not live by bread alone”—the inside of the cup and platter must be cleansed.

Failure has to be registered against the means we are adopting in our moral and religious attempts to recover men. However, there are hopeful signs of an awakening to a truer, higher sense of citizenship and to a greater interest in and care for our neighbour in distress. Some battles are said to have been won by the private soldier; this social service must be a soldier's battle. We must not be any longer contented with sending out a few clergymen with their few lay workers, but each man and woman must lend a hand. The citizen army must no longer remain undisciplined. It must be thoroughly organised and equipped, and its units must have stout hearts and good purpose. Our large towns must be divided into small areas upon a good plan, which must be systematically and intelligently worked out, so that no one in need may be without a friend—“not alms, but a friend.”

No Utopian scheme based upon the theory of Plato's Republic has in it the elements of permanent success with human nature as it has been and is. We have to deal with potentially moral and responsible men, not with things, but with human beings, and these must be tackled individually. Obviously, if we are to have the proper fulcrum, no method will succeed which fails to arouse, where necessary, an endeavour after new character by those whom for the time we have made our neighbour.

One or two practical matters with which to close. As the Right Hon. Mr. John Burns has repeatedly said in effect, it is the enormous drink bill of the country which is responsible for much of the evil which we are now considering. Self-restraint requires to be enforced, and foresight needs to be inculcated. Our people forget the probability that the good years will be eaten up by bad years, and do not all lay by for evil times and special necessities. These two evils—drink and a want of thrift—are painfully manifest in dealing with the "unemployed"; a third is, that children are allowed to drop into casual employment, instead of being taught a trade, the immediate necessity of the family prevails over the future commercial value of the unit.

N.B.—A few references to the legislation of the past in relation to this subject will be found in an appendix.

APPENDIX.

REFERENCES TO A FEW PAST ACTS OF PARLIAMENT RELATING TO THE SUBJECT.

AN Act of Edward III. (of England), 1349, forbids, upon pain of imprisonment, the giving of alms to valiant beggars who refuse to labour at the fixed rates.

In 1478 (James III., Scotland) it was enacted that, "for staining of masterful beggars and sorners that daily oppress and harry the King's poor, it is statute and ordained that the Act and statute of our Sovereign King James the first's time (1424) be put to sharp execution without favour, that is to say, wherever any common sornor be overtaken in time to come, that they be arrested and delivered to the King's Sheriff, and that they forthwith as the King's justices execute them as a common thief or reiver."

This law of 1424 gave forty days in which idlers should find work; if they failed, they were to be imprisoned, to wait and be punished at the King's will.

43 Elizabeth, c. 2 (1601) ordered, among other enactments, the providing of work for the able by means of "a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other necessary ware and stuff."

In 1704 Defoe denounced a bill then before the English House of Commons which seeks to ordain "that in order to set the poor to work it shall be lawful for the overseers of every town or of one or more joyn'd together to occupy any trade mystery, &c. And raise stocks for the carrying them on for the setting of the poor at work and for the purchasing wool, iron, hemp, flax, thread, or other materials for that purpose."

Some of his remarks written in 1704 are just as applicable in 1908. He says—"This is the ruine of our poor" (ale drinking and want of thrift)—"*the wife mourns, the children starve, the husband has work before him, but lies at the ale-house.*" "'Tis the men that *won't work*, not the men that *can get no work*, which makes the numbers of our poor."

"If such Acts of Parliament may be made as may effectually cure the sloath and luxury of our poor, that shall make drunkards take care of wife and children,

spendthrifts *lay up for a wet day*, idle, lazy fellows, diligent, and thoughtless Scottish men carefully provident . . . I presume to say they will soon find work enough, there will soon be less poverty among us; and, if this cannot be done, setting them to work upon woollen manufacture will but ruin our trade and consequently increase the number of our poor."

The 36th George III., c. 10 & 23 (1796), repealed the workhouse test introduced in 1723, and allowed relief to be given in aid of wages. It is needless to say that the rates increased, and as the rates increased and subsidised wages, wages fell. Ultimately nearly every labourer was on the rates. In a small parish with a population of 130 persons, the sum raised in 1812 for the relief of the poor was £36 19s.; in 1816 it was £99 4s.; in 1827, £180 16s.; in 1832, £367; and three-fourths of the inhabitants were paupers; whereas, in the memory of the oldest inhabitant then living (1832), only one person was in receipt of relief.

"The poor rate on a farm in Kent of 420 acres had risen to £300 a year."

A witness who appeared before the Commission appointed in 1834 stated—"The eighteen-penny-children (the weekly allowance for each child where there were more than three) will eat up this parish in ten years unless some relief be afforded us."

Farms were abandoned all over the country, the rate being about £1 per acre in some parishes. The Commission which was appointed in 1832 reported in 1834. A bill was introduced on 17th March, 1834, and passed on 14th August, as the 4th and 5th William IV., and remains the basis of Poor Law administration in England to-day.

The Scotch Poor Law Act was passed in 1845.

DISCUSSION.

Bailie DAVID D. MARTIN (Edinburgh) said—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, after the exhaustive paper we have listened to by Mr. M'Cracken, and at this time of day, I think I will best consult your wishes if I say very little, as I have no doubt there are other speakers to follow who have had more experience in dealing with this subject than I have had.

I think our chairman, in his excellent address on "The Prevention of Disease," indicated the sources from which the unemployable come.

The unemployable problem is only a section of the far greater question of unemployment, and that is such a big question, and has so many economic difficulties, I think the Executive were well advised in restricting this discussion to the question of the "unemployable."

Our chief constable, in his annual report, states that, if 500 persons were segregated out of those convicted for drunkenness in Edinburgh, the problem of drunkenness and crime would be very much more easily dealt with. I think the same may be said in connection with the question of unemployment.

If we had a small section of the unemployable segregated and put under some benevolent restraint, the question of unemployment would be much more easily dealt with.

As a member of the Edinburgh Distress Committee, I may say that we have not yet dealt with the "unemployable." We have tried to find employment for the really genuine unemployed, and especially those who have dependants; but we have not got the length of considering the unemployables, and the difficulty is to know when the point of unemployed ends and the point of unemployable begins, but in many cases there should be no difficulty.

Within the past week I had a man to deal with who had been 77 times convicted for drunkenness and disorderly conduct, and on Monday I had a woman who had been 126 times convicted. What was the use of sending her to jail for thirty days? When she gets out it will not be three days before she is back again for the same offence. We must get some drastic power to commit these people to penal colonies for lengthened periods, where they will be made to do some work to help to pay for their own keep and that of their families, and not allowed out till they give evidence of better behaviour.

We have heard of the systems that obtain in Holland,

Belgium, and Germany, and that they have not been altogether successful in reforming these people; but, if they have succeeded in clearing their streets of those undesirables, even for a time, it must be a great benefit, as the state of matters at present on our streets is a disgrace to our civilisation.

When so much has been done to improve the sanitary conditions of our streets and houses, we do regret that so little has been done to clear our streets of the social wreckage which discredits our fair cities, and, if this discussion will help to promote legislation in that direction, I think it will justify the Executive for having put it on the programme.

I think we can take action in another direction. We ought to get more power to remove the children from undesirable parents. We may not be able to do much with the unemployable themselves, but we have great hope for good results in dealing with the children.

I had two little girls of the same family before me a few days ago for stealing—one aged seven and the other twelve. Both the parents of these children were drunken. The elder girl had several convictions against her and the younger one was being led on. We got one sent to a reformatory and the other into an industrial school.

From my experience in connection with the reformatories, I have great hope of improving the children. In Wellington Reformatory we have something like 80 per cent. of the lads who pass out doing well, and the same can be said of the girls' reformatory at Loanhead. I think that is a great encouragement.

Mr. M'Cracken said that "failure has also to be registered against our moral and religious attempts to recover men." I cannot agree with that statement. I think the results obtained in the reformatories depend as much upon the moral and religious training that the children get in these institutions as on the power of the city to commit.

I know many ladies and gentlemen who go there and take a personal interest in the boys and girls. They secure situations for them when their time is up, and keep up a correspondence with them after they have gone to situations.

I believe it is by this practical, personal sympathy and guidance that we can save the children, by teaching them habits of thrift and self-respect, so that in after years they will be a blessing and not a curse to the nation. I have to thank you for having listened so patiently to my remarks.

Bailie R. B. SHEARER (Greenock)—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, as has been stated by the two speakers who have gone before me, this is a branch of a very difficult subject. It is almost impossible to avoid running the subject of the unemployed and the subject of the unemployable together. While I think the Directors of this Association have wisely limited our present discussion to the question of the unemployable, for the real purposes of our discussion the matter has to be narrowed still further, because there are various classes of unemployable. We have all a natural sympathy with those who are unemployable on account of mental or physical deficiencies. We have sympathy also with those men who find themselves, to a large extent on account of comparatively recent legislation, too old at forty, but there is a large class with whom we cannot have much sympathy—that is, the class which is made up of lazy men and the criminal classes, particularly the drunkards who have been referred to. While we have little sympathy with those people, we feel bound, for the protection of society, to do what we can with a view to get them to conform to the Scriptural injunction, that if they wish to eat they must work. The people to whom I refer to—the able-bodied unemployable—are the sort of men who are only willing to work when they think there is no work to be got—that is to say, they are prepared to accept charity, particularly the indiscriminate charity which has been referred to as prejudicial both to the individual who receives it and to the country at large. That class is a dangerous class. It is a danger to property. The criminal classes are naturally dangerous to property; it is their function in life. Those people, particularly the vagrant class, are also dangerous to the health of the country, because I think it is consistent with the experience of many of you gentlemen here, medical officers of health and sanitary inspectors, that diseases, such as smallpox, are frequently brought to a particular locality by vagrants travelling from one slum to another. But the question comes to be—and that is really the important part of the inquiry to which Mr. M'Cracken has addressed himself—having ascertained that there is something wrong, and that something must be done, what is the particular course which should be adopted? Now, Mr. M'Cracken spoke several times of penal colonies. I do not think he meant "penal" colonies exactly in the sense that the word "penal" might be supposed to mean—that is to say,

colonies which exist for the purpose of punishment. As I understand it, it was a general descriptive term, and he had in view the idea of the reformation of the individual who is unemployable. That is what I wish to be at. What I suggest as the root idea with a view to the cure which we want is that the system should be reformatory, not penal. We have reformatories for young people, and I do not see why we should not under certain circumstances have reformatories for older people. I am only sorry that you had not the privilege of hearing quite the whole of Mr. McCracken's paper, but I happened to get a print of it last night, and can tell you that it would have been a benefit to you to have heard the whole of it, because certain of the details which appear in the print have not been conveyed to you. They have been conveyed to me owing to my having seen the print. In the print he calls special attention to the 1300 relief stations which exist in Germany at the present time. These are something different from the labour colonies in this country. They seem to be put down very much on the principle of having a day's walk between each two stations. Each station practically forms itself into a labour registry, where information can be given to any well-doing workman in search of a job. But even there, in order that there may be no imposition upon those who are willing to help those who wish to help themselves, every one must either pay for his food and lodgings or do some work with a view to get food and lodgings. The work is not oppressive, but there must be some work done, and the result is that people who are honestly endeavouring to gain a livelihood can go from one end of Germany to the other, and if there is work to be had they are directed to it, and have an opportunity of applying for the job on the spot. These relief stations commend themselves to my mind, and I think if we had similar stations, once these inquiries had been exhausted and a man was dead beat, it would be a good thing if we could have, say, for the whole country of Scotland, a free farm colony as a place to which people could go when, without a doubt, they could not get any other form of employment. The thing is not impossible; it is done elsewhere, and the labour is labour of what may be called a humanising kind. Farm work was the original work of mankind, and farm work is, I believe, the work to which those people should go when other work fails. Spade work, even the simplest form of spade work, is beneficial

to the individual who works, and the kindly earth invariably makes a fair return. The tending of cattle is work in which any one could take a share, and, judging by the experience of Continental farm colonies, while portions of the men were employed at the work to which I have referred, others could be engaged in building houses for themselves and shelters for the cattle, and some who were tradesmen in their better days could engage in such manufactures as might be required for the use of the colony itself. It would be a free colony, but if it were found that there are people who are vagrant by inclination—men who are determined not to work—then we should concur in the opinions expressed to-day, and have for such people compulsory labour colonies in which there should be power to detain them. It has been suggested by a high legal authority that the power to detain should be for an indeterminate period, and that if men are dangerous to the nation to which they belong it might be necessary to segregate them practically for life, but I fear that that suggestion would not commend itself to the British public. We are too hostile to the idea of slavery to condemn men to such a fate, although I think it desirable that the segregation of such people should be for such a period which would enable them to acquire the habit of work. But while such people, as I indicated at the beginning of my remarks, are not entitled to much sympathy, it occurs to me that the real way to do them good is to give them hope with regard to the future, and accordingly it has been found the wisest course that they should be credited with a certain amount of wages if they do well, but if they are lazy or decline to work, then they should suffer as regards their food. Let it be sufficient and nourishing, but better when they are prepared to do work. It may be suggested that they might even get some little luxuries, such as tobacco or a band or a library to be attached to the free colony to which I have referred, and under all circumstances they should be able to look forward to the possibility of future independence and full citizenship. (Applause.)

Councillor STEELE (Glasgow)—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, my experience during the last fifteen or sixteen years as a member of the several Special Relief Committees appointed from time to time by the Corporation, and latterly as a member of the Distress Committee, has led me to the unhesitating conclusion that all our efforts to get at and deal with the real, genuine, and deserving

unemployed man who is out of work through no fault of his own have been largely obscured by a class which must be dealt with in quite a different way. I refer to the unemployable class, which is made up of two main sections, viz., (1) criminals, vagrants, drunkards, and those incorrigibly lazy; in other words, all able-bodied men who decline to accept, or, at any rate, to retain, steady employment when offered to them; (2) the physically and mentally deficient. This latter class, which covers the aged, epileptics, weak-willed inebriates, &c., is, to some extent, provided for by existing institutions, and it is really for the other section of the unemployable class that legislation of a comprehensive nature is urgently required.

I am in most cordial sympathy with the resolutions which were some time ago adopted by the Glasgow Distress Committee in regard to the amendments of the statute under which they at present work—amendments which were framed on the invitation of the Royal Commission on Poor Laws and Relief of Distress, which for several years past has been making an exhaustive inquiry into this whole question. Those amendments provided mainly for the Distress Committee being empowered to establish two classes of labour colony—voluntary and compulsory—and to send any person apprehended without visible means of subsistence, and who is not able or willing to work, to a labour colony, and to detain him there for a period of not less than six months, but not exceeding three years. The committee were very strong on the proposal of having a minimum period of detention of six months, as they were firmly convinced that the existing practice of short sentences, instead of having any deterrent effect, was a growing evil; but, as it was conceivable that universal application of this amendment might occasionally operate harshly, the Distress Committee, in their proposals, further provided that it be left in their power at any time, on their being satisfied that any person committed as above to a compulsory labour colony, is, by diligence and good behaviour, entitled to be removed therefrom, to order the removal of such person to the voluntary labour colony, and that, in the event of any such person failing, unless with the sanction of the committee, to complete at said voluntary colony the term for which he had originally been committed, he, on apprehension, be re-committed to the penal colony. Those proposals of the Distress Committee were largely based upon the report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy issued in

February, 1906, a Committee which, while the question of unemployment was beyond the scope of their inquiry, called attention to the opinions expressed by certain of their witnesses to the fact that, if the habitual vagrant and loafer were removed from the streets, the difficulty of dealing with the unemployed would be greatly lessened.

One paragraph of the report of that Departmental Committee puts the question in a nutshell—"The whole history of vagrancy in this and every other country indicates that the vagrant cannot be suppressed, but must be specially treated for his mode of life and his disinclination to do honest work. To apply this treatment it is essential that the habitual vagrant should be detained under reformatory influences for long periods. Under such influences it may be possible to instil into him habits of work; but, even if this should not be achieved by prolonged detention such as we recommend, there are other reasons which render his segregation necessary. To protect the public from the trouble and the nuisance which he causes, to prevent children being trained in his habits, and to deter others from adopting this life seem to us objects which amply justify the course proposed."

Once this unemployable class was thoroughly separated from the genuine unemployed, the solution of the whole question ought to be comparatively simple. This at least can be said with certainty—the authorities would clearly see the problem before them and be able to gauge what was necessary to relieve the circumstances. This separation cannot take place until there has been thoroughly linked up throughout the kingdom a national system of labour exchanges. It can only be by the complete decasualisation of labour that the problem will ever be laid bare. The labour exchange cannot create an extra job for a single man, but it is nevertheless the keynote to the whole situation; and what has been already done in Munich and by other German municipalities in this direction can surely be done in Great Britain.

County Councillor ROBERT LAMBIE (Lanarkshire)—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, after the time that this subject has been before us I will try to get done within my five minutes. The subject is very wide in its extent, and it is a subject that is getting very important in this country of ours, and it must be dealt with. I should have liked very much, as a former speaker has said, that the paper that Mr. McCracken has read would have been in the hands

of the whole meeting. I shall take his division of the subject, and I think we should make a distinction when we speak of the unemployable. We should keep before our minds parties who can never work, but nevertheless it is our duty to see that they are well cared for, and when we come to the other class we should deal with them from a different standpoint. I know that there is a great deal being made of the freedom of the subject. Well, I think that I have tried, so far as I am concerned, to defend that freedom as far as I have been able; but, if we get men to be kept by the public, we do not take their freedom away; they have taken it away from themselves, and we have got to deal with them from that standpoint. You heard what the reader of the paper said about these people flying back to their old nests in the autumn and when winter was drawing near, and going away in the happy springtime. If they do that once we have the right to step in and say, "You will not do it again." There is far too much namby-pambyism about it. (Applause.) We have got to say to these men, "If you cannot look after your own interest, then we will look after it for you, and we will find work for you, and we will control your finances if you are not able to do it yourself." I do not think in doing that we are interfering with the freedom of the subject. I do not care about names; I do not care whether you call it a penal colony or a labour colony, but we say to that man, "We will do it or see the reason why." If we take up that position and do away with the indiscriminate charity which keeps them going, we shall be doing a good work. Our duty is to restore to that man his manhood, and that is the best kind of charity. I say no more about the helpless. It is our duty to help them. As for the other set, it is our duty to see that they help themselves. I want to rub it in that it is our duty to see that they work, or else they will get nothing from us. That is the position that the nation should take up. I cannot agree with Mr. M'Cracken as to what he said about the failure of our moral and religious attempts to recover man. I am sorry to disagree with him, but my past experience is this, that religion has been the only power for such a man. Whenever we get pure, undefiled religion into a man's soul, and are able to teach him to be a follower of Christ of Calvary, we have raised that man to the full standard of a man, and I am prepared to prove that again and again from that standpoint. It has been laid down in Scripture that if a man will not work he will not eat, and, if we can

put the whole teaching of Christ into practice and carry it out in our individual and municipal and national life, the teaching of the Nazarene, that whatever you do unto them you do unto Him, then you have solved the problem. I am glad the Association has taken up this question. The question has been asked, what has this question to do with sanitarians? but it has a great deal to do with that class going through the country spreading disease on more than one occasion, and I think the time has arrived when there should be no uncertain sound that the helpless and indigent will be provided for, but that the strong and healthy who will not work will be compelled to work for their own livelihood and not be a prey and burden upon the community. As far as I am concerned, I am glad the subject has been taken up, and I do not think it is as hopeless as some may think, and I believe we will effect a great improvement and raise such men to a nobler standard, but the standard must be the standard of the Nazarene, Christ of Calvary. (Applause.)

Dr. A. K. CHALMERS—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, for the second time to-day I have felt disposed to follow Councillor Lambie, and I follow him for this reason that, as in a Court of law they are accustomed to supply an advocate for the accused, so I think the unemployable are entitled to that benefit. I want to ask on behalf of the unemployable, "What have I done that you accuse me in the terms you do to-day?" and I want to answer part of that question. Mr. M'Cracken has told us that among the sources of the unemployable there are alcohol, gambling, sensualism, misfortune, &c., and I think he is right; but if we accept this answer, then I would further ask, "Why is it that after hundreds of years of dealing with questions of this sort—because the question of vagrant population has been before the country time out of mind—why do these persons still exist?" Again, I further ask, "Is it altogether their fault, and is not our social system wrong which creates such persons?" I put the thing boldly to you, if you by any act of administration could obliterate the unemployable generation, the father and child within the next week, would the next generation not produce more unemployable? I do not want to introduce any theory, but I want to put it broadly—Is our social system such that some people become unemployable? I take it that no one is disposed to answer me no. I will tell you some facts that appeal to me. Our President this morning made reference to the relations between disease and drink, and I always go back to that association by appealing to the school child.

Now, if you have children that are stunted in height and insufficiently equipped by education, how do you expect they will deport themselves when they come to be industrially employed? Mr. M'Cracken will tell you that 80 or 90 per cent. of the unemployable are casual labourers. Why are they? Why do you allow 80 or 90 per cent. to be casual labourers? I put another problem to you to answer. You have an educational authority which ends its care of the child at fourteen years, and you have unions of labour refusing to accept some of these children for a year or two after that age. It is from this gap that a large number of the unemployable come. I believe that when the present Education Bill becomes an Act it will empower School Boards to exercise some supervision over children after fourteen, but in Germany, with all that power, they have still the problem of the unemployable. With regard to the next point, I think probably the big towns are the chief sinners. Years ago overcrowding in Scotland was very much worse than it is now. Years ago when this was discovered a short cut was devised, and that short cut was the model lodging-house. I do not wish to say anything against them; they help to get quit of a large proportion of overcrowding, and they help to house in a reasonably decent way many who formerly were unhoused or badly housed; but the penalty has been the creation of a class who are a constant sore on civilisation. Read the report of the recent Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded, and go to the keepers of the lodging-houses and they will tell you that three out of four owe their downfall to drink. On admission they are asked no question such as, "Why are you here? What makes the model lodging-house necessary in your case?"

Mr. DUNCAN BURNS (Pollokshaws)—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I think Dr. Chalmers has gone nearer the point than any of the previous speakers in regard to the source from whence the unemployable spring. The moral condition of these people and the environment are so closely connected that they are inseparable. Environment has very much to do with it all. The unemployed are principally brought up and kept in the slums of our towns, and, if we are to deal with the question, I think we are not proceeding actively enough along the proper lines. The question before us is, are the influences at work at the present time equal to the occasion, and, if not, what may be required? I may say that in regard to that I have a little experience in dealing with the unemployed. We have in Pollokshaws a Relief Committee. The forms are filled up by the applicants

for work and handed into my office. The forms are gone over, and the men are started on relief work. We find that the machinery at work at the present time is not equal to the occasion. A number are certainly unemployable on ordinary relief works, and their character is such that they will not, or can not, stay in ordinary employment for any length of time. Others again have lost arms and limbs, and are otherwise incapacitated for ordinary work; but they are still able-bodied, and the Parish Council cannot give them relief. I believe that the present parochial system is not sufficient to deal with them nor yet the relief works. Some of those that we are assisting come year after year. Only yesterday I considered 50 applications, many of them men who work very little in the usual good times, but manage to pick up a living from wages earned by their wives and others who are working. That is the class of people to be sent to a penal or labour colony, but our present system is so inadequate that we have not a colony to which to send these people and compel them to remain and work—it may be for a period of some years. Under the present relief laws they have a further bad influence; they prevent the really deserving cases coming forward and making application. I believe in our towns at the present time we have a very large number of men who are on the verge of starvation and debarred from coming forward because they do not seem disposed to be associated with the class of applicants which is coming forward. I therefore think our present system is not adequate for dealing with the unemployed question. Mr. Lambie said, why has this question been brought up at this Congress? I think that insanitary surroundings are so closely associated with the applicants for early relief as to show there is a very close connection with sanitary matters.

Dr. A. CAMPBELL MUNRO—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, those who have had experience of distress committees have said that if you could eliminate the unemployable from the unemployed, you would make the problem of the unemployed very much simpler. I have no doubt of that. There are a large number who, from sheer laziness and causes to a large extent within their own control, are unemployable, and there are many who are mentally or physically deficient, and so fall into the unemployable class. Every consideration should be given to these. What are we to do with the class who recurrently appear before the magistrates drunk and incapable? The man who on every public holiday gets ostentatiously drunk, goes swearing and tumbling about the streets—an object of disgust to the com-

munity and of impoverishment to his family. He leaves a forfeit or fine of 5s. behind him. Whose pocket does it come out of? Out of the family purse! As to the remedy: on the principle that a dog is allowed two bites, a man might be allowed to get drunk twice with impunity, but if he came up a third time there should be an ultimatum. He should be sent to a penal colony or a reformatory. I think there is a great deal to be said for Bailie Shearer's idea of an indeterminate sentence. Those who turn out to be mentally deficient are hopeless. There is another set—those who have their chances; chance after chance. These should be segregated for a considerable period and taught a trade, through the exercise of which they might be made materially to contribute to the support of their wives and families.

Mr. M'CRACKEN, in reply—Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, when I was asked to read this paper I felt that the time allowed for the introduction was too limited for such a large and many-sided subject, hence in reading it a good deal of the paper has required to be omitted. As religious men and women, what we have to do in social work is to deal with the character of the person. If we can make a new man, then the environment will be made new. Therefore, we must strike at the root of the disease, and that is, the character of a man or woman. With regard to what Mr. Lambie said about my phrase that failure has also to be registered against our moral and religious attempts to recover men, I probably should have said against the methods we are using; but I wanted to impress the matter on your minds when I put it in its nakedness that our religious efforts were failures. If they were successes we should not have large parts of Glasgow as they are at the present time. At a public meeting held in Edinburgh in June, 1891, a resolution was adopted that, "inasmuch as the habitually criminal, vagrant, and inebriate classes are becoming a source of danger and expense to the community, Parliamentary powers are necessary for dealing with them." We are in the very position to-day that that meeting was in in 1891. The pious resolution was passed and nothing more was done.

After what has been said about the results likely to follow the establishment of farm colonies, I want it to be distinctly understood that, as far as I know, there is no colony in Germany—whether it is at Bielefeld or elsewhere—that is really getting thoroughly down to the root of the matter, as is necessary for the redemption of those who enter these colonies. Not 5 per cent. can be shown as reclaimed, and figures have been given to you to show what prevails.

SOME POINTS IN WATERWORKS ADMINISTRATION.

By Mr. WILLIAM A. TAIT, C.E., Edinburgh.

In addressing so representative a body upon water questions, it seems worth while to devote a few words to the relationship of Parliament to local and other water authorities. It is, or, rather, ought to be, common knowledge that Parliament in recent years, particularly by the 1897 Public Health Act, has done a great deal to simplify the procedure to be followed by a local authority in regard to the taking of wayleaves for water pipes and sewers through private grounds. Neither a greedy landlord nor a stubborn tenant can prevent a local authority from doing its duty to its own people within its own proper district. It must at the same time be kept in view that the law is not now supposed to recognise the right to payment for wayleave, but only for surface or other damages arising directly from the operations connected with the execution of the work.

It is to be hoped that combined authorities, following upon a movement which I had a hand recently in initiating, will sooner or later receive from Parliament the powers which the individual authorities at present possess. This is a matter of great importance, as the present tendency of authorities is to combine for water supply purposes, in order that better and more comprehensive schemes may be carried out and competition among neighbouring authorities obviated.

So far as I am aware, Parliament has not yet given local and water authorities the reasonable facilities