

P 443 Part. No. 384

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND.

REPORT

OF THE

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON THE
WELFARE OF THE BLIND.

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MINUTES OF APPOINTMENT.

I hereby appoint—

The Right Honourable W. HAYES FISHER, M.P., A. A. ALLEN, Esq., M.P., H. W. T. BOWYEAR, Esq., W. R. DAVIES, Esq., C.B., Sir A. H. DOWNES, M.D., H. B. GRIMSDALE, Esq., M.B., F.R.C.S., R. S. MEIKLEJOHN, Esq., C.B., Sir THOMAS J. STAFFORD, Bart., C.B., F.R.C.S., T. STODDART, Esq., G. J. WARDLE, Esq., M.P., Mrs. ALICE WESTLAKE, and H. J. WILSON, Esq.,

to be a Committee to consider the present condition of the blind in the United Kingdom and the means available for (a) their industrial or professional training, and (b) their assistance, and to make recommendations.

I further appoint the Right Honourable W. Hayes Fisher to be Chairman, and R. B. Cross, Esq., of the Local Government Board, to be Secretary to the said Committee.

(Signed) HERBERT SAMUEL, President of the Local Government Board.

Whitehall, S.W., 7th May 1914.

I hereby appoint—

C. A. PEARSON, Esq., B. PURSE, Esq., and H. C. WARRILLOW, Esq.,

to be additional members of the Committee appointed by me "to consider the present condition of the blind in the United Kingdom, and the means available for (a) their industrial or professional training, and (b) their assistance, and to make recommendations."

(Signed) HERBERT SAMUEL, President of the Local Government Board.

Whitehall, 26th May 1914.

I appoint Mr. P. Barter, of the Local Government Board, to be Secretary to the Departmental Committee on the Blind, in place of Mr. R. B. Cross resigned.

(Signed) HERBERT SAMUEL, 19th March 1915.

Table with 2 columns: Field (受入先, 受入日, 登録番号, 所在) and Value (国立公衆衛生院附属図書館, Library, National Institute of Public Health)

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REPORT.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD.

SIR,

1. WE have the honour to submit herewith our Report and Recommendations.

The Committee was appointed by the President of the Local Government (the Right Hon. Herbert Samuel, M.P.) on 7th May 1914; an inquiry having been promised by the Government during the debate on Mr. Wardle's motion in the House of Commons on 11th March, 1914.

The terms of reference were "To consider the present condition of the blind in the United Kingdom, and the means available for (a) their industrial or professional training, and (b) their assistance, and to make recommendations."

2. The Committee have held 38 meetings and examined 53 witnesses, whose names are given in Appendix I. of this Report. In addition, a considerable volume of evidence has been obtained in the form of memoranda. We have also visited the following institutions:—The Royal School for the Blind, Leatherhead; and the Royal Normal College for the Blind, Upper Norwood. The Committee, acting on the advice of the Treasury, felt precluded mainly on the ground of economy from making the tour of inspection, which they had contemplated. But informal visits have been paid to a large number of institutions by various members of the Committee.

The first meeting of the Committee took place on 15th May 1914, and 10 sittings had been held, when the War broke out. The Committee thereupon adjourned; but met again on 18th March 1915, and decided to resume their sittings.

We much regret that one of our members, Mrs. Westlake, has been unable (owing to failing health) to attend more than three meetings of the Committee or to sign the Report.

3. During the early part of our investigation the International Conference on the Blind was sitting in London; and we took the opportunity of securing the evidence of witnesses from America, Australia, and Sweden.

We regret that the European situation has precluded the Committee from pursuing the investigation of the condition of the blind in other countries. We consider that this investigation should be undertaken as soon as possible after the War, more especially as the War will have added largely to the numbers of the blind, and will have developed the interest in the treatment of the problem.

4. We propose to deal with the matters referred to us under the following heads:—

- I.—Report of the Royal Commission, 1889.
- II.—Scope of the Problem.
- III.—Age of Incidence and Causes.
- IV.—Elementary Education.
- V.—Professional Training.
- VI.—Industrial Training.
- VII.—Workshops.
- VIII.—Miscellaneous Organisations.
- IX.—The Poor Law.
- X.—The Incapable.
- XI.—Pensions.
- XII.—Blinded Soldiers and Sailors.

General Conclusions and Summary of Recommendations.

Section I.—Report of the Royal Commission, 1889.

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

5. In considering the present condition of the blind in the United Kingdom, it is necessary to refer to the Report of the Royal Commission of 1889 (C—5781), and the extent to which effect has been given to their recommendations.

The chief recommendations of the Royal Commission may be summarised as follows:—

(a) The provisions of the Education Acts should be extended to the blind; and compulsory attendance enforced from 5 to 16.

From 16 to 21 the school authority should have the power and the duty to assist all necessitous blind persons to maintain themselves while learning a trade. Those who become blind from 21 to 50, should equally receive help from the school authority, or if they have passed through an institution should be assisted on the Saxon system.

The State might fairly be called upon to assist a secondary school.

The Royal Commission considered that, if the Education Acts were applied as suggested and State funds therefore became available, this would release from educational purposes charitable funds which might be applied to the enlargement of workshops or assistance of old pupils.

(b) A central workshop should be established in every large centre where the same has not been started. But the State should not directly subsidise their work.

There should be greater solidarity among the institutions so that they would work harmoniously together.

(c) The Saxon system should be adopted as far as possible by all institutions—without any State aid.

(i) A register should be kept of all pupils leaving the institution.

(ii) They should be assisted with tools and materials.

(iii) The institution should endeavour to provide funds to supplement wages.

(iv) An endeavour should be made to interest some influential local agency with which the institution could correspond.

(d) In the case of pensions, hard and fast conditions might be so relaxed that all meritorious cases should be reached. There should be co-operation amongst all pension societies. The State should provide liberally for the aged blind.

(e) As regards the Poor Law, there should be liberal out-relief. The blind should not be forced to go into the workhouse.

(f) For the purpose of the Census there should be a uniform schedule of inquiry for the blind throughout the United Kingdom, including causes and extent of blindness. Every school or institution should keep a record for this purpose.

(g) Information respecting the treatment of purulent ophthalmia should be circulated through the sanitary authority or through the Post Office.

(h) In the case of Ireland, every facility should be given for sending children to some properly certified institution.

(i) A grant should be given from the Exchequer of three-fourths of the sum necessary for education and maintenance, and one-fourth should be provided from the local or union rates.

(ii) There should be Government inspection.

(iii) The education should be denominational.

It was reported "that the aged and infirm in many workhouses have a wretched existence."

(2) PRESENT PROVISION.

6. The State by legislative and administrative action has given effect to the recommendations to the following extent:—

(a) Provision has been made for the elementary education of the blind in England and Wales by the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, 1893, and in Scotland by the Education of the Blind and Deaf Mute Children (Scotland) Act, 1890. No similar provision has been made for the compulsory education of blind children in Ireland.

For secondary and technical education of blind persons over 16, local education authorities in England and Wales have permissive powers under Part II. of the Education Act, 1902. The Board of Education have power to aid technical schools and classes and secondary schools. Analogous provision has been made for Scotland under the Education (Scotland) Act, 1908. These provisions are explained in detail in paragraphs 106; 107, below.

(b) The system of old age pensions has benefited a number of blind persons over 70 years of age.

(c) Ophthalmia neonatorum has been made compulsorily notifiable in England and Wales.

(d) A system of maternity and child welfare grants has been established.

7. Apart from the action of the State, provision for the blind by voluntary organisations has been considerably developed in recent years.

The information published by Gardner's Trust for the Blind in June 1915 indicates that there are 56 workshops for the blind, many of which make provision for industrial training of pupils over 16, 23 homes for the blind, 71 pension societies, 62 home teaching societies, a considerable number of libraries and miscellaneous societies, and 7 unions in England and Wales and 10 missions in Scotland for the general care of the blind.

In Appendix II. we give a list of some of the chief organisations for the blind. It will be seen that the annual income from subscriptions and donations to these associations approaches 100,000l., while a similar amount is derived annually from investments and stocks. The operations of these organisations will be dealt with in the course of the Report.

Section II.—Scope of the Problem.

(A) DEFINITION.

8. The Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, 1893, section 15, provides that "In this Act the expression 'blind' means too blind to be able to read the ordinary school books used by children."

Apart from this there appears to be no statutory or generally accepted definition. It is obviously desirable that there should be some uniformity of practice in determining what

persons should be marked out for special treatment by the State and be eligible for the benefits of the various organisations for the blind; but the absence of a recognised standard by which blindness is to be determined militates against this.

More important, however, is the consideration that the want of a definition seriously hampers the collection of exhaustive and uniform statistics, to which fuller reference will be made in the next section of our Report.

9. We have endeavoured to obtain some definition which should be of practical use in dealing with the blind, and we sought the assistance of the Section of Ophthalmology of the Royal Society of Medicine. The Society were good enough to appoint a special committee and to furnish us with the Report which appears in Appendix III. of this Volume. We take this opportunity of recording our appreciation of the valuable assistance so readily accorded to us.

10. It will be observed that as regards children the Report accepts the definition of the Act of 1893.

As regards adults, the Section of Ophthalmology have considered the proposals in the Education Employment and Maintenance of the Blind (No. 2) Bill of 1914. They suggest that the following definition should be adopted: "Blind means too blind to perform work for which eyesight is essential." It is further suggested that in the application of the definition certain safeguards should be adopted, viz., that the examination of the blind should be made only by persons who are registered under the Medical Act and who produce evidence of possessing competent knowledge of diseases of the eye; and that a certificate should be given which should also indicate whether the case should be re-examined at a future time.

11. We have considered this Report, and we are of opinion that the definition of blindness therein should be adopted.

We also consider that the safeguards suggested should be adopted in connection with the certification of the blind for any purpose.

(B) STATISTICS.

12. In this section we propose to deal generally with the statistical information available as to the blind in the United Kingdom, excluding persons blinded in the war, who are considered separately in Section XII. of the Report.

(1) Data Available.

The data available to the Committee were (i) the Census Returns, (ii) Official Returns of blind persons within the scope of the Poor Law, and (iii) particulars obtained from the various institutions and associations. A few observations are necessary upon the value of these data.

(i) The Census Returns.

13. The Census returns do not provide a reliable indication of the total number of persons who are blind for practical and economic purposes. It appears from the introduction to Volume XI. of the English Census, 1911 (Cd. 7020), that much difficulty was experienced owing to the absence of a generally acceptable definition of blindness. The Census deals only with persons returned as "totally" blind; but it is pointed out that it is extremely doubtful whether the figures obtained accurately represent the numbers of the totally blind. The Registrar-General also reported that the attempt to ascertain the duration of the infirmity had not produced any reliable figures which could be used.

The Census for Scotland (volume III, Cd. 7163) also relates only to the "totally" blind.

The Census for Ireland (General Report, Cd. 6663) illustrates a different procedure. For persons not in Institutions for the Blind a form was issued including an enquiry whether the person was "blind." The fact of blindness having been thus ascertained, special circulars of queries were issued, enquiring *inter alia* as to the degree of blindness, the cause, the age of incidence, and the education and occupation of the person. The persons partially blind were thus distinguishable from the totally blind.

We observe that the information furnished in the three reports is not uniform—*e.g.*, as regards causes, marriage, residence in institutions.

14. We consider that it would be an advantage if there were greater uniformity in the Census Returns for England, Scotland, and Ireland.

We are of opinion that the course taken in Ireland of securing full particulars of the blind by means of a second census has many advantages; and we think that the possibility of adopting a similar course in England and Scotland should be considered.

(ii) Poor Law Returns.

15. The returns of persons under the Poor Law were provided by the Local Government Boards at the request of the Committee, and will be found in the Appendix of the Volume of Evidence. We think that the statistics therein may be regarded as exhaustive. Further reference is made to these statistics in paragraph 29 *et seq.* below.

(iii.) *Information furnished by Institutions.*

16. The Committee endeavoured to collect information from all the institutions where industrial or professional training was given, and from all the workshops. Returns were also asked for from the seven unions of the blind.

We desire to acknowledge the readiness with which much valuable information has been put at our disposal by the organisations approached. But owing to the inevitable want of complete uniformity and precision, we do not think that the statistics derived can be accepted without reserve.

(2) *Number of the Blind.*

17. The Census Returns (1911) indicate that the total numbers of persons returned as totally blind were:—

	Total.	Males.	Females.	Proportion of Blind to Population.
England and Wales	26,336	13,257	13,079	1 in 1,370
Scotland	3,317	1,638	1,679	1 in 1,435
Ireland	4,312	2,133	2,179	1 in 1,018
Total for United Kingdom	33,965	17,028	16,937	1 in 1,274

18. The Age Groups are as follows:—

	Under 5.		5-15.		15-55.		Over 55.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
England and Wales	251	214	776	608	5,915	4,674	6,315	7,583
Scotland	19	25	97	104	847	603	675	947
Ireland	6	10	41	33	652	516	1,434	1,620
Total for United Kingdom	276	249	914	745	7,414	5,793	8,424	10,150

19. A comparison of the figures for 1911 with those for 1901 indicates that though the total number of blind has increased, the proportion of blind to population has diminished, except in Ireland.

	Year.	Total Number.	Proportion.
England and Wales	1901	25,317	1 in 1,285
	1911	26,336	1 in 1,370
Scotland	1901	3,253	1 in 1,376
	1911	3,317	1 in 1,435
Ireland	1901	4,253	1 in 1,048
	1911	4,312	1 in 1,018

(3) *Miscellaneous Statistics.*

20. It may be convenient to summarize here some miscellaneous information from the three Census Reports:—

(a) *England and Wales:*

Since 1851 there has been an improvement every year in the proportion of the blind to population.

As regards Marriage, the figures are as follows:—

	Married.	Unmarried.	Widowed.
Males	5,537	5,434	2,286
Females	2,899	5,731	4,449

Blindness was combined with other infirmities in many cases:—

	Males.	Females.
Blind and deaf - - - - -	176	256
Blind, deaf, and dumb - - - - -	34	28
Blind and dumb - - - - -	16	10
Blind and mentally defective - - - - -	257	306

In London there are 1,634 males and 1,930 females returned as blind.

(b) *Scotland:*

21. It is interesting to observe that in comparing the figures of the 1911 Census with those of 1901 there is an increase of 92 women, but a decrease of 28 men.

Combined infirmities are returned as follows:—

	Males.	Females.
Blind and deaf - - - - -	25	38
Blind and dumb - - - - -	3	9
Blind and mentally defective - - - - -	36	30

Two hundred and thirty-eight blind persons were enumerated in special Institutions for the Blind.

(c) *Ireland:*

22. The Memorandum prepared by Dr. Coey Bigger, of the Local Government Board, Ireland (Appendix VII. to the Volume of Evidence), and his evidence (Qs. 9102 to 9120) shows that there are special conditions affecting the number of blind in Ireland. It appears that when the great stream of emigrants left Ireland in the '50's and '60's they were not allowed to take their blind with them; there is therefore left a residuum of blind persons out of proportion to the present population. Secondly, unhygienic conditions led to occasional outbreaks of epidemic ophthalmia, to which a large proportion of blindness is traceable.

Allowing for these circumstances, the present ratio in Ireland is satisfactory, and there are grounds for thinking that with the population decreasing and conditions improving the number of blind is a diminishing number.

23. The Census Report (1911) shows that a second inquiry returned 618 males and 691 females as partially blind.

Conditions as to marriage in the case of the totally blind are as follows:—

	Married.	Unmarried.	Widowed.
Males - - - - -	725	981	427
Females - - - - -	302	1,112	765

It appeared that there are 3,371 Roman Catholic blind, 538 Protestants, and 318 Presbyterians.

Particulars were also given as to education: of the totally blind 1,476 were returned as uneducated, but of these only 41 were between 5 and 15 years of age. The educated are 65·8 per cent. In 1901, they were 60·7 per cent., and in 1861, 42·8 per cent.

251 males and 348 females were enumerated in institutions.

(4) *Occupations.*

24. We propose to deal in some detail with the statistics as to occupation, as the question of employment is one of the most serious problems to which we shall have to refer.

(a) *The Census Returns.*

These Returns show that occupations were specified for the following total numbers:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
England and Wales	4,388	1,138	5,526
Scotland	725	230	955
Ireland	1,414	798	2,212
Total for United Kingdom	6,527	2,166	8,693

The English Census indicates that in 1911 the proportion of males returned as occupied was 346 per 1,000 against 372 per 1,000 in 1901.

25. The following table extracted from the Census Returns will give some indication of the occupations chiefly followed :—

	England.		Scotland.		Ireland.		Totals for United Kingdom.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Willow, &c., workers, basket makers	875	224	93	6	172	18	1,140	248
Musicians, masters, singers	438	63	66	1	74	11	578	75
Musical instrument makers, tuners	269	—	25	—	—	—	294	—
Hawkers, &c.	287	41	40	6	—	—	327	47
Brokers, agents, factors	209	49	10	2	—	—	219	51
Grocers—Tea dealers	160	—	—	—	9	1	169	1
Mat makers	186	—	—	—	23	—	211	—
Brush makers	156	67	20	4	5	11	181	82
Upholsterers	—	—	59	25	—	—	59	25
Crofters	—	—	24	1	—	—	24	1
Farmers	126	—	13	1	431	75	570	76
Agricultural labourers	45	—	7	1	—	—	52	1
General labourers	94	—	17	—	367	27	478	27
Clergymen, priests, &c.	59	—	13	—	7	—	79	—
Schoolmasters, lecturers, &c.	41	62	3	14	7	—	51	76
Carpenters	—	—	15	—	—	—	15	—
Hosiery makers and knitters	—	138	—	66	1	263	1	457
Seamstresses	—	—	—	17	—	14	—	31
Domestic servants	—	88	—	15	7	172	7	275

(b) Returns from Institutions.

26. We asked all the Institutions for the Blind to furnish the numbers of those under training or employed at the Institution, excluding all who were in receipt of poor relief. It is doubtful whether that exclusion has been precisely observed in all cases, and the figures cannot be accepted as wholly reliable. We give, however, a summary :—

	Under Training.			Employed.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
England and Wales	523	447	970	1,013	330	1,343
Scotland	50	21	71	373	86	459
Ireland	48	45	93	85	31	116
Total for United Kingdom	621	513	1,134	1,471	447	1,918

(c) Poor Law Returns.

27. The three Local Government Boards were good enough to furnish statistical reports dealing exhaustively with the blind who are under the Poor Law. These reports will be found in Appendices IV., V., and VI. of the Volume of Evidence.

Particulars are given as to the number under training or in employment; and combining these figures with the previous table, the following result is obtained :—

	Under Training.			Employed.		
	Poor Law.	Non-Poor Law.	Total.	Poor Law.	Non-Poor Law.	Total.
England and Wales	618	970	1,588	619	1,343	1,962
Scotland	151	71	222	251	459	710
Ireland	125	93	218	233	116	349
Total for United Kingdom	894	1,134	2,028	1,103	1,918	3,021

28. Thus it appears that the various institutions or Poor Law authorities cover the following numbers either in training or employment :—

England and Wales	3,550
Scotland	932
Ireland	567

But, as already indicated, there is probably some duplication between the returns, and the figures are, therefore, given under reserve.

In comparing these totals with the Census figures of the "Occupied," it is to be remembered that the above figures would not touch the large number of persons engaged in professions or agriculture or home industries, except so far as they might come under the Poor Law for relief.

But it is interesting to observe that, allowing for some duplication, the total number of blind persons employed in workshops corresponds very closely with the total number returned as employed in workshops in the most recent edition of the pamphlet issued by Mr. H. J. Wilson of Gardner's Trust. And the number of persons employed in workshops in the United Kingdom may be regarded as between 2,600 and 3,000.

(5) Poor Law Returns.

29. While considering the statistics as to the occupations of the blind, it may be desirable to examine further the returns as to the blind under the Poor Law.

The total numbers receiving relief on 1st July 1914 were—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
England and Wales	4,628	4,338	8,966
Scotland	649	669	1,318
Ireland	775	956	1,731
Total	6,052	5,963	12,015

30. The total numbers returned as capable of education, training, or employment are—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
England and Wales	1,132	897	2,029
Scotland	215	160	375
Ireland	205	200	405
Total	1,552	1,257	2,809

The nature of the relief of these persons is shown in the following table :—

	Poor Law Institutions.		Other Institutions.		Out-relief.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
England and Wales	194	130	354	325	584	442
Scotland	28	15	48	64	139	81
Ireland	38	29	117	131	50	40
Total for United Kingdom	260	174	519	520	773	563

It may be observed that some persons in receipt of out-relief may be working at institutions, though not returned as resident therein.

31. In the next table we indicate the age groups of the capable blind who are in Poor Law institutions.

	England and Wales.		Scotland.		Ireland.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Under 16	17	13	2	1	1	1
Between 16 and 25	22	23	4	4	5	6
Between 25 and 50	130	78	12	3	18	13
Over 50	25	16	10	7	14	9

(6) The Unoccupied.

32. Turning next to the unoccupied, we have endeavoured to ascertain the number of persons capable of education or employment, but unoccupied. We regret, however, that conclusive statistics are not available. It will be convenient to deal with England, Scotland, and Ireland separately in this instance.

(a) *England and Wales.*

33. The Census returns as unoccupied—

	Males.	Females.
Retired - - - - -	2,945	700
Pensioners - - - - -	339	75
Old-age pensioners - - - - -	210	347
Private means - - - - -	314	771
Others unoccupied (including scholars) - - - - -	4,471	9,564

The figures 4,471 males and 9,564 females, apparently indicate those who are unoccupied and not provided for. As they relate to persons over 10, it would be necessary to deduct those of school age (10-15), thereby reducing the totals to 4,034 males and 9,226 females.

It is to be observed that the figures do not distinguish between the capable and incapable; and, of course, include married persons.

34. From the Local Government Board returns it will be seen that there were 711 persons in receipt of poor relief, who were capable of training or employment, but were not in fact being trained or employed.

Of these, 47 were under 16, 41 between 16 and 25, and 572 between 25 and 50. It was stated that 233 were doing light work.

35. We endeavoured to ascertain through the unions for the blind the number of capable persons who were unable to obtain training or employment. The unions, however, are not yet fully organised, and the returns sent in were very incomplete. They suggest, however, that there would be 3,000 or more blind and partially blind who are capable but unoccupied.

(b) *Scotland.*

36. The Census return gives the following:—

	Males.	Females.
Retired - - - - -	233	33
Pensioners - - - - -	20	5
Old-age pensioners - - - - -	18	69
Private means - - - - -	28	96
Students (14 and upwards) - - - - -	16	9
Others (all ages) - - - - -	570	1,197

Taking 570 males and 1,197 females as representing those who are unoccupied and unprovided for, it is necessary to deduct the age-group 0-15, which reduces the figures to 454 males and 1,068 females.

37. From the Poor Law Report it appears that there were 167 capable blind not under training, and 124 not employed; but there is probably duplication between these figures. It was stated in evidence (Q. 9040) that less than 200 persons in receipt of parochial relief, who were capable of training and employment, were unemployed.

38. Particulars were obtained from Mr. Frew Bryden, of the Glasgow Mission to the Out-door Blind, and they show that there are 392 males and 241 females, between 15 and 60, who are capable of training and employment, but about half to two-thirds of the number are in temporary or precarious employment. The figures were derived from returns furnished by the various out-door missions in Scotland, which are highly organised bodies.

(c) *Ireland.*

39. The Census return, under the heading of "Occupation," gives 675 males, 1,349 females (being blind persons over 15) as unspecified.

The report of the Local Government Board indicated that there were 405 persons under the poor law capable of training or employment, and 358 were under training or in employment, so that 47 only appear to be unoccupied.

Particulars were also collected by Mr. Rochfort Wade through the constabulary, and it is suggested by him that there are in all 205 males and 110 females capable of employment but unoccupied.

(7) *The Incapable.*

40. Lastly, some statistics are required as to the Incapable. For the purposes of our Report, we have to regard as incapable a person who by reason of age cannot profit by industrial training; and persons over 55 would almost certainly come within this category.

The Census returns give the following number over 55:—

	Males.	Females.
England and Wales - - - - -	6,315	7,583
Scotland - - - - -	675	947
Ireland - - - - -	1,434	1,620

41. The Poor Law returns indicated that blind persons in receipt of relief who were not capable of training or employment were as follows:—

	Males.	Females.
England and Wales - - - - -	3,496	3,441 (5,450 over 50 years.)
Scotland - - - - -	434	509 (709 over 50 years.)
Ireland - - - - -	570	756 (1,080 over 50 years.)

42. Incomplete returns furnished by the unions for the blind in England suggest that there are about 4,000 blind persons incapable who are outside institutions.

For Scotland, Mr. Frew Bryden estimated that there were 303 males and 355 females (between 16 and 50) incapable of employment, and 907 males and 1,119 females over 50, including those in receipt of poor relief. Mr. Rochfort Wade's estimate of the incapable blind in Ireland is 1,349 males, 1,244 females.

(8) *Summary.*

43. The Census returns show that in 1911 there were 33,965 persons (17,028 males, 16,937 females) returned as totally blind. Of these, 2,184 (1,190 males, 994 females) were under 15.

The Census returns specified 8,693 (6,527 males, 2,166 females) as "Occupied," including children of 10 and upwards.

The returns obtained from the institutions indicate that approximately 3,000 blind persons are occupied in workshops and institutions. We have endeavoured to collate in paragraphs 32-39 above the statistics as to the capable blind who are unoccupied. The data are unfortunately incomplete; but a conservative estimate points to there being not less than 3,000 blind persons capable of training and employment, but unoccupied.

In July 1914 there were 12,015 blind persons (6,052 males, 5,963 females) in receipt of poor relief. Of these, 2,809 (1,552 males, 1,257 females) were returned as capable of training and employment; and of the 2,809, 434 (260 males, 174 females) were actually in poor law institutions, the remainder being in receipt of out-relief or in other institutions.

With regard to the incapable blind, it may be noted that the Census returns give 18,574 (8,424 males, 10,150 females) blind persons over 55. The Poor Law returns and the statistics furnished by certain organisations indicate that there are probably not less than 10,000 incapable blind persons in the United Kingdom.

Section III.—Age of Incidence and Causes.

(1) AGE OF INCIDENCE.

44. The data available with regard to the Age of Incidence are not very satisfactory. Nothing is given in the English Census return, and the Scotch return only indicates that 5.5 per cent. of the blind were blind from infancy.

The returns furnished by the Local Government Boards in regard to blind persons under the poor law provide the following statistics:—

Age at which Blindness occurred.	England (8,110).				Scotland (1,318).			
	Class I. (Capables).		Class II. (Incapables).		Class I. (Capables).		Class II. (Incapables).	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
At birth - - - - -	288	338	291	413	29	40	32	50
Under 16 - - - - -	242	255	240	339	55	55	40	47
16-50 - - - - -	531	221	1,145	816	123	63	182	157
Over 50 - - - - -	11	6	1,481	1,493	8	2	180	255

The Irish Census return gives the following figures:—

Congenital, 174; Under 15, 636; 15-55, 1,500.
Over 55, 1,773; Unspecified, 229.

It will be observed that a very considerable proportion appear to become blind between the ages of 16-50. This has been confirmed by the evidence put before us. Mr. Mullins (Qs. 8474-5) indicated that a considerable percentage of persons in London are found to have become blind after 30. And Mr. Frew Bryden (Q. 9299) suggested that as many as 60 per cent. of the blind in Glasgow and the West of Scotland became blind after 30.

(2) FREQUENCY OF CAUSES.

45. The frequency of the causes of blindness is not shown in the English or Scotch Census returns, but some figures are again available in the returns of the blind under the poor law. These are as follows:—

Causes.	England.	Scotland.
Congenital and infantile	1,330	151
Following measles or other disease of childhood	219	26
Following disease not specifically connected with the eyes	753	86
Following cataract, optic neuritis, or other eye trouble	2,814	466
Following accident	1,040	189
Unspecified	2,810	400

In the case of Ireland, the Census Return for 1911 contains the following statistics as to causes:—

Congenital, 174; Mechanical injury, 994.
Cataract, 576, of which 342 cases occurred over 60 years of age.
Measles, 61, „ 42 „ under 15 „
Brain and nervous diseases, 221.

We have made further inquiry in regard to blindness occurring at birth and blindness due to mechanical injury.

(a) Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

46. Ophthalmia neonatorum is a form of inflammation affecting the conjunctiva—the membrane covering the front of the eye and lining the lids—in the new-born, occurring, as a rule, in the first days of life. It is almost always due to infection of the eyes during birth, and it is certain that there are several forms of infection of varying severity contained and grouped under the same heading.

If the disease is not treated promptly there is often grave danger of total blindness following. Mr. Lawford (Q. 11,619) stated that the proportion of cases of blindness due to ophthalmia neonatorum to the total number of the blind has been calculated to be more than 10 per cent., and that there has been no appreciable diminution in the last 25 years; it must be remembered that ophthalmia neonatorum has been compulsorily notifiable in England and Wales only since 1914, and that the statistics for subsequent years are not yet available.

In Scotland the incidence of ophthalmia neonatorum was examined in a report by Dr. Dewar, quoted at page 459 of the Appendix to Evidence. The general conclusion is that, though severe cases resulting in blindness are now rare, the frequency of ophthalmia neonatorum is much as formerly. The percentage of blindness due to ophthalmia neonatorum is indicated as somewhat higher than 10 per cent. The question arises therefore whether compulsory notification should not be introduced in Scotland.

We find that there is reason to doubt whether notification is being carried out with uniform efficiency throughout England and Wales. Further, it has been strongly represented to us—and we entirely concur—that mere notification will neither prevent nor cure. Mr. Lawford stated (Q. 11,699) that the disease had been practically stamped out in lying-in hospitals, where it was formerly very prevalent; and expressed his opinion (Qs. 11,702 et seq.) that by improving the conditions at birth it would be possible to reduce largely the number of cases of infection. If the disease occurs, it is imperative that each case should be notified at once and receive skilled attention as soon as it is notified. This is secured in some places, e.g., in Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow; and the extent to which this cause of blindness is preventable if properly treated may be gathered from the figures given in paragraph 28 of the memorandum by the Board of Education (page 466 of the Volume of Evidence). In 1912, 329 cases came under the notice of the Liverpool authorities, who by their action in securing prompt treatment, were able to save the sight in every case but one. In Birmingham, in 1913, 220 cases were notified, and in only one case was the sight lost.

47. The system at Liverpool by which such results are obtainable is outlined in evidence (Qs. 11,634-640). As soon as a case is notified, a trained nurse or health visitor is sent at once to investigate the case. She sees that proper treatment is carried out.

The treatment of a child with ophthalmia neonatorum means a treatment nearly all day and a good part of the night. This is best done (Q. 11,640) by a trained nurse, but if not a trained nurse, it may be done by some competent woman, who is able to do it either under instruction or after instruction. The eyes must be very frequently cleansed, some antiseptic lotion applied, and at regular intervals some strong germicidal application has to be applied

to the eyes. The child must be visited every day by the trained nurse or by a medical man, to see what progress is being made, and to ascertain if these applications are being applied systematically and efficiently. It was explained by Mr. Lawford (Q. 11,641) that in the majority of cases this treatment can be effectively carried out in the child's home.

It is, however, essential that hospital accommodation should be provided for the child (if necessary, for the mother also) in a certain number of cases. The disease is more prevalent in squalid homes, where efficient treatment cannot be secured, than in those where better conditions prevail.

Special care should be taken in cases of ophthalmia neonatorum, as the disease may be conveyed by contagion to others.

48. The evidence given by Mr. Lawford (Qs. 11,660-664) suggested that the present arrangements in London for dealing with ophthalmia neonatorum are susceptible of considerable improvement.

49. We desire to emphasise the importance of the part played by the midwife in cases of ophthalmia neonatorum. The specialist who gave evidence before us expressed the decided opinion (Qs. 11,703-705) that the present instructions to midwives are inadequate.

The Central Midwives Board have deleted from the instructions certain parts of the treatment known as the Cr d  method (Q. 11,808), which method is known to have led to a large reduction in cases of ophthalmia neonatorum. We are of opinion that this should receive immediate attention.

The Irish Local Government Board have been successful in reducing ophthalmia neonatorum in Ireland to an almost negligible quantity (Qs. 11,751, 12,191) by steadily bringing the matter to the notice of the dispensary medical officers and midwives. (See also Appendix to Evidence, page 495.)

50. In this connection we have to record that a high percentage of serious cases of ophthalmia neonatorum is due to gonorrhoea in the mother (Q. 11,735); and we find our evidence on this point confirmed in the Report of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases (C.D. 8189), paragraph 96. The Royal Commission report that as high a percentage as 25 per cent. of all cases of blindness has been attributed to gonorrhoeal ophthalmia.

Before leaving this subject it is necessary to note that syphilis is a very common cause of blindness (Q. 11,729). The Report to the Local Government Board of Scotland by Dr. Dewar (Appendix to Evidence, page 459) showed a very high percentage of blindness to be due to interstitial keratitis of a syphilitic nature. The Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases (paragraph 94) reported in a similar sense. In fact, the Royal Commission came to the conclusion (paragraph 102) that over 50 per cent. of all blindness was due to venereal diseases, and we trust that measures taken as a result of their recommendations will reduce the number of the blind by curtailing the prevalence of this fruitful cause of blindness.

51. We have come to the conclusion that—

(i) Steps should be taken to ensure uniform and effectual notification, which should be also enforced in Scotland.

(ii) Arrangements should be made to secure immediate treatment of all cases notified—in which connection competent nurses or health visitors, for whom a grant is obtainable under the Infant Welfare Scheme—might well be utilised.

It is to be noted that Maternity and Child-Welfare Grants to the extent of 50 per cent. of the cost of medical assistance (including nursing) are now payable under Local Government Board regulations to local authorities who make provision for such assistance. We would, therefore, urge local authorities to take action in the matter.

(iii) Hospital accommodation should also be provided wherever it is deficient.

(iv) The amendment of the instructions to midwives should receive early consideration.

(b) Occupational Blindness.

52. We have been impressed by the evidence put before us by experienced witnesses (Qs. 11,593, 11,837) that a large proportion of blindness now caused by mechanical injuries to persons following certain occupations could be prevented. It appears that, with the exception of the bottling of aerated waters, in no industry are the employers compelled to provide, or the workpeople to wear, protective goggles; and, further, where goggles are provided (and such places are few (Q. 11,842)) workmen will not wear them, partly because sufficient attention has not been given to the production of comfortable goggles and partly because of sheer prejudice on the part of the worker.

53. Statistics of such accidents leading to blindness are not comprehensive; but figures furnished by Dr. Collis (Appendix to Evidence, page 462) indicate that 5 per cent. of all accidents reported by certifying surgeons in factories and workshops for the years 1907-1914 are eye injuries; and of these, 2.5 per cent. at least result in the loss of one or both eyes (Q. 11,877). During the eight years mentioned, the number of cases in which the sight of one

or both eyes was lost is known to be 442, and these are accidents occurring in a very limited field, viz., premises which come under the Factories and Workshops Act.

The eye injuries among granite workers also are very high; and it appears that among the granite workers in Aberdeen one in every two has sought medical attention every year (Q. 11,866).

54. The Royal Commission on Metalliferous Mines and Quarries (Q. 11,871) has given attention to the provision of serviceable and comfortable goggles. We are of opinion that the provision of goggles by employers and use by the workpeople should be made obligatory in all cases where there is any proved risk of eye injury; and we are disposed to think that much could be done by educational propaganda such as are used in America (Qs. 11,607, 11,893).

It would be desirable that statistics should be kept in such a form as to indicate more precisely the extent of blindness due to mechanical injury.

Section IV.—Elementary Education.

55. Before considering the means available for the industrial or professional training of the blind, the Committee felt it imperative to ascertain how far the educational requirements of the blind are met up to the period at which they are considered fit to begin industrial or professional training.

A preliminary survey was therefore taken of the elementary education of the blind.

(1) STATUTORY PROVISIONS.

(a) *England and Wales.*

56. The position in regard to elementary education in England and Wales is explained in detail in the Memorandum of the Board of Education which is Appendix II. of the Volume of Evidence, pages 462-70.

The provision of elementary education is governed by the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act of 1893, under which the education of the blind is made compulsory between the ages of 5 and 16. "Blind" is defined as "too blind to be able to read the ordinary school books used by children."

57. There are 41 schools certified under the Act, of which 24 are provided directly by local education authorities, the remainder being schools attached to institutions for the blind, to which the education authorities send the children. The accommodation thus provided is for 2,434, the average attendance is 1,939; and in 1913 the number on the register was 2,050.

According to the figures in the Census the number of totally blind children between 5-16 would be 1,522. We agree with the conclusion of the Board of Education (Q. 335) that the accommodation provided is adequate with the possible exception of certain parts of Wales.

58. The Board of Education expressed the view that more children should be in school, and that the Act is probably not strictly administered as regards children under 10 (Qs. 339, 531). There is naturally in some cases reluctance to part with children at an early age. Through the medical department of the Board, however, a fuller register is to be obtained of all blind children of school age.

We have questioned a number of witnesses in regard to this matter; and we are satisfied that very few children indeed wholly escape the Act. There is ground, however, for the conclusion that a certain number do escape in the earlier years. The position will no doubt be met by the register mentioned above.

59. The Board of Education report that the School Medical Service under the Board's Medical Department, which was established in 1907, has brought more children into the schools; and it is clear that ample provision is now made for the well-being of the children in the schools (Appendix to Evidence, page 465).

60. The cost per annum of educating a blind child in a day school averages a little over 20*l.* In a residential school it is found to vary very considerably. The cost in residential schools provided by Local Education Authorities varies from 32*l.* to 59*l.* per annum, and in non-provided schools from 34*l.* to 43*l.* Particulars will be found in Appendix to Evidence, page 469.

61. The grants paid by the Board of Education are now 13*l.* per head for children in residential schools and 7*l.* for children in day schools.

62. We are happy to be able to report that we have found very general satisfaction with the working of the Act. It has been suggested, however (Q. 11,974), that a special school should be provided for the blind who are physically and mentally defective.

(b) *Scotland.*

63. The education of blind children in Scotland is compulsory between the ages of 5 and 16 under the Education of Blind and Deaf Mute Children (Scotland) Act, 1890.

The schools are described in some detail in Appendix III. of the Evidence (page 471). There are five residential schools, and there are special classes in Glasgow (5), Aberdeen and Paisley.

64. A recent return (July 1915) showed that there were 251 children in school. The number of blind children presented to the inspector in the year 1913-14 was 334. The total number under instruction during that year was 331 (Appendix to Evidence, page 471). According to the Census there were, in 1911, 201 children between 5 and 15—this figure, it will be observed, does not include children of 16, and includes only those returned as totally blind. The figures do not suggest that all the children who should be in school under the Act are, in fact, in school. Evidence was given by an Inspector of Schools in Scotland that in some cases blind children were not received into institutions at a sufficiently early age. It was stated that this was in some cases due to the reluctance of the smaller and poorer school boards to incur the necessary expense (Qs. 1732-38). The authorities are vigilant, and a special return was obtained in July 1915; but we think that the matter should engage the active and constant attention of the authorities, who should consider also whether the difficulty might be met by making the education of blind children a charge upon the Central Education Fund.

65. Under the Code, the grants made by the Scotch Education Department are 12*l.* 10*s.* per head on the average attendance in a recognised residential institution, and 6*l.* 10*s.* per head in a recognised day school.

66. The system adopted in Glasgow deserves notice. The School Board arrange for the blind children to be educated three-fourths of their time with the sighted pupils. But there is a special class at each centre where special instruction necessary for the blind is given. A visiting teacher goes round to the centres to give this instruction.

(c) *Ireland.*

67. There is no provision for the compulsory education of the blind in Ireland; and the only facilities for elementary education are those afforded by certain institutions for the blind. Mr. Purse, a member of our Committee, visited Ireland, and reports to us that he considers in the matter of elementary education and technical training the blind are much neglected; and apart from the school in Belfast, there are no certificated teachers for the blind (Qs. 12,755-60).

It has been strongly represented to the Committee by many witnesses that the principles of the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act of 1893 should be extended to Ireland, and we entirely concur in that view. We are aware that legislation in this direction has been introduced in Parliament, but for reasons which are not clear, the measure has not been proceeded with.

We consider that whatever objection there may be to the inspection of institutions for the blind might be overcome if adequate grants were given by the State and local authorities. The number of children to be dealt with is small, and there appears little reason to doubt that the existing buildings offer adequate accommodation for all the children involved. The Census return shows that there were 74 children between the ages of 5 and 15, of whom 41 were returned as uneducated. Dr. Coey Bigger (Q. 9152) estimated that about 25 or 30 are, in fact, receiving no education.

We are clearly of opinion that a system of compulsory education, on the lines of the Act of 1893, accompanied by State inspection and State grants, should be set up in Ireland.

(2) ADEQUACY OF CURRICULUM.

68. We propose now to deal briefly with a few points of importance in regard to the elementary education of the blind.

There is very general consensus of opinion among the witnesses examined that the curriculum provided in England, Wales and Scotland is satisfactory.

It was suggested by Mr. Pine (Q. 7087) that in some institutions too much trade training is attempted in the period up to 16; and we agree that it is essential to avoid the risk of prejudicing the thoroughness of the elementary education in this manner.

Sir Robert Blair emphasised (Q. 226) the fact that the problem of the blind centred around the question of employment, and was confident that the educational system met the demands made on it at present, and could meet any demand that may be made in the future.

The London County Council system, which will be found fully described in Sir Robert Blair's evidence, makes special provision for children on reaching the age of 14 to go to Elm Court or Linden Lodge Schools; where manual training receives special attention.

(3) BOOKS AND APPARATUS.

69. There appears to be a somewhat serious shortage in the supply of suitable school books for the blind. Evidence to this effect was given by the Education Officer of the London County Council (Q. 248), by the representative of the Board of Education (Qs. 598-600), who indicated that the school books were inadequate, both in quantity and quality, and by two heads of elementary schools (Qs. 1974, 2238). Other witnesses gave evidence to the same effect, while a few were satisfied as regards books for elementary education, but emphasised the lack of more advanced books.

Braille books are, of course, unavoidably bulky and expensive; and we find that in Sweden a small Government grant is given especially for books (Q. 971).

70. We were glad to gather from Mr. Stainsby's evidence (Qs. 6567-70) that the National Institute for the Blind have undertaken a great extension in book production, and anticipate that in the immediate future the position will be materially improved. The National Institute is also giving attention to the improvement of embossed maps and globes, the need for which was put before the Committee by some witnesses.

The need for an adequate supply of school books is of course a matter of peculiar importance, and we consider that establishments producing books for the blind should be assisted by Government grants.

(4) PHYSICAL TRAINING

71. The importance of properly organised physical exercise for the blind children appears to be generally appreciated, and we shall therefore refer only briefly to the subject. The Board of Education endeavour to secure adequate provision for physical training (Q. 351), and the only limitation which appears to operate is that in some places adequate playgrounds are not available.

Several institutions have good gymnasia, and we inspected the admirable provision in this respect at the Royal Normal College at Norwood. It has been admitted, however, that in some schools further equipment would be desirable; and the Rev. St. Clare Hill (Q. 6465) considered that, in the ordinary way, sufficient attention is not paid to the subject of physical training.

The matter being already under the notice of the Board of Education, we do not think it necessary to do more than record the opinion that in the case of blind children it is imperative that properly organised physical exercise should be secured. It has been indicated to the Committee that swimming and rowing are among the best forms of exercise for the blind.

(5) DISCOVERY OF APTITUDES

72. We have reason to doubt whether the means of discovering aptitudes in children, especially for music, are entirely satisfactory. As pointed out by Sir Robert Blair (Q. 121), it is peculiarly important, in the case of blind children, to direct their training in avenues where they possess aptitude. The same witness (Q. 41) expressed the opinion that probably the means of discovering the aptitudes of the children are not sufficient. This opinion was strongly endorsed by Mr. Guy Campbell (Q. 2771) in regard to the discovery of musical ability. Both Mr. Campbell and Mr. Platt (Q. 12,352) indicated that a child, to be a first-class musician, should begin his serious musical training at the age of 10 or 11. It is evident, therefore, that the discovery of musical aptitude needs early attention. We are led to believe that, while in most schools the importance of music is fully appreciated, in many cases vocal music only is practised. We think it is open to the greatest possible doubt whether vocal music is an adequate means of discovering musical capacity; and we think that more attention should be devoted to this matter.

(6) RESIDENTIAL OR DAY SCHOOLS

73. Our attention was directed at an early stage to a marked difference of opinion on this subject. The witnesses who considered the day school as the better system laid stress on the undesirability of withdrawing children from their home life and segregating them from their sighted fellows. There is undoubtedly much weight in the latter consideration; education with sighted children obviously tends to make the blind child more normal. Moreover, we have no evidence that the system acts detrimentally on the blind or the sighted in the same class.

The majority of witnesses were, however, strongly in favour of residential schools. The opinion of the Board of Education (Q. 1437) is that a day centre is never so good from the point of view of education or physical training as the residential institution. The advantages of the residential system have been stated at some length by witnesses of great experience (see Qs. 4145, 4991, 6597). Briefly, it may be said that residential schools are considered to provide better discipline, a more constant and skilled supervision, greater individual attention, more highly organised games and exercises, a proper dietary and medical supervision, and greater educational facilities generally. Some witnesses, while in favour of the day school generally, advocated residential schools for children from bad homes.

74. The Committee feel that the advantage undoubtedly rests with the residential system. We are convinced that, for the majority of children, a residential school is best, and for all children whose homes are in any sense unsatisfactory, the residential school is clearly essential.

At the same time, the individual character must be considered, and there will always be some children who will derive greater benefit from attending a day centre and receiving some part of their instruction with the sighted.

We think, therefore, that there is clearly room for both kinds of school in our system. Indeed there may well be many cases in which the blind child would best be educated on the lines suggested by Mr. Chas. F. F. Campbell—an American witness who (Q. 1027) put forward as an ideal system the proposal that a child should receive its early education in a residential institution, and afterwards be drafted into a day school and educated with the sighted.

Before leaving this subject we should mention that, under the Act of 1893, education authorities can make provision for the boarding-out of children, and committees for this purpose have been formed in London and eight provincial centres (Appendix to Evidence, page 457). On January 1st, 1914, there were 31 children boarded out—all in London.

The evidence of Dr. Eichholz (Q. 1512) indicated that boarding-out in a big city is not likely to be as satisfactory as the residential system.

(7) BLIND AND SIGHTED TEACHERS

75. The employment of blind persons as teachers presents some obvious difficulties, and two distinct considerations of some importance arise, viz., the welfare of the pupils and the interest of the adult blind in teaching as offering a career.

Information furnished by Dr. Eichholz (Appendix to Evidence, page 457) shows that on the teaching staffs in the certified schools for the blind in 1912-13 there were 48 blind teachers out of a staff of 211. Dr. Eichholz considered (Q. 406) that a proportion of 25 per cent. of blind teachers throughout the country is sufficient.

A few witnesses have doubted the advisability of employing blind persons as teachers owing to difficulties that may arise in maintaining discipline. Although we have been informed of certain cases where blind teachers have in fact had no difficulty in maintaining discipline, we consider that the objection must be a material one in many cases. Many witnesses, on the other hand, have strongly urged the suitability of blind persons as teachers, because they understand more intimately the psychology of the blind child, and present a constant stimulus to the pupil by the fact that they are themselves examples of what a blind child can achieve.

76. We find that the balance of evidence is undoubtedly in favour of the employment of blind teachers wherever possible, provided that they are assisted by sighted supervision. We feel that the proportion of blind teachers should probably not be higher than 1 in 3, but we are confident that teaching is an admirable profession for the blind, and a blind instructor must be of the greatest advantage to the pupil. In connection with the maintenance of discipline, and the observation and correction of mannerisms, the system adopted at the Royal Glasgow Asylum for the Blind (Q. 8859) deserves particular notice; the classroom is there divided by sound-proof glass partitions, which enables a sighted teacher to overlook the children in the classrooms on either side.

(8) MYOPES

77. Our attention has been drawn particularly to the treatment of myopic children, which presents a considerable problem to the education authorities.

The condition which gives rise to myopia, or "short sight," is an elongation of the antero-posterior axis of the eyeball. It is hardly ever congenital, but develops in childhood or adolescence.

In most cases, after a certain degree of elongation has occurred, the eye ceases to enlarge, and the myopia does not increase. In a certain proportion of cases the elongation of the eyeball is progressive throughout life, with consequent increase of the myopia. These eyes are subject to many accidents which may lead to blindness.

The first group of cases, in which the myopia becomes stationary at an early age, is often called "school myopia." The latter group is known as progressive myopia; but this grouping is only a convenient classification, and there is no real line of demarcation between the two classes. Nor is it possible to say in the early stages with which form we have to deal. It is therefore necessary to try to arrest the progress of myopia in all cases at the earliest moment.

Since there is evidence (Qs. 10,349, 10,350) that myopia is increased by the fact of working in the schoolroom under bad conditions, the importance of securing good conditions is obvious.

No figures are available as to the number of myopic children in the United Kingdom, but the London County Council Report indicates that in London alone there were 215 children attending the myope schools in 1915; and it was indicated in the evidence (Q. 10,332) that in November of that year there were over 300 children, certified as fit for the myope school, attending and being educated in ordinary schools, and others were being certified weekly.

78. As this problem has received special attention from the education authorities in London, the Committee took evidence from the Headmistress of the London County Council School for myopes at Harvist Road, N. (Qs. 10,325-10,542). The London County Council have

established seven special centres for myopic children, with whom are educated also partially sighted children, the average proportion being two-thirds myopes and one-third partially sighted. Children are drafted into these special centres after being certified by an eye specialist, and are medically examined every six months. All the apparatus is provided under the supervision of the ophthalmic surgeon, and glasses form part of the equipment. The results obtained from these special arrangements deserve particular attention. The object of the authorities has been to prevent these children becoming blind, and equally to prevent their being classed as blind. We were informed that out of 300 myope cases recently examined (Q. 10,375), blindness had ensued in three cases only, *i.e.*, 1 per cent. It was also indicated (Q. 10,528) that, in the case of partially sighted children, 3 per cent. have improved to such an extent that they have been transferred to the ordinary elementary school. A large majority of those who leave (Q. 10,526) work as seeing persons. The myope, it should be added, appears to be very similar to the ordinary child in intelligence, and may be classed as normal in all respects except sight (Q. 10,495).

79. There is a long waiting list of children for these myopic schools, and the London County Council were proposing to establish seven other classes, which, however, were stopped on account of the war. In Leeds, special myope classes have been established for three years past, with good results (Q. 3624). In Scotland there are no special schools for myopes (Q. 1862).

80. We are satisfied that the need for special myope schools is established. In the first place, it is clear that the sight of the children is in many cases improved, and in almost all preserved. We therefore entirely agree with the opinion of the ophthalmic specialist (Q. 11,686) that "the necessity for these schools ought to be realised by the authorities. They are very necessary indeed." Secondly, children with defective vision can be so trained as to take their place in the world as seeing persons. They should not, therefore, be educated in schools for the blind, as such a course is unhappily likely to attach a stigma which may prove a considerable handicap in future life to children who, for the most part, are not likely to become blind.

81. There are two further points to which we desire to refer in the present connection. As already mentioned, one form of myopia, *viz.*, school myopia, is stated (Qs. 10,349, 10,350, 10,447) to be due to the strain put upon the children's eyes in infant schools. Attention was drawn in particular to the danger of reading small print, doing small writing and bending over the work. We have no doubt that the suggestion that the methods adopted in ordinary infants schools are likely to be detrimental to the sight of young children will receive the consideration of the education authorities.

A question also arises in regard to the employment of myopic children on leaving school. It has been indicated to us that it is essential for such children to be employed if possible in outdoor occupations, and in any case on work in good general conditions. The school authorities, however, are often unable to secure that the child shall be started in a suitable occupation, and it is urged that they should have powers to this end (Q. 10,403).

Mrs. Everett explained (Qs. 10,405-425) that there is a small After-Care Committee for the pupils which co-operates with the Labour Exchange. It appears, however, that the excellent work done by this committee is often hampered by the refusal of parents to act on their advice in reference to the employment of the children, and by the need of further visitors to follow up old pupils. The question of after-care generally will be considered more fully in the next section.

(9) AFTER-CARE.

82. The importance of keeping a register of pupils for the purposes of After-Care was emphasised by the Royal Commission of 1889 (paragraph 123 of Report C.D. 5781).

Little appears to have been done by the State to carry out the recommendation of the Royal Commission; but the importance of After-Care is now generally recognised, and several institutions have taken steps in this direction—notably at Birmingham, Bradford, and Manchester; so also have some local education authorities, *viz.*, the London County Council, Leeds, and the North Stafford Joint Authority. As regards Scotland, Mr. McKechnie (Q. 1689) emphasised the urgent importance, and, in common with several other witnesses, indicated that the matter presents no serious practical difficulties.

The system of After-Care must begin with the children in the elementary schools. As pointed out by Dr. Eichholz (Qs. 421-29), it is the only means of testing the value of education, and the surest guide in the planning of educational schemes.

We desire to lay stress upon the necessity that immediate and active steps should be taken to secure a general and uniform system for the complete registration and following up of blind pupils.

83. The system of After-Care should provide for the following:—

- (1) A complete register should be kept of the children in school.
- (2) A careful selection should be made of a suitable occupation for the child, and the necessary steps taken to secure the industrial or professional training requisite.

- (3) After training, assistance must be given in securing employment, and the career of the person should be followed for a year or two.
- (4) Visitors will be necessary to follow up the cases; and the individual records could probably be most efficiently kept on a card index system.

84. We do not contemplate that the local education authorities would be able to carry such a system through all its stages. It would be imperative for them, however, to start a register of all children of school age, and to follow up for a year or two the cases of children who take up employment immediately on leaving school. A considerable number of pupils, however, on leaving the elementary school will pass on to an institution for industrial or professional training; and the after-care of such cases would more properly be entrusted to the institution or other organisation which provides for the after-care of the adult blind. There should be no difficulty in securing co-operation between the school authorities, the institutions, and the unions for the blind and home teaching societies, to which reference will be made later, in following up and assisting persons who have started in employment. We shall also refer later to the assistance of persons working in their own homes which forms a necessary part of after-care work in the widest sense. But in this section we confine our remarks more particularly to the early stages of after-care when pupils are leaving school.

85. Evidence was given before the Committee by Miss Beasley (Qs. 3296-3560) with regard to the London After-Care Association. A register of pupils is kept by obtaining from the London County Council registration forms from the schools. Unhappily, the following up of the children appears to have been discontinued recently; but originally an effort was made to follow up every case for two or three years. Miss Beasley considered that the register could be kept by one person who was able to give whole time to it (Q. 3346). It was indicated, however, that voluntary effort (Q. 3421) appears to be no longer adequate to carry on the work, and that the paid worker has become necessary; in particular paid visitors would be essential to carry out effectively the work of following up all the cases. But given this, it would be possible to keep a register and follow up cases to, say, 21, without serious difficulty.

86. We are convinced of the necessity for a general system of after-care registers being kept in all elementary schools for the blind; so as to form a basis for the system outlined in paragraph 83 above; and we consider that the Education Departments should give the matter their immediate attention.

The feasibility of the scheme is established by what has already been done by certain authorities, but it is apparent that paid assistance is required to secure the following up and visiting of cases; and financial aid for the authority undertaking such work will be necessary.

Section V.—Professional Training.

(1) THE CASE FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING.

87. We think it will be generally admitted that a blind person should not be denied the privileges of secondary education, even though he may have to depend upon an industrial occupation for his livelihood; and we consider that facilities for secondary education should be provided as widely as possible for the blind.

At the same time, in considering the means available for professional training, the Committee thought it necessary in the first instance to ascertain what actual results had been obtained by blind persons embarking on professional careers. Dr. Eichholz (Qs. 669 and 671) expressed the view that professions are difficult spheres for the blind to earn a living in. The education authorities have the subject under their constant attention, but it is stated that there is serious difficulty in obtaining employment.

Mr. Guy Campbell has furnished figures (Appendix to Evidence, pages 459-60) showing the results of training at the Royal Normal College for the Blind up to December 31st, 1915. The record covers 577 persons—420 men and 157 women. Of the men 318, or 86.2 per cent., and of the women 120, or 81.6 per cent., are known to have been successful in professional careers. It will be observed that out of 318 men returned as successful, 210 were pianoforte tuners, and 61 were organists or teachers of music. Of the 120 successful women, 34 were music teachers and 40 were school teachers.

The Headmaster of Worcester College (Appendix to Evidence, page 460) has been able to furnish a record of some past pupils of the College. The record is admittedly incomplete, but out of 56 names returned, 50 were stated to be earning, in professional callings, sufficient for their maintenance.

88. Attention must be drawn to the opinions expressed by some witnesses of wide experience. Mr. Stainsby (Q. 6596) considered that more attention should be given to professional training, and went so far as to say that the blind are more likely to succeed in intellectual occupations than in industrial pursuits. Mr. Stoddart (Qs. 6076 and 8848) could point to many men now employed in workshops who could, if properly trained, make themselves independent in professional or business occupations. The view was expressed

by Mr. Purse (Qs. 11,985-997) that a larger percentage of blind persons are capable of taking advantage of secondary education than is generally thought, and that many failures in industrial pursuits are due to the fact that the individual would have found a more congenial livelihood in one of the professions.

On the other hand, Mr. Priestley (Q. 8181) expressed the opinion that the openings for blind persons in the professions are very limited.

89. We consider that there is a limited field for blind persons in professional occupations, and from the actual records the musical profession and pianoforte tuning appear to offer the best prospect. The possibilities of placing blind persons in business callings should, we think, be further developed.

We shall proceed to examine in greater detail some of the professions which have proved suitable to the blind.

(2) SUITABLE PROFESSIONS AND CALLINGS.

(a) Music.

90. There is a fairly common popular belief that the blind are more fertile in musical talent than the sighted. We have had no evidence to support this suggestion. In fact, two expert witnesses were confident that it is without foundation (Qs. 149 and 6726). There is, however, no doubt that music is one of the most suitable professions for the blind. The figures given in the record of the Royal Normal College, to which reference has already been made, show that a large number of blind persons have followed with success a musical career—whether as performers, teachers or tuners. Mr. Platt (Q. 12,381) stated that there are at least 100 blind organists in the United Kingdom, many of whom are choirmasters also. Over 60 blind organists have taken the diploma of the Royal College of Organists; 25 or 30 blind persons are music teachers in Institutions; and over 150 are believed to be deriving the whole or the major part of their livelihood from music at the present time.

91. There are a few considerations in regard to the subject generally on which the Committee desire to lay emphasis. In the selection of pupils for a musical career it is imperative that careful regard should be had to the suitability of the individual. Not only must the pupil show sufficient musical ability, but must also possess the personal qualifications necessary for a professional career, e.g., good address, pleasing appearance, and in particular, absence of mannerisms. Mr. Platt (Q. 12,351) laid much stress on this point, and we feel that it deserves special notice.

Another matter which was brought prominently before the Committee is the difficulty experienced by musicians during the first year or two of their professional life. Some institutions assist their old pupils at the outset of their career, e.g., at Birmingham (Q. 4947), Manchester (Q. 4232), Nottingham (Q. 7117), and Bradford (Q. 8252). We are satisfied that some provision of this nature should form an essential part of all after-care schemes.

Some witnesses suggested that a central bureau would be of great use in assisting blind musicians to secure posts. In particular, it was indicated that there is no systematic effort to keep the blind organist before the notice of the public and the clergy. The National Institute for the Blind (Q. 6552) are meeting this to a considerable extent by providing in the Armitage Hall facilities for organ recitals before the clergy and others in order to convince them of the capacity of blind organists. We note this with satisfaction, as we have had evidence to the effect that there is no inconsiderable amount of prejudice against the employment of blind musicians.

(b) Pianoforte Tuning.

92. With regard to pianoforte tuning, we are satisfied that if blind persons are to succeed they must be capable of executing all ordinary repairs. In this connection, the Committee have been impressed with the necessity for the establishment of a standard certificate for all blind tuners. The public are naturally in need of some assurance that the blind tuner is efficient; and there is no doubt that there are many efficient blind tuners in practice. It has been brought to our notice, however, that there is no uniform standard in the certificates granted by the training institutions; and in one case we found that an institution was issuing more than one grade of certificate. In the interests of the blind themselves and of the public, a general uniform standard of efficiency should be established by some central authority, which should issue certificates to persons satisfying the necessary tests.

We have noted with satisfaction that some local authorities entrust the tuning of their school pianos to blind tuners.

93. The question of restricting the number of institutions which train blind tuners was also raised in the evidence taken on this subject: and we shall refer to this in the subsequent section of our Report (paragraph 111).

94. It is very generally agreed that it is usually desirable for a blind person to combine music with pianoforte tuning. The advantages of such double training are obvious. The blind organist or pianist who derives his livelihood from performing or teaching is in a serious position if his professional engagements or pupils fail; and in such circumstances his position may be safeguarded if he has tuning to fall back upon. Conversely, the blind tuner is often able to augment his income by playing at dances or in similar incidental ways. The aptitudes of the individual must, of course, determine which of the two callings is to predominate.

(c) The Ministry and the Law.

95. The evidence of the Headmaster of Worcester College goes to show that Holy Orders may be regarded as a calling for which suitable blind persons may be trained with reasonable prospects of success.

As to the legal profession, it has been suggested to the Committee (Q. 4452) that a blind person should not contemplate embarking on a legal career unless he has some private means.

(d) Teaching.

96. We have already dealt with the suitability of this profession for blind persons in paragraphs 75 and 76. It will be gathered from what is there said that the Committee are satisfied that teaching is one of the best professions for the blind. We may add here that the College of Teachers of the Blind holds an examination which is open to blind candidates among others, and is recognised by the Board of Education as satisfying the conditions in regard to an examination approved by the Board in methods of teaching in 'schools for the blind' (Appendix to Evidence, page 464). There is a special Teachers' Training Department at the Royal Normal College, but we regret to note (Qs. 397-401) that there is a diminution in the number of persons trained latterly, and we are informed that this is owing to a decreasing demand for blind teachers.

(e) Massage.

97. This profession is one of the most recently adopted by blind persons in the United Kingdom.

Practically all the witnesses examined have expressed the view that it is in an experimental stage at present, but that it appears to offer excellent scope, if the blind persons are selected with the greatest possible care. They must be of good appearance, pleasant manners, in perfect health, and possessing a considerable degree of intelligence.

Mr. Pearson (Q. 12,655) was able to speak from experience, in that 25 blinded soldiers had been trained for the profession at St. Dunstan's. Some of these men have been working at the Middlesex Hospital, and have proved highly successful; one of them, in fact, has so favourably impressed the authorities that they have offered him a permanent post.

The National Institute for the Blind (Q. 6557) have made special provision for the proper training and employment of blind masseurs, which is more fully described in paragraph 213 below.

We are of opinion that, subject always to the utmost care being exercised in the selection of persons in every way suitable, the profession offers a good field for a limited number of properly trained blind persons.

(f) Business Callings.

98. The Principal of the Royal Normal College was able (Q. 3028) to point to 19 old pupils who have been successful in business callings; and our attention was drawn by Mr. Stoddart (Q. 6076) to the fact that there are many persons employed in workshops who have appearance, address and abilities that would enable them, with proper training, to follow commercial pursuits, such as canvassing for insurance, or to become travellers, or to engage in business on their own account. This was endorsed by other witnesses, who pointed out that blind persons can successfully conduct tea agencies and canvassing generally; especially if they are persons with previous experience who have lost their sight in adult life.

Poultry farming and market gardening have also been found to be suitable occupations for blind persons. But proper training is essential, and it is necessary that the blind undertaking these occupations should have the assistance of a sighted helpmate (Qs. 12,635 and 12,638).

Blind girls can be employed with success in small telephone exchanges: but they cannot do the work in large exchanges where a system of flash lights is used (Q. 4943).

The Committee consider that possibilities of equipping the blind for business and commercial callings should receive the more active attention of the bodies now training the blind.

99. In this connection we wish to draw attention to the need for dealing with the problem of inducing and enabling men and women who lose their sight in adult life to continue in the occupations, businesses, or professions which they have before followed. As a general rule, either gradual or sudden loss of sight brings about a sensation of complete helplessness, and inability to continue a career of usefulness; a sensation accentuated by the general belief of relatives and friends of the blind person that blindness means helplessness. With proper encouragement and instruction, however, such a man may be equipped to continue a career of useful and profitable activity, in the occupation which he previously followed.

The re-education of blinded soldiers has afforded some striking instances of the success which may be attained in this matter; and we cite some examples in paragraph 214 below. We think it is important that machinery should be provided whereby persons losing their sight in adult life may be afforded the opportunity of securing the scientific training needed to re-equip them for following their previous vocation.

(g) *Typewriting.*

100. This occupation does not, save in quite exceptional cases, offer a satisfactory career for boys, because they will probably only command girls' wages (Q. 12,493). But for girls it may, under certain conditions, prove a very good avenue of employment. We have made inquiry as to the conditions qualifying this. Several witnesses doubted the commercial value of typewriting for the blind, because of the undoubted reluctance of employers to engage them. There is, however, no doubt that blind persons are capable of typewriting accurately and rapidly; but there is a considerable body of opinion that they can only be successful if engaged at a central bureau to which copying work is brought; we understand that this is done at Birmingham (Q. 6205).

101. The Committee called an expert witness on the subject, viz., Mr. Black of the Royal Normal College (Qs. 12,416-544), and the evidence given merits careful attention. It is apparent that a blind typist to be successful must receive an exhaustive training, and must attain a high degree of efficiency before she can hope to compete in a business career. There is no doubt, however, that if properly trained, she can command the average salary earned by typists. It is to be noted, however, that since other institutions have begun to train typists, the Royal Normal College have reduced the number training for that occupation at the College (Q. 12,423) in order that the market may not be flooded, it being the opinion of experts that typewriting is a favourable field for the blind—but for a limited number.

Mr. Black explained that a fully trained pupil can write shorthand (*i.e.*, Braille shorthand) rapidly and correctly, she can type rapidly and correctly, and can do work of a highly technical nature—including elaborate statistics. She can use an ordinary machine with certain attachments, which, however, are easily removable, and she can clean the machine. There are obviously certain parts of office work which a blind typist cannot do, *e.g.*, looking up references. But it is confidently asserted that, given an intelligent distribution of the work, a few blind typists could quite well be employed in Government and other large offices (Q. 12,454).

It was suggested to the Committee that there should be some central body to set up a uniform standard test for blind typists, to assure the public of a reasonable standard of efficiency and to assist the blind typists in obtaining posts. In this connection we were impressed with the need of assistance from some properly qualified person who can handle scientifically the initial difficulties which are bound to occur in placing a blind pupil in a new post (Q. 12,432). It has also been suggested that the number of institutions preparing pupils should be limited, to which we shall refer in a later paragraph (paragraph 111).

We think it is clear that a sighted teacher is necessary in training for this work.

102. On the question of the desirability of a central bureau where blind typists might be employed, we attach much weight to the objections indicated by Mr. Black, viz., that the proposal involves a central position and expensive surroundings, as well as certain difficulties of transit. In particular it was pointed out that the City of London is not a good centre, because of the considerable strain imposed on blind persons in getting to and from their work.

Mr. Black inclined to the view that several isolated fields probably provide a better system of employment than the establishment of a central bureau in which a number of blind typists would be collected.

103. We are of opinion that the abilities of blind persons to undertake successfully shorthand and typewriting have been clearly proved. The profession undoubtedly offers a suitable career for a limited number of fully trained persons.

We think that the question whether the blind typist can best succeed in a central bureau or in isolated fields must depend to a great extent upon the individual and the locality. The possibilities of a central bureau have not yet been sufficiently explored in actual practice to enable us to make any general recommendation on the subject, but we feel that the system should be kept in view when local circumstances are favourable.

(3) AGE AND LENGTH OF TRAINING.

104. The time required for the secondary education of a blind pupil need not ordinarily be different from that required by a sighted pupil. But it is necessary to point out that pupils who are to be trained for the musical profession must begin their training at an early age. Mr. Guy Campbell (Qs. 2778-80) indicated 10 as the best starting age; in any case musical training should preferably begin before the age of 13, and in no circumstances should it be later than 16. Mr. Platt confirmed this view (Q. 12,352), and said that 10 to 11 is a suitable age to begin musical training.

It appears that about four years after the age of 16 is required to equip a blind person as a musician or tuner. In the case of tuning it is agreed by experts that it is undesirable to begin training for this occupation after the age of 21 (Q. 6935).

(4) BOOKS AND MUSIC.

105. The provision of educational books has been considered in the section dealing with elementary education; a brief notice is required here in regard to books needed for secondary education. Some witnesses were inclined to emphasize the lack of books for secondary education. We find, however, that the National Institute for the Blind are paying special attention to this matter, and particularly to scientific books (Q. 6572). In this connection we would direct attention to Mr. Platt's evidence (Q. 12,335) to the effect that the National Institute are dealing with the production of Braille music on the right lines, and that the National Library are assisting in this. Mr. Platt stated that during the last eight years more had been done for blind musicians than in the previous 20 years.

(5) FACILITIES AVAILABLE FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING.

(a) *Grants by Central Authority and Powers of Local Education Authorities.*

106. In England and Wales, the Board of Education has powers to aid day courses for blind pupils over 16 under the Regulations for Technical Schools at the rate of not more than 2*l.* for each pupil receiving instruction for not more than 200 hours in the year, and 3*l.** for each pupil receiving not more than 400. For the years 1910-13 the average total grant was a little over 1,000*l.*; grants being paid in respect of over 434 pupils in the year 1911-12.

Under the same Regulations aid is given to evening classes and total grants of a little over 200*l.* were paid in 1911-12 and 1912-13. It is to be observed, however, that the above sums represent grants for industrial and professional training together. But the Government grant in 1913 to the Royal Normal College amounted to 539*l.* (Q. 2867); and this, of course, is for professional training exclusively.

Aid is also given at the rate of 5*l.* per man and 3*l.* per woman, training as teachers at the Norwood Training College; but, as already indicated, the number of persons training is very small.

Under Part II. of the Education Act, 1902, the Local Education Authority has power to supply or aid the supply of education other than elementary. The Local Education Authority, therefore, can at its discretion provide or assist in providing professional training for the blind. The Act provides that the amount provided for education other than elementary in any one year shall not exceed an amount which can be raised by a 2*d.* rate in the case of a county council, and a 1*d.* in the case of a non-county borough.

107. In Scotland grants are payable by the Scotch Education Department under the Day School Code in respect of blind children receiving instruction up to 18, as in the case of other children. Grants are payable also in respect of blind pupils under the Regulations as to Secondary Schools. It is further open to School Boards, Secondary Education Committees and other managers to submit proposals to the Education Department for the instruction of blind persons in technical classes or other classes established under the Continuation Class Code. A grant of 14*l.* 9*s.* 9*d.* was made in 1914 to the Edinburgh Royal Blind School in respect of such a class.

Secondary Education Authorities have powers to grant assistance to qualified blind pupils by bursaries or otherwise under the Education (Scotland) Act, 1908. Allowances have been made to pupils at the Royal Normal College and at the Academy of Music, London, and also to pupils over 16 at the Edinburgh Royal Blind Asylum. Annual subsidies have been made to the Aberdeen Blind Asylum.

Grants may be made by training authorities to persons qualifying as teachers.

108. In Ireland, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Training has powers (Q. 2160) to make grants to technical classes. But there appears to be no provision for professional training in Ireland.

The Poor Law Authorities in the United Kingdom have power to provide for the reception, maintenance and instruction of adult paupers in suitable institutions, subject to the limitation that in Ireland payment in respect of persons over 18 years of age may not exceed 5*s.* a week (page 492 of Appendix to Evidence).

(b) *Facilities in Institutions.*

109. The principal institutions for professional training in England are the Royal Normal College at Upper Norwood, and Worcester College. The Principals of both institutions were examined by the Committee (Qs. 2728-3060 and 4373-634).

The Gardner Trust assists very materially both these Colleges by scholarships and thus enables many blind children, at the age of 16, to continue their education, who would otherwise be unable to do so.

The Royal Normal College has accommodation for 150 resident pupils, but 128 are in residence. Mr. Campbell explained (Q. 2751) that the College is not full because (i) the fees are necessarily high and (ii) other institutions are providing training in music and tuning on the lines of the Royal Normal College. The fees vary from 35*l.* to 65*l.* per head according to age; the cost varies from 50*l.* to 80*l.*; the difference has to be met out of funds

* Note.—Since evidence was taken, new Regulations have been issued under which a grant of 7*l.* per annum can be obtained for each pupil who is regularly attending a suitable course.

voluntarily subscribed. The College is not endowed and its accounts have always shown an annual deficit, which in 1913 was 895*l.* Mr. Campbell indicated that the College needed as much as 3,000*l.* additional income annually if it is to become all that the authorities desire to make it. It appears (Appendix to Evidence, page 459) that in 1913 boards of guardians contributed 294*l.* 10*s.*, and Mr. Campbell (Q. 2802) stated that guardians are acting generously—46 local education authorities contributed 1,760*l.* 19*s.* in all, and the Government 539*l.* 10*s.* The total from public funds was therefore 2,595*l.*, which is less than one-third of the total expenditure of the Institution. The Principal strongly deprecated the system whereby the deficit had to be made good by constant appeals to charity (Q. 2826), and recommended that the provision of further education under Part II. of the Education Act, 1902, should be made obligatory upon educational authorities.

110. The College for the Higher Education of the Blind at Worcester has accommodation for 30 boys. There are 15 at present receiving training there. The Headmaster estimated (Q. 4423) that there were probably 25 blind boys in the country who were suitable for professional training and considered (Q. 4396) that some of these are probably debarred from undergoing such training through lack of scholarships, which in his opinion were inadequate in number and amount. The College has a small endowment bringing in 345*l.* per annum. The fees are 60*l.* to 80*l.* a year—a sum which is no doubt out of the reach of many parents whose boys would benefit by such an education.

A certain amount of accommodation is also provided at other centres, e.g., Birmingham and Manchester.

In Scotland, secondary education is given at Edinburgh Royal Blind Asylum (Q. 5578), where there are 11 students and the fee is 30*l.* There appears to be no provision in Ireland.

111. We have examined a number of witnesses on this subject and have come to the conclusion that on the whole there is sufficient accommodation for the provision of professional training. There is, however, probably scope for a small secondary school for blind girls. Some provision at least for training in pianoforte tuning would be desirable in Ireland; otherwise the existing institutions may be regarded as adequate to accommodate the pupils who are likely to be found eligible for professional training. In this connection we wish to draw attention to the opinion of some expert witnesses that training for music and for typewriting should be restricted to a few highly equipped centres. It is, of course, to be observed that an excessive centralisation would deprive the blind of the benefit of local connections; but we feel that there is great weight in the argument that the blind are more likely to be efficiently trained if their training is restricted to a few thoroughly equipped institutions. It will be appreciated, for instance, that the training of pupils for the musical profession is much better restricted to centres where the pupils will have opportunities of attending good concerts. These considerations confirm our opinion that, with the reservations indicated above, there is no occasion to increase the number of centres in which professional training is given.

112. The question of the actual means afforded to pupils to avail themselves of the training provided by the institutions presents greater difficulties.

In Ireland there is no provision; and the institutions in England would probably be able to accommodate the small number of blind persons who could with advantage be prepared for professional careers. Some children have been sent from Belfast (Q. 7595) to the Royal Normal College, the Belfast Institution endeavouring to collect sufficient money for their maintenance. But we do not find that there is any general arrangement for selecting blind persons and sending them over to the institutions in this country.

In Scotland, Secondary Education Committees are said (Q. 5859) to give bursaries freely; and Mr. Stoddart (Q. 8802) confirmed this; pupils have been sent from Glasgow to the Royal Normal College (Q. 8825). There are three funds available for assistance, viz., the West of Scotland Fund, the Marshal Trust Bursary, and the County Council Bursaries.

In England and Wales the position is a little obscure. We have had evidence that boards of guardians are generally willing to assist pupils over 16. There appears, however, to be considerable variation in the attitude of local education authorities; some grant scholarships readily, e.g., Bradford (Q. 8186); others are apparently less willing to provide for training after 16, e.g., Manchester (Q. 4003).

While some witnesses indicated that blind persons suitable for professional training are handicapped by lack of scholarships, we find (Q. 12,413) that all the Gardner Trust Scholarships are not, in fact, taken up.

113. There is considerable complaint among authorities responsible for training the blind that the powers of Part II. of the Education Act, 1902, are permissive; and many witnesses have suggested that the exercise of these powers should be made obligatory on local education authorities. We are not disposed to recommend this course at present, more especially as the whole position of secondary education, and Government grants in connection therewith, are being actively considered by the education authorities. We feel that at the moment local education authorities are not in all cases aware of the extent of their powers under Part II., and are not generally cognisant of the other forms of assistance available from charitable sources; otherwise we find it difficult to account for the fact that some of the Gardner Trust Scholarships are vacant. It is possible that the scholarships at present

available are not adequate in amount, having regard to the fees charged for professional training; and we think that the desirability of making further Government grants is already recognised.

114. We may therefore summarise our conclusions as follows:—

- (a) That no further provision of accommodation is necessary, except perhaps that of a small secondary school for girls, and in Ireland some facilities for the training of tuners.
- (b) That steps should be taken to draw the attention of local education authorities to their powers under Part II. of the Education Act, 1902, and to urge upon them the desirability of using these powers.
- (c) That efforts should be made to secure that the scholarships and other forms of assistance from charitable funds should be more widely known.
- (d) That the Government should consider the desirability of extending grants in respect of pupils undergoing professional training; in particular, the case of blind persons embarking on a musical career deserves attention.

Section VI.—Industrial Training.

115. In examining the means available for industrial training, our treatment of the subject will not be quite uniform with the previous section on Professional Training, partly because of the inherent differences in the subjects, and partly because we shall devote a separate section to the question of workshops and employment in industrial occupations.

(1) SUITABLE TRADES.

116. There must necessarily be a high percentage of blind persons for whom industrial (as distinct from professional) occupations are suitable. It may be regarded as established that the most suitable occupations are: for men—basket, brush, mat, and mattress making, boot-repairing, chair-caning, upholstery, and cork fender making; carpentry and cabinet making; for women—knitting, sewing, weaving, chair-caning, and light basket work. The wages earned in these occupations will be dealt with in a subsequent section of the Report (paragraphs 144–149). At present we confine our attention to the suitability of trades to the capacities of blind persons.

It was pointed out by some witnesses, and we concur in their view, that basket making is not a suitable trade in which to train a person losing sight in later life. Such persons could be more profitably trained for mat or brush making (Qs. 5050 and 6675).

With regard to boot-repairing, it appears that this work can be successfully undertaken by the blind, but boot-making is not recommended as suitable (Q. 6216).

We should mention here that though several forms of industry have been found suitable for women, Mr. Pine (Q. 7007), who has made a special study of the subject, expressed the view that except in rare cases, no industry for women is remunerative.

117. We have examined several witnesses on the question whether any additions can be made to the above trades which are generally recognised as being the most suitable; and in this connection we may refer to the views of Dr. Eichholz (Q. 657), who, having made a point of studying foreign workshops, considers that on the whole the best trades have been selected in English workshops. We consider that the field has been well explored in this country and that the trades at present taught are the best. There is, however, probably room for development in some of the occupations already followed. Mr. Illingworth suggested (Q. 4117) that more might be done in upholstery if attacked on a large scale; and it was explained by Mr. Stoddart (Qs. 6100 and 8832) and Mr. Macdonald (Q. 9583) that the making and remaking of bedding has been found to be one of the most successful trades in Scotland and that there is a good opening for it in England.

The development of these industries may perhaps involve a question of commercial organisation rather than of training facilities. But we think it deserves notice in any consideration of the trades in which the blind may suitably be trained.

We may add here that though it may not be an industry possessing any considerable commercial possibilities, there is room for experiment and development in the provision of new and approved appliances for educational and trade purposes, models for the use of the blind, special kindergarten apparatus &c. This is an industry which might certainly be developed with the greatest benefit to the blind.

(2) LENGTH OF TRAINING.

118. While the suitable trades are generally recognised, we are not sure that it is always sufficiently recognised that a considerable period of special training is essential. The evidence of expert witnesses convinces us of the necessity of emphasizing this. A blind child on leaving school at 16 is not an efficient worker and cannot be expected to be a wage earner. Not only must the pupil receive a thorough training in all branches of the industry he is to

pursue, but a considerable period is necessary to enable him to acquire the speed essential to a successful worker.

Dr. Eichholz (Q. 453) contemplated four years after 16 as the maximum period required. The superintendents of several institutions indicated that a period of five years might be necessary; but, given that period, a high percentage of pupils would be qualified to be successful wage earners. Mr. Illingworth (Q. 4197) put the percentage as high as 80 per cent. Mr. St. Clare Hill considered it to be over 60 per cent.; but he pointed out that less than 50 per cent. of the girls do well. Particulars obtained of pupils trained between 1906-1915 at the Royal Midland Institution, Nottingham, suggest that 60 per cent. is a sufficiently high estimate. Naturally the period varies with the trade taught. Basket making is regarded as the most complicated, and five years may be required for training; mat making and brush making could, however, be learnt in two or three years; and boot-repairing, upholstering or mattress making in two years or under.

119. We do not wish to lay down any rigid rule as to the period of training that should be given. A period of five years may perhaps be given as a maximum. But it would appear probable that a period of three or four years' training would adequately meet the requirements in many cases.

The Committee made some inquiry as to the age after which a blind person cannot be usefully trained. Some witnesses put the limit at 40-45, others at 50. Making the necessary allowance for individual adaptability, we think it safe to suggest that after 50 it is very problematical whether a blind person can usefully embark on a course of training.

(3) BLIND INSTRUCTORS.

120. The Committee doubt whether sufficient use is made of the blind instructor in workshops and training schools for the blind. Comparatively few blind instructors are to be found in the training school or workshop. It has been the experience of the authorities at St. Dunstan's Hostel for Blinded Soldiers that the principal factor in the rapidity with which blinded soldiers have learned the industries taught at the hostel is to be found in the free use of the blind instructor (*see* paragraph 212 below).

The pupils at St. Dunstan's differ, of course, widely from the ordinary blind persons found in the workshops and training schools, but we think it will be generally agreed that a blind instructor must be a source of confidence and encouragement to a pupil who suffers from the same handicap as himself. A blind instructor also may be expected to have a more intimate appreciation of the difficulties which the blind pupil has to overcome. We think, therefore, that institutions would be well advised to consider the possibility of employing blind instructors more extensively. Such instructors might be recruited from the ranks of their own pupils, who might be trained as pupil teachers, it being important, of course, to select persons possessing skill in the crafts to be taught, and also teaching ability.

(4) ADEQUACY OF ACCOMMODATION.

121. Most industrial training establishments are connected with workshops, and form part of some general institution for the blind. The Board of Education are desirous of securing the separation of learners in training establishments from the workers in the shops. To satisfy these conditions it would be necessary to provide new places. In some centres there is already some shortage of accommodation, *e.g.*, at Manchester (Q. 4025) and Belfast (Q. 7462). On the other hand the accommodation at Birmingham (Q. 5079) appears to be adequate, and at Nottingham (Q. 7079) there are vacant places. Mr. Priestley (Q. 8295) took the view that as a whole there is not a deficiency of places for industrial training, and we consider that this view is probably correct.

This, however, is subject to a qualification arising from the shortage of workshop accommodation to which we shall refer later. If further workshop accommodation is ultimately provided, there will probably be an increased demand for technical training, in which cases the present training places may not be adequate. It is to be noted, moreover, that the problem takes a different form in England and in Scotland. Mr. Frew Bryden explained (Q. 9441) that in Scotland all who are trained are kept on for employment in the institution which provides the training, and; owing to the shortage of workshop accommodation, the Scotch institutions do not take in a number of pupils eligible for industrial training. In England, however, the institutions do not limit their training to such pupils only as they will subsequently be able to employ in their workshops, with the result that the majority of persons are able to get training but many are turned adrift after training, owing to the lack of workshop accommodation.

We find that there is probably no sufficient accommodation available for the training of those who go blind in later life. This may not be due so much to any actual want of accommodation as to a disinclination on the part of institutions to undertake responsibility in cases of this sort. We shall refer further to this in paragraph 128 below.

122. While there is some conflict of evidence, the Committee have come to the conclusion that, apart from local variations, there is not any considerable shortage of accommodation for

industrial training in Great Britain for those between 16 and 25. The problem in any case is not one which could or should require a solution apart from the general question of the provision of more workshops for employment.

(5) FINANCIAL PROVISIONS.

123. The necessity of providing further training for a period of three or four years after 16, and the general adequacy of the existing accommodation being established, we have to consider how far the present arrangements are sufficient to enable blind persons actually to avail themselves of the training provided in the institutions. The provisions set out in paragraphs 106-108, as regards the powers of the central authorities to make grants, and the local education authorities to supply or aid the supply of education after 16 apply, of course, to industrial as well as professional training.

Several institutions, *e.g.*, the Midland Institution, Nottingham, Henshaw's, the Royal Institution at Bradford and others, receive the Government grant in respect of the industrial training given, the classes being recognised by the Board of Education under the Regulations for Technical Schools. The grant is 3*l.* a head. It is not clear, however, that all who might avail themselves of this assistance have in fact taken steps to secure it.

124. The other sources of assistance from public funds are the payments which local education authorities and boards of guardians have power to make. We shall examine a few cases in detail, having regard to the cost of training and the financial position of some of the institutions concerned.

At Henshaw's Asylum, Manchester (Q. 3986), the cost per head of pupils receiving industrial training is 50*l.* per annum. The fee charged for pupils over 16 is 36*l.*; and 36 boards of guardians and 44 education authorities pay this fee for their pupils. After allowing for the Government grant of 3*l.*, there is still a deficit of 11*l.* a head to be met out of the funds of the institution; and there are 80 pupils in the technical school. The accounts of the institution show a considerable deficit. Mr. Illingworth indicated that boards of guardians were generally willing to pay the fee, and so were local educational authorities in many cases.

At the Royal Institution, Birmingham (Q. 4860), the cost per head of residential pupils is 51*l.* The fees charged are 30*l.*, and the public authorities are found willing to pay the fee. The accounts of the institution show a deficit.

At Leatherhead (Q. 6344) the cost is 46*l.* per head. Paying pupils are paid for at the rate of 30*l.*, there being 150 free pupils on the foundation. It was stated that the annual expenditure of the institution is 13,000*l.*, and the income on which they can rely is 10,000*l.*

At Nottingham, where there are 76 pupils on the average under training, Mr. Pine considered that the cost per head (Q. 7032) was between 40*l.* and 50*l.* The fee charged is 30*l.* Mr. Pine explained that he found local education authorities generally willing to do something in these cases, but they agree to pay for instruction for short periods only, which are extended from time to time, and this makes it impossible to lay out a course of instruction satisfactorily (Q. 7018). In some cases local education authorities had raised the question whether it was worth while to provide training, having regard to the insufficient opportunities for employment (Q. 6961).

In the foregoing cases it will be noted that a considerable part of the cost of industrial training has to be met out of the funds of the institution, which, of course, are obtained largely by constant appeals to private benevolence.

In Bradford, however, the city council, the guardians, and the Institution for the Blind have co-operated and produced a very complete system for the care of the blind in the city. The Education Committee (Q. 8215) reimburse the institution for practically the whole cost of technical training. The institution (Q. 8029) are dependent on charity to the extent of 500*l.* per annum only, but their position is due to the exceptional assistance given by public funds.

Mr. Stainsby (Q. 6667) informed the Committee that he had experienced difficulty with local education authorities in these cases.

125. In Scotland, we find that the Edinburgh Institution has no difficulty (Q. 5859) in getting bursaries from Secondary Education Committees, and the parish councils are inclined to be generous (Q. 5632).

The Glasgow Corporation (Q. 6023) grant 100*l.* a year for technical instruction, there is a Government grant of 2*l.* a head for such instruction, and Mr. Stoddart (Q. 8873) indicated that the parish councils are liberal in these cases. Nevertheless, the accounts of the Glasgow Institution for the year 1914 showed that in respect of industrial training there was a deficit of 775*l.* to be met from the general funds of the institution.

Mr. MacDonald (Q. 9496) did not find quite the same readiness on the part of the Poor Law authorities at Dundee to provide industrial training.

In Ireland, Mr. Hewitt (Q. 7575) explained that the Belfast institution received no grants from the Technical Instruction Department. Some boards of guardians are generous, but not apparently to the Belfast institution (Q. 7513). The evidence from the Richmond institution in Dublin (Q. 7784) indicated that the guardians required some pressure before they would assist.

* Note.—See footnote on page 25.

126. The foregoing examples, we think, fairly indicate the position generally. We have had the accounts of a large number of institutions under our notice, and in almost every case there is an adverse balance; in many cases the adverse balance is considerable. These institutions provide industrial training costing 40*l.*-50*l.* per head per annum; but in every case, after allowing for the Government grant and the fees paid by local education authorities or boards of guardians, there is a deficit of 10*l.** or more per head to be made up out of the voluntary funds of the institution. It is clear from what has been said that the institutions are not financially in a position which justifies their being called upon to bear this burden. There is no evidence that there is any general tendency for voluntary subscriptions to increase. In several cases the tendency has been reported to be in the reverse direction. It is noteworthy that at Leatherhead (Q. 6150) subscriptions are stimulated by elections, with the result that a few eligible pupils have to wait for admission (Q. 6162).

127. There is ample evidence that in many cases the local education authorities and boards of guardians act sympathetically. There is no doubt, however, that in a number of instances public authorities agree to provide for the training of the blind only after pressure has been brought to bear. We have had evidence (Q. 3378) that the necessity of bringing pressure to bear on boards of guardians causes delay before the child can begin its industrial training. The fees paid, moreover, do not provide for the whole cost of training, and if the local education authority or the guardians desire to refuse entirely it is within their discretion to do so.

We feel that it will be generally agreed that this position is altogether unsatisfactory. The remedy strongly advocated by many witnesses was to make the exercise of the powers contained in Part II. of the Education Act, 1902, obligatory upon local education authorities. It may be mentioned that in the United States of America the State provides education up to the age of 18 or 20 as may be necessary (Q. 1058). There is no sharp division at the age of 16, and the State continues to train the pupil until fit to go out into the world.

The proposal to make the provision of Part II. of the Education Act, 1902, compulsory may be the ultimate solution of the difficulty in this country. But we do not recommend immediate recourse to this measure. It has been pointed out that local education authorities would probably be more willing to provide the funds necessary for industrial training if the prospect of subsequent employment were made clearer. We shall be able to show in the next section of our report that at present the prospect of employment for blind workers is by no means encouraging, and in the circumstances it is not difficult to understand the occasional reluctance of the authorities to provide training. It appears to the Committee that further obligations should not be placed upon local education authorities until the question of employment and the provision of workshops is also taken in hand, and until the relationship of Exchequer grants to local rate contributions has been placed on a more equitable basis.

128. Before leaving the question of facilities we desire to draw attention to a particular class of case which presents considerable difficulty, *i.e.*, the case of a person going blind in later life. Such a man may have a family and considerable domestic responsibilities; but for a period of three or four years he must undergo training and for that period must necessarily be earning nothing. The support of his dependents involves a considerable problem. Mr. Mullins (Q. 8476) said that he was constantly coming across such cases, and emphasised the acute need of funds to make provision for them. It appears that there is some shortage of accommodation for the training of such persons (Qs. 4063, 6925 and 7566); and the explanation may be found in Mr. Purse's remark (Q. 12,016) that institutions are reluctant to undertake the responsibilities implied in undertaking the training in such cases.

It is clear that some special financial assistance should be provided to meet these cases.

(6) ASSOCIATION WITH WORKSHOPS.

129. We have already referred to the desire of the Board of Education that pupils at 16 should receive technical education on strictly educational lines, and separated from the artisans in the workshop (Q. 381). The desirability of keeping youths of 16 to 20 separate from adult journeymen will at once be recognised. A further point to be noted is the desirability of avoiding too great a break at the age of 16. Dr. Eichholz (Q. 542) laid stress on the advantages of the pupil receiving technical training in the same institution in which he received his elementary education; the continuity of environment has beneficial results. The same view was expressed by Miss Beasley with regard to the training of girls (Q. 3453).

On the other hand, we have had evidence that there is some danger in separating technical training too strictly from the workshop (Qs. 11,998-12,008). It must be borne in mind that there is in some cases a chance that the method taught may be divorced from methods needed in actual practice. Mr. Mullins explained (Q. 8688) that training should be in close association with actual workshop methods. Mr. Walker (Q. 2619) went so far as to say that the workshop is the right place for training. Attention should be drawn to the system adopted at Birmingham (Q. 4901) where the pupils and workpeople are in the same room but separated by a screen.

* Note.—Since evidence was taken the grant payable by the Board of Education has been increased from 3*l.* to 7*l.* per head. The deficit of 10*l.* should therefore be reduced to 6*l.* in the case of England and Wales.

130. On the whole, we are disposed to think that the course to be aimed at is that outlined by Mr. Priestley in evidence (Qs. 8223-227); pupils should be separated entirely from the men working in the workshops; but their training should be under the same management and supervision as the workshop—whereby the actual conditions of employment would be kept constantly in view in the training given.

The Committee do not in the least desire to suggest that the industrial training of the blind should be unaccompanied by the benefits of general education or conducted on purely materialistic lines; but in the case of the blind, it is essential to give that intensive training which will ensure that the pupil shall become an efficient wage earner.

In this connection we note the suggestion made by Mr. Purse (Q. 12,005) that there should be some central authority responsible for methods of instruction. Mr. Purse also expressed the view that (Q. 12,774) the improved technical instruction now given is producing a better type of workman, and that in a large measure the Elementary Education Act, 1893, laid the foundation for this.

(7) RESIDENCE OF PUPILS.

131. We have already indicated the advantages of the residential system for children receiving elementary education. Many of the considerations arising in that connection, however, will not apply to the case of pupils over 16. We desire here only to recommend for careful consideration the system adopted at Nottingham (Qs. 6909-6923), where pupils are boarded out with foster mothers, under the partial supervision of the institution, but are to a large extent free from the ordinary institutional restrictions. Pupils are found to have gained self-reliance and independence in this manner, and the system has proved in many ways advantageous. At Edinburgh, the apprentices live in approved lodgings; and two witnesses—Mr. Priestley (Q. 8174) and Miss Garaway (Q. 2382)—recommended hostels for pupils over 16.

We think that some such system for pupils who have passed the elementary school age is probably better than strict confinement within an institution. It is, of course, essential that scrupulous care should be taken in providing all due safeguards in such a system.

(8) AFTER-CARE.

132. Having dealt with this subject at some length in paragraphs 82-86, we shall draw attention to one point only here; and that is that when industrial training has been given the next step in after-care is to secure employment. In Scotland, as already explained (paragraph 121), the training institutions make a practice of keeping on in their workshops the persons they have trained (Qs. 5890-5835), and only train such numbers as they can keep in this way.

But in English institutions many more are trained than can be given employment subsequently in the workshops. This is the case at Manchester (Q. 4204), Birmingham (Qs. 4789-798), and Nottingham (Q. 6956) among others.

In both cases the problem turns on the provision of workshop accommodation. A small proportion of blind persons will, of course, be able to work in their own homes, and their supervision will also form part of the necessary after-care work.

We shall proceed to deal with the question of workshops and employment generally in the next section.

Section VII.—Workshops.

I. AMOUNT OF ACCOMMODATION AND FINANCE OF INSTITUTIONS.

133. In paragraphs 32-39 we have collected the statistics available as to the number of persons capable of training and employment, but unemployed. The data available are by no means exact in the case of England and Wales, but point to an estimate of about 3,000. In Ireland the evidence indicates that the number would be about 300. In the case of Scotland a much more precise figure was obtainable through the very complete organisation of the Missions to the Outdoor Blind, which returned 392 men and 241 women as coming within the categories above mentioned. It would appear, therefore, that in the United Kingdom there are between three and four thousand blind and partially blind persons who are capable of being trained or employed, but are unemployed or in precarious employment. Mr. Stainsby (Q. 6814) estimated that 72 per cent. of employable blind persons were unemployed.

Though exact figures are not available, the detailed evidence which we have taken proves beyond question that the lack of workshop accommodation is widespread and acute. It will be seen from the evidence that almost every institution has a waiting list. Practically every witness testified to the urgent need of further workshops, and great majority urged that this is the crux of the problem of the blind in the United Kingdom.

134. Educational authorities in their evidence expressed far less concern for the difficulties in training the blind than for the difficulty of finding remunerative employment for the pupils trained. This was strongly emphasised by Sir Robert Blair (Qs. 139 and 225) and

Dr. Eichholz (Q. 440); and Miss Beasley (Q. 3381), of the After Care Association, said of the shortage of workshops in London: "We are met all the time by that difficulty."

135. Turning to the evidence from the institutions, we note that according to the information recently published by Gardner's Trust for the Blind, there are in England and Wales 56 workshops; in Scotland, 7; and in Ireland, 2, together with seven institutions where the employed are not journeymen out-workers, but inmates. The total number of persons employed is a little over 2,800. We have examined a number of witnesses from these industrial establishments, and find that the workshop accommodation is in practically all cases insufficient to meet the demands made on it.

In Manchester (Q. 4083) the accommodation at Henshaw's Asylum is not one-third of what is required; and Mr. Illingworth expressed the view that, over the whole country, more than one half of the persons trained cannot get employment in workshops. Henshaw's Asylum are building new workshops for brush-making (Q. 4097) on their own land. We note, however, that in 1915 the total deficit on all accounts in this institution was 3,181l.

At Birmingham (Q. 4851), the Royal Institution provides for people from Birmingham and the district; but in the year 1914 (Q. 4926) 27 cases of persons outside Birmingham had accumulated on the waiting list. The institution is anxious to build further shops, but is prevented by financial reasons.

At Hanley (Q. 5261), more accommodation is needed, but the establishment has a deficit of 500l. (Q. 5280).

In London, the shortage of accommodation is particularly serious. Mr. St. Clare Hill (Qs. 6358-63) explained that the Waterloo Road workshops are not able to take more than a small proportion of the pupils trained at Leatherhead, and many have to be sent to other parts of the country. Mr. Mullins (Qs. 8641-45) suggested that there are probably 2,000 blind persons in London capable of employment, and there is workshop accommodation for 250. When it is realised that the annual deficit on the Waterloo Road factory is 800l.-1,000l. per annum (Q. 6320), and that the trading account of the Tottenham Court Road workshops shows a deficit of 738l., it will be appreciated that these institutions are not financially in a position to extend so as to meet the deficiency of workshop accommodation.

The witnesses mentioned, and Mr. Stainsby (Q. 6612) agreed, that one of the first steps in the solution of the problem must be the amalgamation of the various workshops in London, or the placing of them under a central control (Qs. 6249-62). There are clearly considerable difficulties in the way of this, and an effort already made in this direction has not been wholly successful. We are satisfied, however, that further efforts should be made. It has also been brought to the notice of the Committee that the blind in London are in some ways less well provided for than in the provinces, one of the chief reasons being that in the provinces they seem to be kept more prominently before the notice of the public.

At Bradford, the institution is just able to pay its way (Q. 8026), which is due partly to the great support received from public funds in Bradford. Employment in the workshops is limited to persons from Bradford and the district, but the institution receives almost weekly applications (Q. 8038) from persons elsewhere. Mr. Priestley (Q. 8044) considered that there was a need for further workshops in every county throughout the country. He estimated that the workshop accommodation should be increased to 7,500 places, and that, as a first step to this end, the present workshops should be extended to employ as many again as at present. Financial assistance would, of course, be imperative to enable the existing institutions to do this (Q. 8196).

136. In Scotland the position is similar. Mr. Stoddart (Q. 8817) and Mr. Frew Bryden (Q. 9372) thought that the present accommodation should be doubled. The statistics furnished by the out-door missions (Appendix to Evidence, page 461) show that there are 633 blind persons capable of training and employment, but not in institutions; and a large proportion of these are unemployed because there are no openings in workshops. The institutions in Scotland do not appear to be any better able financially to meet the requisite extensions than do those in England. Their accounts generally show a deficit. The Glasgow Institution is one of the largest—their subscriptions in 1914 amounted to 3,902l., grants 885l., fees, &c. 1,652l., investments and bequests 827l., and trading profits 572l.—which, however, would have disappeared (Q. 8844) if the institution had had to pay any rent for their workshop. The income of the institution, however, fell short of the expenditure by 2,903l.

137. In Ireland, the Belfast Institution, which has a deficit of 1,200l. (Q. 7458), has knowledge of 60 capable persons who cannot be accommodated, because the workshops are inadequate, and the institution has neither funds nor trade enough to secure an extension of the workshops. It was reported to us (Q. 7833) that the workshop accommodation in Dublin was adequate.

Mr. Purse (Q. 12,763) pointed out that apart from the Richmond Institute, in Dublin, and the workshops at Royal Avenue, Belfast, there are no outdoor workshops in Ireland; and that men go out and beg in the streets rather than remain in the institutions. Objection was strongly urged to the monastic life (Q. 12,169) which is imposed upon so many blind persons in Ireland by the purely residential system which is prevalent. The National League for the Blind insisted (Q. 12,186) on the need of wage-paying workshops, to which the blind can come as ordinary journeymen and live the life of the ordinary citizen.

138. We should add that, pursuant to the suggestion made in evidence (Q. 8923), Dr. Andrew Fuller, of the Local Government Board, made some special inquiries with regard to blind persons now receiving poor relief in England. He visited 13 large centres, covering 24 unions. Dr. Fuller reported that there appeared to be 32 persons who would profit by further training, 34 trained but unemployed, and 81 untrained but who could profitably be trained.

These figures indicate that in these areas there is not an inconsiderable number of persons who could become partially self-supporting if there were workshop facilities for their training and employment.

139. We have come clearly to the conclusion that the workshop accommodation in the United Kingdom should at least be doubled, there being, approximately, 3,000 persons in workshops at present (paragraph 28), while our estimate of blind persons capable of training and employment, but receiving neither, is something over 3,000. The existing institutions are not financially capable of undertaking the necessary extension; but the first step towards providing the additional accommodation would undoubtedly be best secured by the extension of the present large workshops.

We have made detailed inquiries from the heads of the largest institutions as to the probable cost per place of providing additional accommodation. The estimates, of course, vary a good deal according to the locality, and by reason of the fact that some institutions fortunately possess freehold land on which the necessary extensions could be made. But the figures returned from the English institutions and from Belfast indicate that on the average the cost of providing new workshop accommodation, including site, building, and equipment, would not be less than 100l. per place—and would in all probability exceed that figure by 15l. or 20l.

In Scotland, through the good offices of Mr. Stoddart, the heads of all the large institutions met and considered these questions; and the conclusions arrived at were (1) that the number of additional workshop places required in Scotland is 400, (2) the approximate cost per place of providing additional accommodation would be 150l. The Edinburgh Institution estimated the cost of provision to be 175l. per place.

(2) MARKET VALUE OF GOODS; GOVERNMENT PREFERENCE.

140. In a return which was secured from practically all the institutions in the United Kingdom, the Committee inquired as to the market value of goods made by the blind. The replies pointed to an almost unanimous opinion that goods made by the blind can rarely—if ever—be put on the market at such a price as will secure a profitable sale under ordinary conditions of business competition. Goods made by the blind are equal in quality to the work of sighted labour, but the cost of production is so high that there is almost invariably a loss on the sale.

The witnesses examined have confirmed this. In some cases there is apparently considerable difficulty in obtaining any market for the goods produced. Evidence to this effect was given in regard to London (Qs. 6321 and 6623), Dublin (Q. 7802), and Dundee (Q. 9569). On the other hand, many witnesses have indicated that they have a market, though not a profitable one. In Lancashire (Q. 4115) there is not much difficulty; and in Birmingham and district (Q. 4791) a market is found with the local authorities. In Glasgow (Q. 6089) the Royal Asylum have been for many years successful in finding a market. The Belfast workshops (Q. 7504) find a sufficient market for their present output, but could employ more men if they could secure more trade.

141. We have come to the conclusion that generally there is not a serious difficulty in disposing of the goods made by the blind. But it is usually found impossible to dispose of them at a profit. Having regard to the financial position of most of the institutions for the blind, it will be recognised that the difficulty of securing a profitable market is particularly serious and urgently requires a solution.

A large proportion of the goods made by the blind are articles which are required by local authorities and by the Government (Q. 6940). We have had under our notice one or two instances of institutions supplying local authorities—but obtaining their contracts in open competition. A number of institutions have had Government contracts. The Government (Q. 6447) gave these contracts to the blind at the average price of accepted tenders. The National Committee for the Employment of the Blind have endeavoured to secure that such contracts shall be given to the blind at the highest price of accepted tenders. Mr. Pine, however, doubts whether this would in fact help materially (Q. 6945). With the exception of a Government contract executed locally at Glasgow (Q. 8789), we did not hear from any witness of any institution making a profit on a Government contract.

It has been urged upon the Committee by several witnesses (Qs. 4805, 6328, 6937-46, 8136, and 8519) that the position would be considerably improved if the Government and municipal authorities would give a definite preference to blind institutions in the purchase of certain classes of goods. It was, however, appreciated that it might be undesirable for

blind institutions to have an absolute monopoly which would remove the stimulus of competition. In any event the price to be paid by Government under such an arrangement would not be easy to adjust, and it was suggested (Q. 6942) that a sub-department of the Government might undertake this work among other duties in the interests of the blind.

142. It was recognised by the advocates of these proposals that any system of preference would probably involve a non-commercial price, but the additional cost to the State would be very small, and would probably be recouped by the saving on grants and poor-rate (Q. 8138). Representatives of institutions also recognised and agreed that Government control and standardisation of production would necessarily follow if the Government gave a preference to goods made by the blind. It is interesting to observe in this connection that in Ohio, U.S.A. (Q. 1087), the Board of Administration has agreed to buy all brooms from the workshops for the blind. We consider that the possibility of reserving certain contracts for the blind should receive the sympathetic consideration of the Government. We do not think it desirable to specify the precise form in which the preference should be given, as the matter must obviously be examined in detail by the spending departments concerned.

143. We may observe here that we have examined witnesses on the question whether the competition of prison-made goods was felt to any serious extent by the institutions for the blind. In England and Wales there appears to be practically no complaint on this ground, and in the case of Scotland we were not able to get evidence of any definite instance (Q. 9560) where such competition was felt. The workshops for the blind in Belfast (Q. 7588) gave up mat-making because of the competition of prison-made goods, but it was admitted that the industry was not a profitable one. The Committee have come to the conclusion that there is not now any general ground for complaint as regards the competition of articles made in prisons.

(3) WAGES.

144. Closely allied to the problem of marketing the goods made by the blind is the question of the wages paid and earning capacity of the blind.

The value of the output of the blind worker is, in the first place, diminished by the cost of the sighted supervision which is absolutely essential. In the second place the blind worker is normally a slower worker than the sighted man. Mr. Purse (Qs. 12,024-027) expressed the view that the average industrial blind worker is not capable of attaining a speed of more than half that of a sighted worker. This view has been generally confirmed by other expert witnesses whom we have questioned on the subject. Mr. Stoddart (Q. 6085) put the wage of a set wage worker at one half that of a sighted worker and the wage of a piece-worker at two-thirds that of a sighted worker. The estimates of other witnesses varied from one-third to two-thirds. In very exceptional cases, of course, the earning capacity of a few individuals of peculiar skill in certain occupations may approximate more nearly to that of the sighted; but as a general rule it does not appear that it can be put higher than half that of a sighted worker.

145. The wages actually earned support this estimate. The National Committee for the Employment of the Blind collected statistics of the wages actually earned in a number of large institutions for the first week in March 1914; the men's wages averaged a little under 14s., the women's a little over 6s. (The wages in fact paid—as distinct from the amount earned—averaged 19s. and 10s. respectively.) Mr. Priestley of Bradford put the average value of the actual earnings of men at 10s. or 11s. a week (Q. 8066), and of women at 5s. a week (Q. 8065).

Sufficient has been said to make it quite obvious that the actual earnings of the blind worker must be augmented if he is to receive anything approaching a living wage. A number of institutions provide for this. At Leeds (Q. 3685) 25 per cent. is added to the earnings, and 780l. was spent in this way in one year from the funds of the Institution. At Manchester (Q. 4110) trade union rates of wages are paid plus 4s. a week compensation grant. The Institution has a minimum wage of 8s. a week for women (Q. 4168). At the Birmingham Institution trade union piece-work rates are paid with augmentation, which is a sum based on actual trade earnings recorded over a fixed period of six months.

At the Royal Midland Institution, Nottingham, basket makers earn 18s. to 20s. a week, and brush makers 15s. to 18s. (Qs. 7039-41). A graduated scale of augmentation is in operation, fixed by taking the average of wages earned for 12 months, and dealing with each case individually. Mr. Pine considered that the commercial value of women's labour is only 5s. to 7s. a week (Q. 7009). The average wage paid to men at Bradford is 17s. a week, and to women 8s. 6d. a week including augmentation. The principle of the system of augmentation is to give most to the worker engaged on work where the smallest earnings are possible (Q. 8074). The Institution aims at providing a minimum wage of 16s. for men and 10s. for women.

In London, the workshops at Tottenham Court Road have a special system of augmentation (Q. 8489). The actual earnings of a brush maker are estimated at 12s. a week, and this is augmented to 17s. 10d. The wages paid to basket makers are 21s. 5d. a week.

The Royal Institution at Edinburgh (Q. 5664) augment the wages of their workpeople to 22s. a week. At Glasgow (Qs. 8807-10) there are some skilled piece-workers getting 28s.

a week, and needing no augmentation. The usual rule of the Institution is that piece-workers receive the trade rate of the district (where applicable), and time-workers are paid the full market value of the goods or the nearest ascertainable rate for the work. A minimum wage of 23s. a week is in force, the difference between the amount earned and the wage paid being charged to the gratuity account.

We learned that at Dundee (Q. 9524) basket makers are able to earn 23s. to 25s. and need no augmentation.

In Belfast the basket maker's average wage is 19s. to 20s. a week (Q. 7702) and the brush maker's 15s. to 18s. The Institution gives augmentation according to the merits of each case. Wages are very low in Dublin (Q. 7793), and the average earnings of basket and brush makers do not amount to more than 8s. 6d. to 9s. 6d. a week. The Richmond Institution has no fund from which to augment these earnings; but all the workers obtain 5s. a week from the Poor Law Authorities (Q. 7796).

146. It will be observed that there is considerable difference in the wages obtainable in the several trades; basket making, for example, produces higher earnings than brush making, and brush making than mat making. Moreover, the wages obtainable in the same industry may vary according to the locality. We note, however, with satisfaction that institutions appear generally to adopt as a basis for the wage the trades-union rates in force in the district.

It will be seen that most institutions do their best to augment the earnings of the blind worker, and that there is considerable diversity in the systems adopted. It may be desirable to summarise briefly some of the chief methods of augmentation of wages and the objections that may be advanced in regard to them:—

(a) Augmentation graduated in inverse ratio to the earnings obtainable in the industry followed; e.g., 25 per cent. increase for brush makers and 15 per cent. for basket makers. Mr. Purse (Qs. 12,114-5) stated this system was the cause of continual friction in the workshop. It is, of course, obvious that this method of augmentation, while raising the small wage to a fairer level, none the less penalises proportionately the highly skilled basket maker.

(b) Augmentation in proportion to wages earned. This gives the efficient worker a proportionate reward, but penalises the good but slow worker, who, however conscientiously he may apply himself, can only earn a small wage.

(c) The adoption of a minimum wage. This system is unfortunately not free from the danger that cases of malingering may occur. We have had evidence of instances that have actually occurred (Qs. 4169, 5004, 8078 and 8846).

(d) Augmentation fixed at the discretion of the Institution authorities, according to the merits of each case.

This method, of course, has the advantage of considerable elasticity, but we appreciate that the variations of treatment that would arise through lack of uniformity among the institutions might cause discontent in the blind community generally.

(e) A fixed compensation grant conditional on good conduct, with trades-union rates of wages. This system would, perhaps, conduce to uniformity and would be free from the disadvantages of the proportional augmentation above mentioned. We have, however, heard some doubt expressed as to the desirability of giving a fixed grant purely as a compensation for blindness.

147. State aid in augmentation of wages is given in some other countries. In Sweden (Q. 926) an Act recently passed provides pensions for invalidity, including blindness, at the rate of 8l. 6s. per annum for men and 7l. 16s. for women. In the United States of America (Q. 1084) there is direct augmentation of wages by the State in two or three States, and practically all the workshops for the blind are State aided. In Australia (Q. 1349) a State pension of 10l. per year is provided for all blind persons over 16, provided that the income does not exceed 1l. a week. A witness represented to the Committee (Q. 1385) that this had an injurious effect upon young blind persons. The Government give the Sydney Industrial Institution 1l. for every 1l. collected from the public (Q. 1320).

148. It appears, however, that more might be done to increase the actual earning power of blind workpeople by the exercise of the greatest possible care in putting the worker to suitable and congenial work. Our attention has been drawn (Q. 12,803) to the system in force at Birmingham, where there is a periodic review of the pupils' work in order to test their suitability for various trades (Q. 5079).

149. The complement of this is to secure that the trained worker shall get the class of work which he can do well. The necessity for this was clearly brought out by Mr. St. Clare Hill (Q. 6248). An order was received at the Waterloo Road workshops which particularly suited

the capacities of the employees, and at trade union piece-work rates two men earned 3*l.* a week, three over 2*l.*, and five over 30*s.* a week. Such possibilities could, of course, be extended if measures could be adopted generally to classify both work and workers, and to secure that orders of the same kind should be repeated in the same shop, and the right class of work put into the hands of the right class of man. This leads to the immediate consideration of the need for systematic organisation between the workshops generally.

(4) THE QUESTION OF CENTRAL CONTROL.

150. We have no doubt from the evidence given (*e.g.*, *Qs.* 2655, 6103, 6260, and 7864) that the competition at present between the various institutions for the blind is severe and in many ways detrimental to the interests of the blind. The present competitive system militates against such an arrangement as has just been mentioned for securing a flow of suitable orders to the appropriate workers; it leads moreover to undercutting of prices; and there are often several societies for the blind competing for subscriptions in the same area—in Glasgow there are no fewer than six such organisations (*Q.* 6108). It will be obvious also that, if some co-ordination of the workshops were secured, it might be possible to arrange for combined purchases of raw material, which would no doubt assist the financial position of many of the institutions.

There is a considerable demand among the heads of institutions (*Qs.* 6076, 6942, and 8148) for the creation of some central authority to regulate the position. The Committee are satisfied that the smaller workshops should be amalgamated with or affiliated to the larger, and that there should be some central authority to control the whole system. The evidence has not led us to suppose that there would be any general opposition to this among the voluntary organisations for the blind. Government assistance is needed and would be welcomed, and a measure of Government control would, we think, be readily accepted (*Qs.* 6813, 8194).

151. We recommend, therefore, that some central authority should be entrusted with the duty of supervising generally the workshops for the blind. Among its duties would be to secure the affiliation of the smaller workshops, the regulation of relations between all institutions and organisations for the blind, the classification of work and workers, the combined purchase of materials, the placing of orders from Government Departments, the standardisation of work, and, in consultation with the Education Departments, the standardisation of training. We also consider that some method should be adopted—*e.g.*, a system of certification to secure that public subscriptions shall be directed towards the support of those institutions which are doing necessary work, and shall be diverted from those organisations which are unnecessary.

(5) LARGE AND SMALL WORKSHOPS; HOME INDUSTRIES.

152. To complete our observations in this connection, a brief reference is necessary to the subject of the utility of small workshops. The evidence has shown that expert witnesses are emphatically of opinion that small workshops are unsatisfactory. This view is taken by witnesses from Birmingham (*Q.* 4930), Glasgow (*Q.* 6103), London (*Q.* 6615), Belfast (*Q.* 7510), and Bradford (*Q.* 8142). It will be obvious that the cost of equipment, the purchase of raw material, and the cost of adequate supervision will be proportionately very expensive in a small workshop, with the result that goods are produced at an excessive cost, and under conditions that are not likely to conduce to a ready sale. The alternative is inefficient work, which we fear is not infrequently put on the market, and merely discredits the blind craftsman. Apart from these inherent objections to small workshops, it will be appreciated that they also divert a portion of charitable funds which could be better used elsewhere in large and more efficient workshops. We have no hesitation, therefore, in expressing the opinion that small workshops should, wherever possible, be amalgamated with or affiliated to the larger institutions. We realise that this may tend to draw the blind into large urban areas, but we feel that any disadvantage involved in this is not commensurate with the advantages of the scheme indicated.

153. On the question whether workshops or home industries are the better sphere for the blind workers, we think there is little doubt that for the large majority the workshop is the better. Mr. Illingworth stated (*Q.* 4313) that experience had proved that home industries produce only one-half to two-thirds of the wages earned in workshops. It appears to be the experience of many experts that the workshop is preferable, as a general rule, and that the blind should be encouraged to gravitate there.

It is, however, generally agreed that there is a place for home industries for the blind. There will always be a proportion of blind persons who by reason of other infirmities cannot work away from home; and this form of employment may often be found desirable for girls, who, in any case, appear to be unable to earn any considerable wage, even if they go to workshops. There will also be individual cases where the skill of the worker and the

particular circumstances of his surroundings make home industry a profitable and desirable form of livelihood. A more general system of after-care, however, appears essential if home industries for the blind are to be placed on a satisfactory footing. Such a system must provide for the purchase of materials, the supervision of work produced, and the marketing of the goods.

154. Mr. Pearson indicated (*Q.* 12,595) that the system of after-care started for blinded soldiers would be extended to all home workers. He has since reported to the Committee that this system for the after-care of blinded soldiers has now been well established. It is directed from a central depôt in London. The country is divided into districts in each of which is a travelling inspector, and the blinded soldiers settled in each district are provided with the plant and material for their home industries, which are regularly supervised by the inspectors. It is the hope of the National Institute that if this system is extended to the general blind home worker it will secure the co-operation of the local institutions, which, it is felt, would most effectively care for the scattered blind home workers in the districts of which the institutions are the centre. We think that the State should assist in developing the after-care system on these lines.

Before leaving this point we desire to draw attention to the evidence of Mr. Frew Bryden (*Q.* 9383), which indicated that apart from such occupations as mat-making, brush-making, cobbling, knitting, &c., a number of blind persons get a living as small traders, by hawking, &c., and the Scotch Mission to the Outdoor Blind assists such industries.

(6) GENERAL.

156. It may be convenient to summarise here the salient points in regard to the workshops:—

(a) There is a very serious shortage of accommodation. The deficiency should be made up, in the first instance, by the extension of the existing workshops. New workshops will ultimately be necessary also. It is questionable whether sufficient charitable funds will be forthcoming for the purpose.

(b) A Government Department should be entrusted with the control of blind institutions generally, to secure some preference for the work of the blind in Government contracts, to prevent overlapping and competition between organisations for the blind, and to standardise the work produced. We consider that Government intervention, if directed mainly to the securing of administrative efficiency, would not affect prejudicially the flow of charitable funds for the blind.

(c) A system of certification of institutions might be introduced, and Government grants made for the assistance of certified institutions, in which case schemes should be established whereby a minimum wage would be secured.

(d) The Government Department should supervise *inter alia* the system of after-care, especially for persons following home industries, and should also co-ordinate generally the activities of the various organisations for the blind.

Section VIII.—Miscellaneous Organisations.

157. The foregoing sections of our Report have indicated the field covered by the Institutions for the Blind, in the provision of training and employment. There are several large institutions which provide for elementary education, industrial or professional training and employment in workshops. These institutions undoubtedly play the principal part in the provision for the blind.

We propose now to turn to some of the other important organisations which provide for the welfare of the blind, mainly outside institutions.

(1) THE SCOTTISH MISSIONS.

158. The evidence on this subject will be found in Minutes of Evidence, *Qs.* 9289-478, and Appendix, pages 461-62. There are in Scotland ten Missions for the Out-door Blind, having for their object the care of the blind who are outside institutions. The whole of Scotland has been mapped out and is covered by these societies without overlapping. They have 3,535 persons in all on their rolls, and their income is over 8,000*l.* per annum. Some of the societies have considerable libraries, the total number of volumes being 21,000.

159. The Committee heard evidence in regard to the Glasgow Out-door Mission, which is the largest of the societies, and may be taken as typical of the others. Visitors from the mission go round the district to teach the blind to read, and to secure assistance for them. Books are sent free by the mission from their own library, and small pensions (8s. to 10s. a month) are paid in some cases. Capable blind persons are put into touch with the institutions, and we had evidence from Mr. Stoddart (Q. 8770) and Mr. MacDonald (Q. 9513) indicating that the missions co-operate harmoniously with the institutions. The Glasgow Mission also spends some of its income in assisting blind persons to set up small trading industries of their own (Qs. 9383-85).

Mr. Frew Bryden (Q. 9328) stated that the funds available from voluntary sources were not adequate. It appears, moreover, from the returns that there is a deficit in the case of most of the societies.

The societies hold an annual conference in order to secure cohesion and solidarity in their work (Q. 9361).

160. There can be no doubt as to the value of the excellent work done by these societies, and we desire to draw particular attention to the manner in which the areas have been mapped out, and the arrangements made for annual conferences, so that the whole of Scotland is covered by the Out-door Missions without overlapping. The thoroughness with which the care of the blind is organised in Scotland is deserving of special notice. The work, however, appears to be hampered by lack of funds, and some form of Government assistance might very properly be given.

(2) THE ENGLISH UNIONS.

161. As explained in Evidence (Qs. 9680-863) an attempt has been made to reproduce the idea of the Scottish Out-door Missions in England and Wales, where seven unions of the blind have been established. The whole of England and Wales is divided into areas, which are groups of counties. The object of the unions is to bring within the reach of the blind the particular help suited to the needs of the case. They are organising bodies and have practically no funds for distribution. The large institutions for the blind appear to work well with the unions (Q. 9701).

The unions work by counties, *i.e.*, they aim at having a committee for each county. The counties in turn are sometimes split up into divisions, which have visitors working in each parish; or the county may be worked by a strong central committee and a paid visitor; the county of Oxford, for example, employs a paid blind teacher.

We find that the unions are by no means fully organised yet. In the Midland Union, which has been in existence for seven years, there are some counties which are still only partly organised (Q. 9698); and we understand that this is due largely to lack of funds. The Northern is apparently more completely organised, but the Eastern Counties Union is still not completely organised (Q. 9799).

162. These societies assist the blind by visiting, providing books, teaching to read, and securing suitable help in individual cases. We had evidence from a pension society (Q. 11,567) that some of their best cases were brought to them by the unions. In the county of Oxford, 50 blind persons have been taught to read in seven years. The unions do not teach home industries to any considerable extent.

Registration and after-care, however, receive particular attention (Q. 9810), so that the unions may not lose sight of persons migrating from one county to another. As there is a union of unions to co-ordinate the work of the seven unions, and these seven unions in turn are designed to cover county areas and smaller divisions within the county, there appears to be here a good scheme of organisation for assisting the blind outside institutions.

It is clear, however, that the development of the organisation is far from complete, and has been retarded partly from lack of funds, and partly because the work is dependent to a great extent upon securing the services of suitable voluntary workers. If a Government Department is set up, it might assist financially and administratively to strengthen and complete the valuable organisation provided by the unions.

(3) THE HOME TEACHING SOCIETIES.

163. The work of the Home Teaching Societies is somewhat similar to that of the unions. These societies, however, are not organised by counties, but appear to be mostly isolated and unattached bodies. Their chief object is to teach the blind to read and to place literature within their reach. But it is noteworthy that in the last five years 595 persons have been assisted by these societies in securing pensions (Q. 9945).

The secretary of the London Home Teaching Society said that there are 56 Home Teaching Societies, through whose agency over 8,000 blind persons are visited annually. The Committee gathered that the visiting in outlying areas is still defective (Q. 9929).

164. We took evidence from Miss Ainsworth Gilbert, the secretary of the London Home Teaching Society (Qs. 9864-10,104). This is the largest of the Home Teaching Societies, and its area is London and district. For three years the London society has visited 2,000 blind persons regularly—usually once a fortnight. They do not teach industries, but teach the blind

to read. The society has a library of 8,400 volumes which are lent free, there being 15 paid blind visitors who take the books to the readers.

The London Home Teaching Society co-operates with the Metropolitan Union; it has representatives on the case committee of the union, which in turn avails itself of the services of some of the Home Teaching Societies' representatives in various parts of the metropolitan area. Some overlapping, however, admittedly occurs between these organisations, and also between the Home Teaching Society and the National Library. Miss Gilbert expressed the view that more scientific collaboration was possible between these bodies, and that overlapping and possible waste of money could be more completely avoided. The witness expressed the hope (Qs. 9933-41) that the Government would undertake to co-ordinate and direct voluntary effort: it was suggested that Government intervention would be acceptable in most cases, and would not dry up the sources of voluntary effort.

The Committee have no doubt that the Home Teaching Societies are playing a useful part in the care of the blind; but they agree with views indicated above as to the necessity for co-ordination and direction by some central authority.

(4) LIBRARIES FOR THE BLIND.

165. The Committee took evidence from Miss Austin (Qs. 10,105-325) on the subject of libraries for the blind generally, and the National Library for the Blind.

The National Library for the Blind is the largest and most important library for the blind. It contains 21,000 volumes, of which 1,200-1,500 are in Moon type, and it has 4,000 pieces of music. The circulation is 250 volumes a day. The library has 6,000 readers, 1,190 being direct readers, and 70 institutions and 66 public libraries subscribing. The library adds annually to its stock 1,700 volumes and 150 pieces of music. 250 volumes a year are obtained from printing houses; but the library has 500 voluntary writers who transcribe books into Braille, after having received the special training which is essential for this work. There are also some paid blind writers who earn a few shillings weekly at the work.

The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust has given the National Library funds for a new building; and the library is now properly housed. Moreover, since evidence was given before us, we have been informed that the library has been made free to every blind person.

We understand that the contents of the library have recently been greatly increased by the action of the National Institute for the Blind, which has decided to hand over to the National Library the 8,400 volumes which now form the library of the London Home Teaching Society. The National Institute has also agreed to make to the National Library an annual gift of a number of copies of books published by the Institute—it being estimated that this gift will amount to over 5,000 volumes annually. In the same way the Royal Blind Asylum and School, Edinburgh, is presenting several copies of each book published by that institution.

166. There are five libraries which are specially large: the London Home Teaching Society, for example, has a library of 8,400 volumes; the Glasgow Mission to the Outdoor Blind, the Northern Counties Blind Asylum, North Shields, and the Manchester and Salford Blind Aid Society, all have over 5,000 volumes; and the Northern Counties Institute at Inverness has nearly 4,000 volumes.

There are four libraries of special value, *viz.*, at Oxford, the Royal Normal College at Upper Norwood, West Craigmillar, and the Catholic Truth Society. These libraries are noteworthy as containing rare books and books mainly required by students.

There are 68 minor libraries for the blind, and they are largely subsidiary departments of various Institutions and Societies. Their stocks vary from 200 to 5,000 volumes. It should be noted that a book will average four to five volumes in Braille type.

167. The distribution of books among the blind is clearly not free from difficulty. Much is done, as already indicated, by the Home Teaching Societies; and there are 70 institutions which subscribe to the National Lending Library. Public Libraries also assist in distribution and the movement is growing. In 1906 five public libraries subscribed to the National Library; in 1915 the number was 66. Eighteen out of 50 public libraries in London subscribe; but we understood from the Secretary of the London Home Teaching Society (Q. 10,049) that of 1,428 readers questioned, only 225 said that they could go to the public libraries and get books. This, of course, may be largely a question of co-operation. Miss Austin said (Q. 10,253) that public library work was very well done in all cases where there was co-operation with the local blind society.

It is clearly desirable that the blind reader should be able to obtain books from the public libraries like any other ratepayer. But it is useless for a public library to undertake the supply if it aims merely at doing this cheaply by providing only a few books. It is suggested that the best plan is for public libraries to subscribe to a central library, whereby they can secure a variety in the supply of books without overtaxing the accommodation available; for it must be borne in mind that the bulkiness of Braille volumes makes the question of space an important consideration.

The policy of the National Library has been to prevail on public libraries to obtain books on loan from that centre when there is any sufficient demand; but where the readers are few, they can better be supplied direct by the National Library.

168. The ideal suggested by the secretary of the National Library, and also by the secretary of the London Home Teaching Society (Q. 10,011), is that there should be a National Free Library, distributing through home teaching societies, public libraries, and other agencies. Since this evidence was given, the ideal has been partly realised in that the National Library has now been made free to all blind readers.

We concur in the view that a central free library distributing in the manner suggested above is the best organisation; and, having regard to the immense value of a national free library for the blind, and urgent need for developing such an organisation, we consider that a State subsidy is desirable.

We understand that the charges for postage of Braille literature are regarded generally as reasonable.

169. The question of organisation arises, not only in connection with the distribution of books, but also the production. There has been some overlapping resulting in the unnecessary duplication of books, but this has now been reduced by the federation (Q. 10,216) of some of the principal libraries, and the production of the Union Catalogue. But centralisation in one national library, as outlined above, would, of course, still further reduce the danger of overlapping.

We find that the actual production of printed books is now greatly improved, and the adequacy of the supply was not the subject of complaint by the National Library. There is, however, clearly a demand for more school books, to which we drew attention in paragraphs 69, 70 and 105 of this Report. Hand-written books will still be required for the supply of rare works, and we have noted that hand-written books last longer than the printed, and are preferred by many beginning to learn to read. Similarly, books in Moon type will always be necessary for certain classes of readers whose touch is not sufficiently sensitive for Braille. This point was emphasised by several witnesses, and we regret to find that, on the average, apparently only one book in Moon type is produced for 50 in Braille. Books in Moon type are, therefore, deficient in quantity and quality. They must be produced by machinery, and we understand that the National Institute for the Blind is undertaking the production of such books.

170. As already indicated, the National Institute is undertaking the production of books and music on a very large scale. In view of this and of the fact that the institute is fully apprised of the directions in which deficiencies have been pointed out, we do not consider it necessary to make any recommendation on this point.

The question of organisation generally has again been brought prominently before the Committee, and we are of opinion that greater co-operation is necessary to prevent the possibility of overlapping in the production of particular works, and to secure a more thorough system of distribution. We consider that the idea of a central free library previously outlined offers a satisfactory solution.

(5) THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

171. The admirable work of this Institution in many directions has already been touched upon in our Report; in particular we allude to the production of books and music, and the provision made for musicians generally in the use of the Armitage Hall. The equipment and varied activities of the Institute are dealt with in Mr. Stainsby's evidence (Qs. 6548-588). It controls the London Home Teaching Society, the Moon Society (Brighton) and the Massage Institution (London). The National Institute has also been closely associated with the care of the blinded soldiers and sailors, with which we deal in Section XII. of this Report.

(6) GARDNER'S TRUST FOR THE BLIND.

172. This is another organisation which is the centre of much valuable work for the benefit of the blind. Founded in 1879, it administers the income derived from 300,000*l.*, a legacy left by the late Mr. Henry Gardner. The fund is applied as follows:—

- (1) Two-ninths in instructing the blind in the profession of music.
- (2) Two-ninths in instructing the blind in suitable trades, handicrafts and professions other than the profession of music.
- (3) Two other of such nine equal parts in providing pensions.
- (4) The remaining three of such nine equal parts in such manner as the Committee think best for the benefit of the blind.

Scholarships amounting to over 3,700*l.* a year, and special grants amounting to over 700*l.* a year are granted for educational purposes at various colleges and schools, to the blind who have attained the age of 16 years. Grants are made to blind men and women for industrial purposes, *i.e.*, to enable them to start and carry on their respective trades, and also to institutions and societies towards meeting the cost of enlarged buildings, plant, general purposes, &c. Pensions amounting to 2,860*l.* a year are granted to 225 blind persons.

The Committee of the Trust also administer the Edith and Norman Lord Pension Fund, Rashdale's Charity for Blind Women, the "Scholarship Fund for Blind Boys," and the Norman Lord Dinner Fund.

(7) OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

173. There are 40 to 50 smaller societies scattered up and down the country and assisting the blind in various ways. Among these we may mention the After-Care Association in London, the Hepburn Starey Society, and the Indigent Blind Visiting Society, London; the Manchester and Salford Blind Aid Society, and the Reading Blind Aid Society.

174. There are over 20 homes for the blind, and many are largely charitable institutions, only a small fee being charged.

Section IX.—The Poor Law.

175. The blind under the Poor Law have already been referred to several times in the Report, but it will be convenient to summarise here a few salient points.

The position of the blind under the Poor Law has occupied a good deal of the Committee's attention. Evidence with regard to England and Wales will be found in Qs. 8896-9004, on Scotland in Qs. 9005-98; and on Ireland in Qs. 9099-288. Memoranda from the three Local Government Boards are on pages 474-97 of the Appendix to the Evidence.

(1) ENGLAND AND WALES.

176. It appears (Q. 8951) that 34 per cent. of the totally blind are in receipt of poor relief.

With regard to the education of blind children, we find that guardians have power to subscribe to certified schools, the grants being fixed by the Local Government Board. A child need not become an inmate of a workhouse before receiving the benefit of education provided by the Poor Law authorities, but can go straight to an institution (Q. 8959), and a parent is not disfranchised because of relief given to his child up to the age of 16 years. After that age the parent would be disfranchised, and this may press hardly in many cases where the dependent is receiving training. A husband would not be disfranchised on account of relief to a blinded wife. It is noteworthy, however, that a child cannot be dealt with directly under the Elementary Education Act, 1893 by the local education authority, if it is in a workhouse or is boarded out. We consider that there is no sufficient reason for making such a differentiation between these children and children in receipt of out-relief. We understand that the Local Government Board share this view, and we recommend that all Poor Law children under 16 should be dealt with directly, under the Act of 1893, by the local education authority of the district from which they come.

177. Turning to persons over 16, we find that guardians have full power to provide for the maintenance and instruction of the adult blind, and may give out-relief in such cases. They have power to subscribe to institutions for the blind such sums as the Local Government Board approves. The Board, however, have no power to fix the amount of out-relief that may be given. All persons receiving poor relief are disfranchised, except where they receive medical relief only.

The returns showed that there were under the Poor Law 711 persons capable of being trained or employed but not trained or employed. It was thought that there are not many actually in Poor Law institutions who would be capable of employment. We have referred in paragraph 138 to Dr. Fuller's further investigation on the number of persons in receipt of poor relief who would be likely to benefit by any extension of workshop accommodation.

(2) SCOTLAND.

178. Forty per cent. of the blind in Scotland are in receipt of poor relief.

Children under 16 have the benefit of the Elementary Education Act of 1890, and a parent is not disfranchised by reason of relief given to his child.

For those over 16, parish councils have power to subscribe to institutions; and we note (Q. 9094) that there is a right to appeal to the Scottish Local Government Board in regard to the amount of out-relief. We gather, however, that such appeals are rare. It is estimated that there are about 120 persons capable of training or employment, but unemployed; and the number who would benefit by any extension of workshops is probably quite small (Q. 9042).

(3) IRELAND.

179. The proportion of blind persons in Ireland under the Poor Law is about 30 per cent.

As already indicated, there is no system of public elementary schools for children under 16 in Ireland; but the guardians can provide for the education of a child at one of the institutions, and a child need not pass through the workhouse in order to secure this. The parent of such a child is in law disfranchised (Q. 9155), and we consider that this disability should be removed, especially having regard to the fact that it does not attach to a parent in England or Scotland.

180. For persons over 16 the guardians have power to make payments to institutions; but in Ireland they are precluded by statute from paying more than 5*s.* per week to each

person. Dr. Coey Bigger expressed the view (Q. 9160) that there is a considerable number of persons in Poor Law institutions who would be capable of training and employment if there were adequate workshop accommodation. The attention of the Committee was also directed to the fact that (Q. 9182) while a man is being trained at the expense of the Poor Law authorities he is disfranchised. This, of course, applies equally in all parts of the United Kingdom, and we think that this disability might very reasonably be removed from a person who is handicapped by blindness and has recourse to the Poor Law only to assist him in securing training.

(4) GENERAL.

181. As regards the general question of the treatment of the blind who have recourse to Poor Law assistance, we endorse the view of the Royal Commission of 1889, (paragraph 263 of C.D. 5781), that the well-conducted blind should receive a liberal outdoor relief if they have friends to live with. Cases, which are unsuitable for out-relief, should ordinarily be accommodated in a special ward or special Home. In this connection we desire to draw attention to the special Homes provided by arrangement with the Guardians at Bradford and Manchester, to which the blind are sent instead of to the workhouse.

We reserve to the next section of our Report (paragraph 183) the question of poor-relief for blind persons who are incapable of making any contribution to their self-support.

Section X.—The Incapable.

182. In considering the large number of organisations which help the blind to help themselves, it must not be forgotten that, in a great many cases, blindness is unhappily accompanied by other infirmities physical or mental.

Complete statistics of the incapable blind are not obtainable; but the returns furnished with regard to the blind in receipt of poor relief were divided so as to show persons capable of training and employment, and persons not capable. The figures for the latter class are as follows:—

	Males.	Females.
England and Wales - - - - -	3,496	3,441
Scotland - - - - -	434	509
Ireland - - - - -	570	756
	<u>4,500</u>	<u>4,706</u>

i.e., there are under the Poor Law over 9,000 blind persons who, by reason of other infirmities or age, are incapable of earning their living to any degree.

183. We have had under consideration the question whether the incapable blind, who are generally so afflicted through no fault whatever of their own, should be allowed to become paupers. It has been suggested that where the blind have suitable homes they should be supported there by charitable pensions; and other cases should be provided for in large special homes (Qs. 5719, 6076, 6510). Such a scheme would prevent these cases coming under the Poor Law or drifting to mendicancy.

We entirely agree that the incapable blind should be assisted by pensions rather than Poor Law relief, and this is effected to a considerable extent by the various pension funds to which we shall refer in the next section of the report. In our opinion, however, every incapable blind person who is worthy should be secured an adequate pension; and it will be necessary for the State to provide additional funds for this purpose, which, of course, should be distributed with due regard to the pensions already paid from charitable sources. There will remain a proportion of cases which can only be dealt with in special homes. The extent of the problem will be ascertainable only by actual experience, and both the residuum to be provided for and the funds available may be affected by the other measures which we have recommended. We do not therefore suggest that at this stage a special home should be provided for the incapable blind.

Section XI.—Pensions.

184. Sufficient has already been said to indicate the undoubted need of pensions for a large proportion of the blind. In this section we shall examine the provision made by the numerous pension societies, and certain questions arising on the administration of these charitable funds.

(1) SOURCES AVAILABLE.

The Royal Commission on the Blind (paragraph 257) recommended that co-operation amongst all pension societies should be established, whereby a united register should be kept of all recipients, and thus the possibility be avoided of undeserving cases being relieved, and

of blind persons becoming recipients of more than one pension except under special circumstances.

Such a register has been made by the private effort of Mr. Stuart Johnson, whose father, Mr. Edmund Charles Johnson, was a member of the Royal Commission. There is much testimony to the practical value of the register. We have had the benefit of hearing evidence from Mr. Stuart Johnson (Qs. 10,679-929), and have thus secured comprehensive particulars of the pension societies.

185. It appears that there are 79 charities giving pensions to the blind, and 52 of these are endowed charities. The register in 1912 showed (Q. 10,758) that there were 5,836 pensioners; and the total amount payable in that year was 47,541l.

(2) ADEQUACY OF FUNDS.

186. We have found no evidence that there is any surplus funds in any of these charities: in fact, it is clear from the long waiting lists that further funds are urgently needed. This was confirmed by Mr. Bowyear (Q. 10,613), Mr. Stuart Johnson (Q. 10,751), and Mr. Purse (Q. 12,082). Mr. Evans explained (Q. 10,967) that in the Clothworkers' Charities there are 60 persons on the waiting list, and in Day's Charity there are 250 persons on the waiting list—these being selected cases from a total of 1,000. Some of the persons on the waiting list may have to wait five or six years. These facts are significant, when it is remembered that the Clothworkers' Company already distribute between 11,000l. and 12,000l. a year.

The Royal Blind Pension Society (Qs. 11,217, 11,263) were distributing 9,568l. to 1,323 pensioners in 1914, but still have 250 persons on their waiting list; we were informed that only 25 per cent. of the eligible applicants obtain pensions each year (Q. 11,270).

Hetherington's Charity (Q. 11,440), administering an income of 8,294l. a year, reports that some applicants have to apply three or four times before obtaining a pension.

Sir Walter Prideaux informed the Committee (Q. 12,232) that the Goldsmiths' Company have a long waiting list.

We observe that the Jewish community apparently provide all the pensions necessary for the blind of the Jewish religion. Mr. Hyams (Q. 11,080) stated that the Jewish Blind Aid Society have no waiting list.

(3) ADMINISTRATION.

(a) Co-operation.

187. Mr. Evans (Q. 11,047), of the Clothworkers' Company, testified to the great usefulness of Mr. Stuart Johnson's register. We find also that other steps are taken to secure co-operation between societies, many of which print and exchange lists of pensioners. The Committee gathered, from all the witnesses examined on this subject, that there is now very satisfactory co-operation between the societies.

(b) Cost of Administration and Question of Amalgamation.

188. It has been urged by the National League of the Blind (Q. 12,056) that the sources of distribution are too numerous for efficiency or economy, and that the present system of administration is wasteful. It was suggested that the administration should be centralised in the hands of the State.

The system under which there is a large number of agencies, each administering a small fund, is obviously wasteful. It would be a clear gain to the blind if the administration of pension charities could be co-ordinated by the amalgamation of the smaller organisations with the larger. This is the policy at which the Charity Commission aim (Q. 10,576), *i.e.*, the grouping of smaller societies; and the desirability of this course was endorsed by witnesses interested in pension societies, viz., Mr. Stuart Johnson (Q. 10,740), Mr. Evans (Q. 10,948), and Mr. Pocock (Q. 11,380).

189. In this connection we desire to draw attention to the excellent work which is being done by the City Companies in administering pension funds for the blind. The Clothworkers' Company administer a number of trusts—in all, 7,272l. a year. Since 1909 (Q. 10,942) the company have undertaken the secretarial work for Day's Charity—thereby saving that charity 200l. a year. The Goldsmiths' Company (Q. 12,252) administer two trusts for the blind, no administration expenses being charged—on the contrary the company supplement the funds.

We therefore recommend that, so far as possible, small charities should be grouped together under the administration of some larger organisations. The extent to which the State should intervene to secure this will be considered in the next section.

(c) Government Intervention.

190. The control at present exercised over charities by the State is vested mainly in the Charity Commission. The jurisdiction of that body, however, is limited (Q. 10,545) to endowed charities, which may be broadly defined as charities having permanent endowments settled on specified trusts for a charitable purpose.

The Charity Commission have power to establish schemes, appoint trustees, examine accounts, and regulate administration generally, *e.g.*, in authorising sales or leases of land.

They have no power under their ordinary jurisdiction to make a scheme altering the essential trusts of a charity if those trusts can be carried out in their original form, and their discretionary power in making schemes is limited by the Chancery doctrine of *cy-près* (Q. 10,575), i.e., the scheme must follow as nearly as possible the original trusts. If the annual income of a charity is under 50*l.* the Commissioners can make a scheme on the application of one of the trustees or of any two inhabitants of the locality interested, but if it is 50*l.* or over the application must come through the majority of the trustees.

A scheme can be made by order of the Commissioners with an appeal to the High Court or by Bill procedure in Parliament. By this latter method schemes can be made altering the trusts far more extensively than is possible under the ordinary jurisdiction of the Commissioners.

191. The Charity Commission consider (Q. 10,651) that it would be desirable for them to have control over other charities besides the endowed charities. The Committee are of opinion that there should be an extension of the powers of the Charity Commission to enable them to exercise some scrutiny and control in the case of all charitable funds for the blind; particularly in order that they might secure the grouping of charities to which we have referred. We do not, however, consider it necessary that the State should undertake the direct administration of these funds. There are some large organisations already doing this work very efficiently without cost to the State, and without charge to the funds of the charity. To these the smaller societies could probably be amalgamated, and the State saved the expense of direct administration without detriment to the interests of the blind. It is, moreover, clear that some of the large charities, such as the City Companies and the Gardner Trust, while not unwilling to undertake the administration of other funds, could not be expected to hand over their funds for administration by the State (Q. 12,255).

It has been suggested by some witnesses that State intervention might stop the flow of public charity. We are not satisfied that this would be the case; but it is clear that if the administration of pension funds were completely centralised in a Government Department, it would militate against the diffusion of interest in the blind, which, however, would be preserved in some degree if there were a small number of distributing agencies.

192. Before leaving this part of the subject, we desire to draw attention to the point raised by Mr. Stuart Johnson (Q. 10,689), that the blind should avail themselves of the other general charities open to them, instead of relying solely on charities confined to the blind. We understand that the Charity Commission do not keep a Register of Charities indexed according to the objects for which the funds are available. It is clearly desirable that such a register should be available, if its compilation is feasible.

(d) *Amount of Pensions and Plurality.*

193. Mr. Stuart Johnson's evidence (Q. 10,759 *et seq.*) showed that there are about 6,000 pensions being distributed, and the average amount of each is 8*l.* There are about 4,000 persons in receipt of one pension, whereas there are 45 who enjoy four pensions, but these were only for small amounts. We have examined several witnesses on this subject, and do not find that there are persons having a plurality of pensions amounting to any considerable sum. Pension societies are now closely in touch, and the exchange of lists is general. It will generally be found, therefore, that where several pensions are enjoyed by one person, they are small sums, and the aggregate is only a modest amount. We may quote one instance of a person who has six pensions (Q. 10,768), which, however, only amount to 31*l.* 5*s.* a year.

194. This consideration is closely connected with the question of the amount of any pension given. We think it will be agreed that, if it is to be of real use, the pension must be a fairly substantial sum, such as will assist the pensioner to live in a reasonable degree of comfort. Very small pensions will not do this, and the Committee view with some misgiving the large number of pensions of 5*l.* or 6*l.* which are now distributed. We fear that these small sums must in many cases be a waste of money; they are small doles which are unlikely to be of material assistance, and may merely stimulate the recipient, as Sir Walter Prideaux indicated (Q. 12,264), to go round "cadging" for pensions.

195. The Committee are of opinion that it would be preferable that the pensions should be fewer in number but more substantial in amount; and we learn from Mr. Evans (Q. 10,961) that the tendency is now to aim at a sum of 15*l.* or 20*l.* in the distribution of funds. In this manner a larger number of blind persons are more likely to derive real benefit from the pension funds available.

(e) *Inequality of Distribution.*

196. Some charities for the blind are restricted to the blind in specified areas. The majority, however, are for the benefit of the blind generally. It became clear from the evidence that the blind in all parts of the United Kingdom do not in fact benefit equally from the funds available. Many of the funds are administered in London, and a large percentage of pensions seems to be enjoyed by persons near London (Qs. 11,018-030, 11,132). In the provinces there is a very wide discrepancy between the number of pensioners in different localities (Qs. 10,722-727); and one of the reasons advanced is that some centres

are more fortunate than others in having good organisations for the blind, which seek out suitable cases and make applications for pensions on their behalf. This is no doubt one of the causes of the inequality of distribution. Another is that the pension societies may not be widely known. Both causes, of course, operate more seriously in the more remote parts of the country. In particular, we note that in Ireland the number of pensions enjoyed is practically negligible.

(f) *Method of Election.*

197. The voting system is adopted in some charities, e.g., the Royal Blind Pension Society. This system no doubt advertises a society and brings in funds; it was admitted, however (Q. 11,317), that, ideally, selection by a committee is the best method. We find that selection by a committee is the procedure adopted by the Clothworkers' and Goldsmiths' Companies, Gardner's Trust and by Hetherington's Charity, and we think it will be generally agreed that this method of election is more satisfactory than the voting system.

(g) *Method of Distribution.*

198. Under this head we desire only to draw attention to the course pursued by some societies in paying their pensions through almoners. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the obvious advantage of a system under which a representative of the pension society is in personal touch with the pensioners, and we think that this method should be adopted wherever possible. It is also desirable that pensions should be paid at least quarterly.

(4) QUALIFICATIONS.

199. Certain qualifications, e.g., age, locality, &c., are required by pension societies in selecting their pensioners. These requirements appear to be imposed, in many cases, largely because it is necessary to have some standard limiting the number of eligible applicants, there being far more applicants than funds available. We note with satisfaction that good character is an essential qualification insisted on by all societies, and arrangements are provided for reviewing pensions in case of bad conduct or where the circumstances of the pensioner change. We propose to touch briefly on some of the most common qualifications required, taking as typical the organisations in regard to which we took detailed evidence.

(a) *Age.*

200. Mr. Stuart Johnson (Q. 10,744) stated that the average age of the blind in receipt of pensions was 61.5. It does not appear that any considerable number of pensions is held by persons who are capable of working regularly. The Clothworkers' Company (Q. 10,978) limit their pensions to persons over 50. In Day's Charity the age limit is 40. In Hetherington's Charity (Q. 11,434) the limit is still higher, viz., 55. The Royal Blind Pension Society only require that the applicant shall be over 21; and the Goldsmiths' Company and Gardner's Trust impose no age limit—we were informed, however, that the average age of the Company's pensioners was, in fact, 47. It appears that in practice it is extremely difficult for a blind person under 40 to obtain a pension.

(b) *Residence.*

201. Residential qualifications are required by some societies. Hetherington's Charity, for example, is restricted to the forty counties of England (Q. 11,449), and they require the additional qualification of two years' residence in one parish (Q. 11,446). The Gardner Trust pensions are confined to England and Wales, and the Goldsmiths' pensions are confined to the Home Counties. It was explained that this limitation was imposed by the Company partly because it would otherwise be overwhelmed with applications, and partly because its income was largely derived from the metropolis.

(c) *Income.*

202. The Clothworkers' Company have fixed an income limit of 24*l.* per annum assured income, which enables them to grant a pension of 10*l.* and leave the recipient still eligible for an Old Age Pension. The Royal Blind Pension Society require that a married applicant shall not have more than 30*l.* per annum, and a single applicant 20*l.* The income limit in Hetherington's Charity is 20*l.* This charity, we should add, is restricted to persons who have enjoyed a better position in life. The Goldsmiths' Company and Gardner's Trust have fixed no income limit, but consider the degree of hardship in each case.

The necessity for imposing an income limit will readily be recognised in view of the need to restrict the granting of pensions to really necessitous cases. We do not propose to express any view as to the amount which should be specified, as, in our opinion, it is essential that those who are administering pension funds should have some latitude in considering the degree of hardship in each individual case.

203. As regards the relation of pensions for the blind to the Old Age Pension, we find that the societies are anxious that their pensioners should take advantage of the assistance provided by the State. As already indicated, the Clothworkers' Company fix the income limit at 24*l.*, in order to leave the pensioner eligible for the full Old Age Pension. The Royal Blind Pension Society (Q. 11,224) reduce pensions so that the recipient may become eligible

for the full Old Age Pension. Hetherington's Charity (Q. 11,509) urge their pensioners to apply for the State pension, but as their pensions are granted for life they have no means of enforcing this.

(d) *Poor Law Relief.*

204. The Charity Commission (Q. 10,646) exclude from their schemes persons who within a certain period have been in receipt of Poor Law relief. This action is based on an old decision in the courts that a person in receipt of poor relief is not a proper object for charity left for the benefit of the poor generally.

Many charities follow this practice. It appears to be generally felt that the proper object of a pension is to maintain the recipient in independence, and when a person has been reduced to seeking the aid of the Poor Law he is beyond the advantageous help of charity; or, at least, many such cases are obviously more suited for relief at the hands of the Poor Law authorities. We do not find, however, that blind pension societies enforce this disqualification rigidly. Out-door medical relief is generally not regarded as poor relief, and a time limit is often added to modify the disqualification. The Clothworkers' Company, for example, disqualify an applicant who has been in receipt of poor relief within the previous two years (Q. 10,992); the Goldsmiths' Company fix the period at five years (Q. 12,244). Gardner's Trust does not grant pensions to those in receipt of poor relief, nor, as a rule, to those who have received such relief within 12 months. Hetherington's Charity excludes recipients of poor relief at any time, but this does not include medical out-relief. The Royal Blind Pension Society have no such limitation; on the other hand, they ask for an undertaking from the guardians that they will not reduce a pensioner's out-relief if a pension is granted, and the guardians generally agree (Q. 11,247).

Section XII.—Blinded Soldiers and Sailors.

205. Since this Committee was appointed a new element has been introduced into the problem of the care of the blind. The blind community in this country has been increased by the accession of a large number of officers and men who have lost their sight in the War. We felt it to be clearly our duty to report specially on the condition of those who have made so tragic a sacrifice in the service of their country. It is generally known that practically all the blinded soldiers and sailors have been cared for at St. Dunstan's Hostel, Regent's Park, by the Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Care Committee. Sir Arthur Pearson, the Chairman of the Care Committee, was good enough to give evidence before us (Qs. 12,545-754), and has furnished us with a recent Memorandum on the work at St. Dunstan's.

206. The Committee was formed in 1914, and began its work in February 1915. At the time of Sir Arthur Pearson's evidence his Committee had been at work about a year—35 cases had passed through their hands, and 135 N.C.O.'s and men and 9 officers were at that time under their care.* The premises used by the Committee are St. Dunstan's, Regent's Park. Officers who have lost their sight are accommodated in houses near the hostel. It will be appreciated that the hostel is in a unique position for all purposes (Q. 12,553). Its central position makes it easily accessible for all forms of help that the patients require; yet its spacious grounds afford ample space for healthful exercise. Close to St. Dunstan's are houses at which the relations of the inmates are entertained, free of charge, for a week or so at a time, their journeys to and from London being paid for by the Care Committee.

207. The funds are derived practically in entirety from voluntary subscriptions, the National Institute for the Blind, the Red Cross Society, and the National Relief Fund all contributing to the upkeep. The establishment has a large staff of voluntary workers; but in the workshops the trade teachers, nearly all of whom are blind, are paid (Q. 12,601).

208. By special permission, the Care Committee begin their care of the blind as soon as they reach the hospitals in this country (Q. 12,723); and, as soon as they are well enough, the blind are transferred to St. Dunstan's. There, as explained in evidence (Qs. 12,597-604), the men live in every comfort; it is felt that the proper treatment of the cases demands that, at any rate in the early days of their misfortune, they should be surrounded with comparative luxury.

209. In the early stages of his disability, a newly blinded man requires help and assistance in the simplest matters of everyday life, and great care is taken at St. Dunstan's to initiate him into the best method of re-adapting himself to his new conditions. He is, in fact, "taught to be blind."

* *Note.*—In June 1917, the number of blinded persons at St. Dunstan's and its Annexes was 404, and the number who had passed through, 259.

210. The actual re-education and training is divided into two sections—the class-room and the workshop. Working under the handicap of sudden blindness imposes a severe mental strain; the working day is therefore short, and it is found that the shortness of the working day is one of the chief reasons for the speed with which the men at St. Dunstan's acquire their knowledge and training.

In the school-rooms the men are taught to read Braille. The facility with which this is acquired depends not only on intelligence, but also upon sensitiveness of touch; and about 10 per cent. of the men fail to master the difficult art of tactile reading. The men are also taught to write in Braille. It is found that lessons in Braille impose a great mental strain on most men, and their lessons are accordingly broken by work in the netting-room.

Typewriting is also taught in the class-rooms. It is found that almost every man is able to acquire the art of typewriting. Generally speaking, typewriting is not taught as an occupation, but in order to enable a man to continue to communicate with others by writing. Every man is given his own typewriter when he has passed the writing test imposed.

The National Library for the Blind has arranged to extend free membership to all blinded soldiers, who may thus be able to keep themselves supplied with Braille literature through its circulating system.

211. In the workshops there is an extensive range of occupational training. The largest number of the men learn cobbling. The men at St. Dunstan's learn to sole and heel a pair of boots efficiently in six or seven months, and those who have acquired this industry, are making good earnings. The cobblers are also taught mat-making, for the cobbling work may sometimes be slack, in which case, resort can be had to the mat-frame, thus securing constant employment and providing another occupation at which good money is to be made.

Some of the duller men learn mat-making only. The profits are quite satisfactory, the one objection being the monotony of the work.

Basket-making, the oldest of the staple industries of the blind, is taught in many varieties. St. Dunstan's does not profess to turn out a man who is a complete master of the art, and can make every kind of basket. Men are taught to make baskets of a few saleable descriptions, and care is taken to ascertain whether any particular kind of basket is in special demand in the locality in which they are to settle.

The other industry taught in the workshops is joinery. Here again a man is not taught to be a complete all-round joiner, but is taught to make a few saleable articles, such as picture frames, tea-trays, corner cupboards, ornamental tables, &c.

Sir Arthur Pearson states that the men at St. Dunstan's acquire these industries in a very much shorter time than is usually supposed to be necessary to teach a blinded man a trade. He attributes this principally to the free employment of blind teachers. It is pointed out that the whole outlook of a man becomes different when he finds himself in the hands of a teacher who works under the same handicap as his own. The more intelligent and apt men are kept as pupil teachers.

The short hours of work already referred to are another cause for the rapidity with which industries are acquired—another lies in the fact that these men are, with the exception of the loss of their sight, healthy normal individuals, differing, as a whole, widely from the workmen to be found in ordinary institutions for the blind.

212. In addition to the workshops, the authorities at St. Dunstan's have established a poultry farm where the men are taught poultry keeping on practical and up-to-date lines. The poultry-farm pupils are also taught rough carpentry, and learn to make hen-coops, sitting-boxes, gates, &c. They are assisted by an arrangement which enables their wives, mothers, sisters, or other relatives to acquire poultry-farming at a large farm in the Midlands, on the same principles as those taught at St. Dunstan's. This training is given to relatives free of all charge.

213. There are three occupations which are taught to the men who possess the highest degree of intelligence, and who have been best educated in the past. The first of these is massage. The massage training is conducted on the most modern and scientific principles. Men acquire a preliminary knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and pathology at St. Dunstan's itself, and then pass to the massage school of the National Institute for the Blind. The authorities of the Middlesex Hospital (Q. 12,655), St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and the Hampstead Hospital permit the more advanced classes to visit these hospitals daily and massage patients. The men have to pass the examinations of the Incorporated Society of Trained Masseurs, the most severe in England. So far none have failed. A large number of men have become duly qualified masseurs, and have joined the Almeric Paget Massage Corps. The whole of these have situations at military hospitals, where they receive a wage of 2l. 10s. a week. Sir Arthur Pearson reports that the medical officer in charge of the massage department at a large command dépôt, where 32 masseurs are employed, stated lately that the four blind men from St. Dunstan's who worked there are the most competent members of the massage staff.

Another of the more intellectual occupations taught at St. Dunstan's is shorthand writing, combined with typewriting. This work is accomplished by means of a machine which enables Braille in its most highly contracted form to be taken at a speed equal to that of the ordinary shorthand writer. Men who learn this art continue their training at St. Dunstan's until they

have a speed of well over 100 words a minute. Those who have been placed in situations are stated to be giving entire satisfaction.

Telephone operating is the third of the more intellectual occupations taught to the blinded soldiers. The blind telephone operator cannot, of course, work in public exchanges where the flashlight system is in vogue, but is able to do so in exchanges belonging to large offices and business establishments where the drop-shutter system is installed. Though the shutters are made to pattern, and are apparently identical, the blind operator in a few weeks can tell by the sound which has fallen. A good knowledge of Braille writing by hand as well as type-writing is a necessary part of the equipment of the blind telephone operator, in order that messages may be taken down and transmitted to various parts of the establishment in which he works.

214. In every possible case a man is returned to his original industry or occupation. There have been some very marked instances of success in this direction.

Sir Arthur Pearson has furnished the Committee with these examples :—

"A young blinded Canadian officer, who had, before he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force, studied electrical engineering at one of the leading Canadian Universities, was induced to continue in this profession. He followed courses of special instruction, and obtained a position in the largest electrical industrial concern in Canada. He has been entrusted particularly with the obtaining and presentation of what are called 'trouble reports,' i.e., he converses daily on the telephone with the heads of the many branch establishments, situated within a radius of 300 miles, discovers any difficulties that have arisen in connection with the supply of power and its distribution, and makes reports, annotated with his own expert observations, of these for presentation to the head officials. Sir Arthur Pearson has received from the heads of the business excellent reports of his work."

"A blinded English officer, who was the colonial director of a great London business firm, with branches all over the world, was persuaded to carry on in this complicated and difficult position. This he has done with complete success. His fellow-directors, after his first few months' work, confirmed him in his appointment, and expressed their gratification at the manner in which he was conducting his department."

"An English private soldier, who was employed in a large firm of hot-water engineers, was, much against his own inclination, persuaded to endeavour to continue in that business. It was impossible for him to go on with his original occupation of planning out heating systems in large buildings, but he returned to the business in a general office capacity. In a very short time he was responsible for the whole of the ordinary correspondence of his firm, and a little later was entrusted with making out specifications, and ordering materials to carry out the rough plans prepared by men doing the work in which he was formerly occupied. His remuneration is now twice as high as it was before he was blinded, and he has given perfect satisfaction to his employers and himself."

215. The period of the stay at St. Dunstan's is nominally six months, but this is extended whenever necessary. On completion of the training, great care is taken in starting the men in life (Q. 12,672); and in this connection the special After-care Department, which has been established by the National Institute (Q. 12,593), will be of paramount importance.

On leaving St. Dunstan's, the blinded man is settled in the industry which he has been taught, is provided with an outfit, and with a good stock of raw material. He is visited regularly, his work is supervised, raw material of the best quality is supplied to him at cost price, and assistance is given in the matter of marketing his goods, either locally or at a central depôt. This after-care system has been organised upon a permanent basis, and there will be an adequate sum for its steady maintenance.

The earnings of men who have left vary, of course, greatly according to industry and aptitude. They average well over 1*l.* a week, and many men are earning more than 2*l.* a week.

216. The blinded soldiers and sailors are entitled to considerable pensions, which are fully set out in Appendix IV. of this Report. Having regard to the substantial State pension, and the admirable way in which the men are prepared at St. Dunstan's to start life again, and the machinery that has been set up to look after them in the future, we feel that the country may be safely assured that highly satisfactory steps have been taken to secure the welfare of those who have given their sight for their country.

217. While we are glad to be able to record the excellent results obtained from the training at St. Dunstan's, which cannot fail to be instructive and stimulating to all interested in the case of the blind, we consider that it would be unsafe to make therefrom a general deduction as to the capacities and potentialities of the average blind person. As already indicated (paragraph 211), the men at St. Dunstan's are, with the exception of the loss of sight, healthy normal individuals, differing widely from the ordinary blind person, whose blindness is very frequently accompanied by other deficiencies, physical or mental.

General Conclusions and Summary of Recommendations.

(1) CENTRAL CONTROL.

(a) A new Department.

218. The recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1889 have been carried out only to a partial extent (paragraphs 5-7), and many of the needs to which they drew attention are still apparent. We have come clearly to the conclusion that the condition of the blind in the United Kingdom calls for the more active intervention of the State to secure (a) central control, organisation, and assistance for the existing agencies of voluntary help which could be utilised with far greater effect if centrally directed, and (b) additional assistance for the blind.

In order, therefore, to give effect to such of the following proposals as do not fall naturally within the purview of any of the existing Government Departments, e.g., the Education Departments or the Charity Commission, we recommend that a special department, whose function shall be the general care and supervision of the blind, shall be set up in the Ministry of Health, whenever such a Ministry is created, and in the meantime it should be set up in the Local Government Board. In our subsequent recommendations we shall refer to this department together with the Advisory Committee mentioned in paragraph 220 below as the "Central Authority." The Central Authority should have at its disposal funds provided by the Exchequer, in order to make grants, capital and annual, for the purposes indicated in the recommendations and for such other purposes as may appear necessary in the course of its administration.

(b) Finance.

219. Many of the recommendations which we have made in regard to educational matters require to be dealt with by the Education Departments, and the expenditure (which we do not anticipate would be considerable), would be met from the Votes of those Departments. This would, no doubt, form part of the general development of Education other than Elementary which is now being undertaken.

The funds to be placed at the disposal of the new Central Authority, which we recommend, would be partly to meet the capital outlay involved in carrying out our recommendations, and partly to meet the annual expenditure in the same connection.

(i) The initial capital expenditure which the Committee consider to be most essential is that which is required for increasing the workshop accommodation (see paragraph 139 above). Some 3,000 additional places are urgently required, and the estimated cost per place varies from 100*l.*-175*l.* We think, therefore, that having regard to the rise in prices, an outside estimate of the capital sum required would be 500,000*l.* This is the only capital outlay upon which we think it will be necessary for the Central Authority to embark, and the sum mentioned is based upon figures obtained after careful inquiry.

(ii) An annual expenditure will, of course, be involved in connection with our proposals, e.g., in respect of grants to institutions and other organisations for the blind, pensions, and other purposes arising from time to time in the course of the administration of the Central Authority. The amount required is extremely difficult to estimate; and, in fact, can only be ascertained as the work of the new department proceeds; but we think that an annual expenditure of approximately a quarter of a million may be estimated for the purpose.

(c) Advisory Committee.

220. We are of opinion that the administration of the new department should be carried out under the immediate guidance of a strong Advisory Committee of persons associated with the care of the blind. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee should be the Parliamentary Secretary of the office in which the new department is established. All matters of policy should be referred to the Committee. All executive functions should be exercised by the department, which should be responsible to Parliament through the Parliamentary Head of the office. In our view, however, these executive functions should be exercised in accordance with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee as accepted by the Parliamentary Secretary.

We would suggest that the Committee should consist of seven members, of whom the Vice-Chairman and one member might be paid; the Committee should include a representative of Scotland and of Ireland. It would, of course, be competent to the Advisory Committee to appoint sub-committees, either for general or local purposes. On these Committees, persons of experience in the management of institutions and organisations for the blind, and representatives of blind workpeople would find a place.

(2) CONDITIONS OF THE BLIND IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

221. We think that the Central Authority should take the earliest opportunity of making an inquiry into the condition of the blind in other countries, to which we have referred in paragraph 3 of our Report. It will be obvious that such an inquiry will be of the utmost value for purposes of comparative observation.

(3) DEFINITION. (Paragraphs 8-11.)

222. We think it would be desirable that a uniform definition of blindness should be adopted in the case of adults—viz., "Blindness means too blind to perform work for which eyesight is essential." Such a definition might be used in connection with the census and generally by organisations for the blind. We think that certain safeguards should be adopted in applying this definition, namely, that the examination of the blind should be made only by persons who are registered under the Medical Act and who possess competent knowledge of the diseases of the eye, and that a certificate should be given which should indicate whether the case should be re-examined at a future time (paragraph 10). In this connection we desire to draw attention to Appendix III. of this Report. It would also be helpful if the medical certificate included an opinion by the medical authority as to professions or handicrafts which should be avoided by the person examined.

The Committee suggest that the certificate, where given, should if possible state the original cause of blindness.

(3) STATISTICS. (Paragraphs 12-43.)

223. The census returns show that in the intercensal period the number of blind persons returned as totally blind increased to a very small extent, and the proportion of blind persons per thousand decreased in all cases except Ireland, where there was a slight increase.

The statistics available indicate that there are a considerable number, probably three or four thousand, of capable blind persons who are either unemployed or in precarious employment.

Further it is noteworthy that in England, Scotland and Ireland over 30 per cent. of the blind population are in receipt of poor relief.

The Committee found that the statistics available are by no means satisfactory. The basis of comparative statistics must be the census; but it is apparent that a census return restricted to the totally blind omits a large number of persons who are only partially blind, but must for educational and economic purposes be treated as blind persons.

224. We therefore recommend that the census statistics in the various parts of the United Kingdom should be procured on a uniform basis, and we recommend for careful consideration the procedure adopted in Ireland, whereby a second census was taken to secure figures of persons totally blind and persons partially blind and detailed information regarding the blind generally.

(4) CAUSES OF BLINDNESS AND AGE OF INCIDENCE. (Paragraphs 44-54.)

225. With reference to the causes of blindness, we accept the conclusion that ophthalmia neonatorum is responsible for over 10 per cent. of the cases. We are satisfied that blindness resulting from this cause can be materially reduced if notification is accompanied by immediate treatment. Notification by itself will not be sufficient.

We are also satisfied that the proportion of blindness caused by accident could be reduced if the wearing of protective glasses were more generally enforced in dangerous occupations.

We find that a large proportion of blind persons become blind after the age of 30 (paragraph 44).

226. We therefore recommend:—

(a) Steps should be taken to assure uniform and more effectual notification of ophthalmia neonatorum.

(b) We desire to draw the careful attention of the authorities to the representations which have been placed before the Committee that the instructions to midwives should be amended so as to provide more ample protection against ophthalmia neonatorum.

(c) Arrangements should be made to secure immediate treatment of all cases as is provided in certain large towns; e.g., Liverpool and Birmingham, at the present time. Local authorities should be urged to avail themselves of the grants payable under the Maternity and Infant Welfare Scheme. Hospital accommodation should be provided wherever it is deficient.

(d) Ophthalmia neonatorum should be made compulsorily notifiable in Scotland.

(e) The provision and wearing of goggles in dangerous occupations should be made more widely obligatory than it is at present.

(f) It would be desirable that more precise statistics should be kept of the amount of blindness due to mechanical injury.

(5) ELEMENTARY EDUCATION. (Paragraphs 55-86.)

227. The provision for elementary education in England, Wales and Scotland may be regarded as generally satisfactory. Few children appear to escape the operation of the Acts, although in some cases it seems that they are not brought into school until a somewhat late age. The education authorities have this matter under observation.

The Committee were impressed with the desirability of establishing a system of public elementary education in Ireland; and of increasing generally the provision for myopic children.

In particular we desire to emphasise the necessity of initiating a general system of after care by establishing a register of all blind children in the public elementary schools. We are satisfied that the establishment of a register and the systematic following up of blind children is a fundamental essential to the proper care of the blind.

228. We make the following recommendations:—

(a) The attention of elementary education authorities should be drawn to the imperative necessity of seeing that all possible steps are taken to discover the aptitudes of blind pupils.

(b) Residential institutions should be regarded as preferable to day centres for the majority of young children.

(c) The employment of blind teachers wherever practicable should be encouraged, and the salaries of blind teachers should be on an equality with those of sighted teachers.

(d) The Committee have no doubt that the Education Departments will give their closest attention to the need for Braille books which the National Institute for the Blind is endeavouring to meet.

(e) The education authorities should take steps to increase the number of schools or classes for the separate treatment of myopic and partially sighted children.

(f) The provision of a system of public elementary education in Ireland should be established at the earliest opportunity.

(g) A uniform scheme of after-care should be initiated in the elementary educational system, and we recommend that a detailed register should be made of all the children in the elementary schools and that, by means of paid visitors, the elementary education authorities should keep in touch with the children leaving elementary schools, until they are transferred to the care of either the secondary education authority or some recognised organisation for the blind. The Central Authority should work out details of this scheme in conjunction with the Education Departments.

(h) We recommend for consideration whether the education of blind children in institutions in Scotland might possibly be facilitated if it were made a charge on the Central Education Fund.

(6) PROFESSIONAL TRAINING. (Paragraphs 87-114.)

229. With regard to professional training, we are satisfied from the evidence before us that there are some professions on which blind persons may embark with a reasonable prospect of success. The present accommodation appears to be adequate, except perhaps in the case of blind girls, but it is not clear that the funds available are distributed in such a manner as to make it possible for all suitable blind persons to receive professional training. This may be more a matter of organisation than of increasing the number of scholarships actually available.

We desire, however, to draw attention to the financial position of the Royal Normal College, which is mainly dependent on charitable funds, and has a serious deficit. It is clear that the success of many blind persons in professional callings depends upon some financial assistance being forthcoming at the start of the career.

230. We therefore recommend that—

(a) The education authorities should consider whether the provision of a small school for blind girls would not be an advantage.

(b) The attention of the local education authorities should be directed to their powers under Part II. of the Education Act, 1902. Efforts should be made to secure that scholarships and other forms of assistance from charitable funds should be more widely known.

(c) The Government should consider the desirability of increasing the facilities for the higher education and professional training of blind persons, and of extending the grants payable in respect of pupils undergoing professional training; and the Central Authority should endeavour to secure financial assistance for persons embarking on professional careers.

(d) Wherever possible pianoforte playing should be combined with pianoforte tuning.

(e) With regard to tuning and repairing, it is imperative that one uniform standard should be set up.

(f) The possibility of adopting business callings should receive more consideration. Particular attention should be paid to the case of persons losing their sight in adult life. With proper encouragement and scientific training it may be possible to equip them to resume their previous vocations. The Central Authority should consider the best machinery for discovering such cases and providing proper treatment therefor.

(g) The position of blind typists should receive the careful attention of the Central Authority. A uniform standard of efficiency should be established. We are of opinion that a limited number of blind typists might be employed in Government and other large offices.

(h) The profession of massage offers scope for remunerative employment, provided always that the greatest care is exercised in selecting the persons to be trained for this career.

(i) The attention of local education authorities should be drawn to the desirability of employing blind tuners for school pianos.

(7) INDUSTRIAL TRAINING. (Paragraphs 115-132.)

231. The accommodation for industrial training does not appear to be materially deficient in existing circumstances, but the demand for such accommodation may be considerably increased if the facilities for employment are improved. At present in England many more persons receive industrial training than can be afterwards employed in the available workshops. In Scotland a number do not receive training because workshop accommodation is not available for their subsequent employment. The Committee have come to the conclusion that the question of providing any further accommodation for industrial training must await the provision of further workshop accommodation.

We desire to draw attention to the financial position of institutions at present providing industrial training for the blind. It is apparent that the training of blind persons costs these institutions on the average^{*} 10*l.* per head per annum over and above the sums found by the rates and taxes. The result is that the majority of the blind institutions are dependent upon constant appeals to public charity and show a continual deficit in their accounts. It is hoped that the financial position of the training institutions may be improved by the adoption of the recommendations which we make in regard to the workshops for the blind. When this provision has been made it will be for consideration whether the provisions of Part II. of the Education Act of 1902 should not be made obligatory.

232. Subject to these general conclusions on the facilities available for industrial training, we make the following recommendations in matters of detail:—

(a) The trades at present taught in this country appear to be the most satisfactory, but attention should be given to the possibility of developing the bedding and upholstery businesses.

(b) The period of training required may be taken on the average as four years after the age of 16.

The age limit within which training may begin with advantage is probably 50 years.

(c) We think that special arrangements should be made through the Central Authority to secure grants for persons going blind in later life who are frequently reduced to serious straits while undergoing the period of training.

(d) We consider that the Education Departments in consultation with the Central Authority should co-ordinate the schemes of industrial training for the blind throughout the country.

(e) The training institutions should be in close touch with the workshops in order that the methods of training may be based upon the actual methods in operation in the workshops. The necessary steps can be taken, no doubt without difficulty, to secure that young pupils are kept apart from the journeymen wage earners.

(f) When pupils come from the elementary schools to the training institutions, their after-care should normally be transferred to the institution, and it should be the duty of the institution to see that the pupil is placed in suitable employment and that he is duly passed on to the after-care organisation in the area where he works.

(g) We are of opinion that blind instructors might be more generally used in industrial training.

* Note.—For the reason explained in the footnote to paragraph 126, the sum of 10*l.* in this paragraph should now be reduced to 6*l.* in the case of England and Wales.

(8) WORKSHOPS. (Paragraphs 133-156.)

233. We are satisfied that the crux of the problem of the blind in the United Kingdom at the present moment is the inadequacy of workshop accommodation. The evidence is conclusive that the present accommodation should at least be doubled, and even this may not be sufficient. This involves immediate provision of between two and three thousand places, which will cost, on the average, not less than 100*l.* each to establish, and an annual sum for maintenance. It will be apparent, however, from what has been said in this Report, that the institutions for the blind are not financially in a position to meet this demand.

The difficulties in the employment of blind labour generally can be mitigated also if Government Departments will give a preference to the work of the blind in certain classes of contracts at their disposal. We are satisfied that this would materially relieve the financial difficulties of the institutions, but it may also be necessary for the Central Authority to make grants to supplement the work of these institutions upon conditions which will ensure their efficient working. Much can be done by the systematic classification of workers and workshops to which we have alluded in the body of our Report, and by the elimination of the competition between institutions which is clearly detrimental to the interests of the blind. We make recommendations in detail in these matters.

The Committee are satisfied that the employment of blind women is a phase of the problem which needs particular attention, as it is clear that blind women are unable, except in rare cases, to earn anything approaching an adequate wage.

234. We, therefore, make the following recommendations:—

(a) The existing accommodation should be at least doubled, and in the first instance this provision might be effected by the extension of existing workshops. As the existing institutions are not financially in a position to meet the expenditure involved, we have recommended that the Government should place funds at the disposal of the Central Authority for this purpose.

In Ireland it is necessary that workshops should be established where blind workers can live the life of the ordinary wage-earning journeyman.

(b) The Central Authority should make arrangements with the spending departments of the Government to secure that in certain contracts blind institutions are given the preference.

It is necessary that inspection and standardisation of production must follow. It would be a great advantage if a uniform system of keeping accounts were generally adopted. Special attention should be directed to the possibility of establishing systems of co-operative buying of raw material and selling of produce, which we are satisfied would materially assist the institutions for the blind.

(c) The Central Authority should take steps to eliminate the unnecessary competition between existing institutions by securing the amalgamation or affiliation of the small workshops to the larger institutions. For this purpose we consider that a system of certification might be introduced and a register maintained whereby the Central Authority might indicate to the public the institutions and organisations which are co-operating in the systematic care of the blind. By this means public charity would be diverted to those bodies which operate on the lines laid down by the Central Authority.

(d) The Central Authority should also have funds at its disposal to make grants for the assistance of the certified institutions and organisations; and, in making such grants, should take steps to establish schemes whereby a minimum wage would be secured.

(e) Special attention should be given to the amalgamation of workshops in London.

(f) An effort should be made to classify work and workers so as to secure that suitable contracts are placed in shops where the workers have special adaptability for the particular class of work to be done. The affiliation of workshops as suggested in (c) above would facilitate this.

(g) The care of persons working at home should receive the careful attention of the Central Authority. It is imperative that such persons should be visited and assisted in the purchase of materials and the marketing of their goods, and it will be for the Central Authority to determine upon a systematic scheme on these lines, to be carried out either by the large institutions or by the other organisations for the outdoor blind, or by both, according to the exigencies of local circumstances. In this connection the scheme set on foot by the National Institute will, no doubt, be of great value. (See paragraph 154.)

(h) The Central Authority should direct particular attention to the employment of blind women.

(9) MISCELLANEOUS ORGANISATIONS. (Paragraphs 157-174.)

235. We have dealt in detail with the miscellaneous organisations. Much excellent work is done by these societies, but we are satisfied that the blind could be helped to a far greater extent if the operations of the various organisations were controlled and assisted by some central body.

236. We therefore recommend that—

(a) The Central Authority should have the duty of co-ordinating the efforts of the various organisations which care for the blind outside institutions.

(b) The organisation in Scotland is already highly efficient, but financial assistance by way of grant may become necessary.

(c) The organisation of the English unions should be completed as rapidly as possible, and Government assistance is required for this. Inquiry should be made by the Central Authority into the position of the home teaching societies and the unions generally, in order to secure more scientific collaboration between them. The Central Authority will no doubt have to consider the re-allotment of areas of activity in connection with schemes for the after-care of the blind to which we have referred in paragraph 234 (g).

(d) Since evidence was taken, the National Library for the Blind has been made free to every blind person. We are satisfied of the urgent need for a central free library, and in order to ensure the continuation and development of this organisation, we recommend a State subsidy, either by way of capital or of annual grant. We are satisfied that administrative measures should be taken to secure the active co-operation of the home teaching societies and public libraries with the National Library for the Blind, so as to facilitate the circulation and distribution of the books available and to minimise still further the danger of unnecessary duplication in production.

(e) It is necessary that the supply of Moon type books should be increased. In this connection the efforts of the National Institute for the Blind deserve to be encouraged by the Central Authority.

(f) The Central Authority should consider the desirability of assisting establishments engaged in the production of books generally for the blind.

(10) THE POOR LAW. (Paragraphs 175-181.)

237. Special attention has been paid in this Report to the position of the blind under the Poor Law. It is clear that if proper workshop accommodation is forthcoming, a number of blind persons who are at present a charge upon the rates would become partially self-supporting.

238. We recommend that—

(a) Children under 16 should be dealt with directly, under the Act of 1893, by the local education authority of the district from which they come, and that there should be no differentiation between children who are in receipt of out-relief and those who are in a workhouse or boarded out.

(b) In Ireland it would be desirable to repeal the provision by which a parent is disfranchised if his children receive education through the Poor Law authorities.

(c) With regard to the treatment of the blind generally under the Poor Law, we think that so far as possible they should be granted out-relief, or receive special accommodation in the institutions. The homes provided at Bradford and Manchester appear to us to offer a valuable example of the humane treatment of the blind.

(d) We consider that blind persons who lose their sight in later life, and not infrequently have recourse to Poor Law assistance while being trained, should not be disfranchised for this reason, and that the whole question of disfranchisement of the blind and of those upon whom the blind are dependent should be sympathetically considered.

(11) THE INCAPABLE. (Paragraphs 182, 183.)

239. Special attention should be paid to the position of the incapable blind, who, unless they are unworthy, should in our opinion be secured an adequate pension. The Central Authority should take steps to secure this, and should co-ordinate its schemes in relation to the existing pensions.

(12) PENSIONS. (Paragraphs 184-204.)

240. With regard to pensions, we are satisfied that the sum at present available is wholly inadequate for this purpose. We think that it would be an advantage if some of the smaller societies were grouped with the larger, and we make recommendations as to the powers of

the Charity Commissioners under this head. We are satisfied that there is now a general and sympathetic co-operation between the various pension societies, and the interchange of lists of pensioners undoubtedly diminishes overlapping. We do not find any cases in which a plurality of pensions is enjoyed in such a way as to aggregate any considerable sum in the hands of any one pensioner.

It has become evident from the information furnished to the Committee that the distribution of pensions throughout various parts of the United Kingdom is by no means equal, and some lack of organisation is evident in this respect.

We do not desire to criticise the qualifications at present required of pensioners, but we feel that where Poor Law relief is a bar, it is reasonable that some limit should be given so as not to exclude persons who at any time have been in receipt of Poor Law relief.

241. We accordingly recommend that—

(a) As the funds at present available for pensions are inadequate, it is necessary for the Central Authority to have further grants placed at its disposal in order to meet the position, having regard particularly to the need of provision for the aged and incapable blind. It would further be necessary that the Central Authority should draw up schemes by which the grants placed at its disposal for pensions should be co-ordinated with pensions derived from other sources.

(b) Wider powers should be conferred upon the Charity Commission in regard to vested funds and with reference especially to funds collected from voluntary subscriptions; and in consultation and agreement with the Central Authority the Charity Commission should endeavour to group all the smaller pension societies with the larger so as to reduce the sources of distribution and consequent administrative expenditure.

(c) The amount of each pension should be increased to a substantial sum, the Committee being of opinion that small doles are undesirable.

(d) In particular, the distribution of pensions over various parts of the United Kingdom should be so arranged as to secure equal facilities for application. At the present time the outlying areas appear to receive far less than those near London.

(e) We recommend for careful consideration the desirability of securing information as to the other forms of charity for which blind persons are eligible, it being clear that assistance can be obtained from such sources without concentrating all the demands for assistance for the blind upon those charities, already inadequate, which are exclusively established for the blind.

(13) BLINDED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS. (Paragraphs 205-217.)

242. It remains for the Committee to draw attention to the inquiry which they made into the care of the soldiers and sailors blinded in the war. It will be seen that these men are very adequately provided for at St. Dunstan's Hostel, and that active steps are taken by the National Institute of the Blind to secure their future welfare after they leave the Hostel. The Committee feel that the steps taken to ensure the welfare of the blinded soldiers and sailors merits the greatest confidence and approbation.

(14) CONCLUSION.

243. These are the conclusions to which we have come and the recommendations which we make after careful examination, spread over three years, of the problem of dealing with the blind.

We want to impress upon the country the extremely hopeful nature of this problem. It will be observed that whereas in England and Wales one in 1,285 were reported as blind in 1901, the last census return shows this number to be reduced to one in 1,370.

We are convinced that if our recommendations are adopted, the proportion of the blind to the population will be gradually and permanently reduced. We might well hope that each decade would see a diminution in the numbers both of those who are blind from birth and those who are blind from accident, if effect is given by the State and by all concerned to the recommendations which we have submitted.

Now that our investigations have shown that by a reasonable expenditure of money and by well-directed effort we can greatly reduce the numbers of the blind, and at the same time materially improve the condition of those whose sight we cannot restore, we ought not, as a nation, to rest content until at least we have set an example to all other nations.

A great nation ought undoubtedly to direct a portion of its resources towards the adoption of wise measures for the relief of the weak and suffering members amongst its citizens. In years to come it should be part of Great Britain's pride that in these Islands can be studied the best methods for the prevention of blindness and the best treatment of those whose blindness cannot by any human knowledge or resource be averted.

244. In conclusion the Committee desire to put on record their appreciation of the great assistance which has been readily rendered to them by the various organisations for the blind throughout the kingdom. The institutions, associations, and societies have most willingly furnished information as to their work. We are also much indebted to the witnesses who have given evidence before us; and we desire to express also our thanks to the various Government Departments who have furnished us with much valuable information.

245. The last duty which we have to discharge is a particularly pleasant one. It is to convey to all who read this Report, with its accompanying volume of evidence carefully prepared, that we are under a deep sense of obligation to Mr. Barter, who has acted as our Secretary since Mr. Cross (our original Secretary) resigned his position on being appointed Private Secretary to Sir Horace Monro. To Mr. Cross, whose assistance we had during the first ten months of our deliberations, we tender this expression of our thanks for his services in setting us upon our way; while of Mr. Barter, who has acted as our Secretary since the 19th March 1915, and until the completion of our Report, we desire to say that by his grasp of the problem which we had to consider, by his skill in marshalling the evidence upon which our recommendations rested, and by his general industry, tact and ability, he has lightened the load of our labours and made pleasant the path to our conclusions.

(Signed) W. HAYES FISHER (*Chairman*).
A. A. ALLEN.
HENRY W. T. BOWYEAR.
W. R. DAVIES.
ARTHUR DOWNES.
HAROLD B. GRIMSDALE.
R. S. MEIKLEJOHN.
ARTHUR PEARSON.
BEN PURSE.
T. J. STAFFORD.
THOMAS STODDART.
GEO. J. WARDLE.
H. C. WARRILOW.
HENRY J. WILSON.

P. BARTER (*Secretary*).

20th July 1917.

RESERVATIONS.

RESERVATION BY MR. ALLEN, SIR ARTHUR DOWNES AND MR. STODDART.

I. *Financial Assistance of the Blind.*

We have signed the Report as it stands, because the proposals in it represent a great advance on anything that has hitherto been done for the blind. We are not, however, satisfied with the proposals for the financial assistance of the blind.

These proposals may, perhaps, be divided as follows:—

- (i) For those at present employed or to be employed in workshops. The Committee, recognising that a blind person's earnings must be considerably less than those of a sighted person, recommend that the proposed grant from public funds for the assistance of workshops should be paid only on condition that a minimum wage (amount not stated) should be paid to the blind people employed in the workshop.
- (ii) With regard to those not so employed, it is recommended that the pensions which are at present granted from charities should be increased and augmented (to an amount not stated) out of public funds.

In our opinion, the better course would be for the State to recognise the handicap under which the blind persons suffer, and to make a suitable allowance to all blind persons above the age of 21 who are not unworthy of assistance and who have no sufficient private means of support. The sum of 10s. per week has been suggested by some witnesses, but this might be a matter for consideration by the Central Authority. That this is not an unreasonable proposal is shown, we think, by the fact that in cases of blinded soldiers the State awards the full disablement pension of 27s. 6d. a week. If this system of general pensions for the blind were to be adopted, it would be necessary for the Central Authority to satisfy itself that the blind person was doing his best to contribute to his own support. Any refusal to undertake training or suitable employment might involve the forfeiture of the pension. Street begging, crime, drunkenness would also lead to its forfeiture.

Those engaged in workshops should be paid at trade union rates of wages, and would have a stimulus to employ their abilities to the best advantage.

The present pensions from charitable funds would be very useful for supplementing the State grants of those who from some incapacity were incapable of earning, even with the 10s. State grant, a sufficient wage, and also for cases of illness or old age.

A considerable volume of evidence will be found to support the grant of a State allowance to all blind people, and we would especially draw attention to Bryden 9324-9, Walker 2678-81, Stoddart 8817-8, 8864-7, Hedges 1348-51, 1384-6, 1418-23, who deal with the pension system in Australia and point out certain dangers and disadvantages, and to Campbell 1124-31, who deals with the system which is working in the State of Ohio.

We recommend, therefore, that the State should recognise the handicap from which blind people necessarily suffer and should make a suitable allowance to every blind person above the age of 21 who has no private means of support and is not unworthy.

II. *The Central Authority.*

Whilst agreeing with the general principle of securing that some Central Authority should be responsible for the general welfare of the blind, we are of opinion that the proposal in paragraph 218 of the Report would be unsuitable for Scotland.

It would not be possible, in our view, for a department of the English Local Government Board to exercise control or supervision over the school boards or parish councils of Scotland, both of which have many duties with regard to the blind. We are of opinion that an Advisory Committee should be set up in Scotland who would advise the Secretary for Scotland in all matters concerning the welfare of the blind.

(Signed) A. A. ALLEN.
ARTHUR DOWNES.
THOMAS STODDART.

RESERVATION BY MR. ALLEN, MR. BOWYEAR AND SIR ARTHUR DOWNES.

Education of Young Children.

Whilst fully impressed by certain advantages that are to be derived from placing blind children in institutions at an early age, we are by no means convinced that the general adoption of this system would be beneficial. It seems to us that, as in the case of sighted children, institutional life is a poor substitute for home and family life.

Where the home is bad there can of course be no doubt of the value of institutional treatment throughout the school career of a child, and the same may be said where there are no satisfactory day centres for the education of blind children. Where, however, as is the case in London, there are satisfactory day centres within easy reach of most blind children, there would be no sufficient reason for removing the child who has a good home to an institution during the early years of school life. London has two residential schools, Elm Court and Linden Lodge, to which girls and boys are sent at the age of 14 for more specialised training, and this system seems to us to have a good deal to recommend it.

We recognise, however, that in the case of children possessing real musical ability, it may be necessary to send them at an earlier age to a school giving special musical instruction.

We cannot, therefore, concur in the view expressed by our colleagues that education in institutions should be adopted as the usual form of education for young blind children, and we are further of opinion that such a system would meet with opposition from many parents.

(Signed) A. A. ALLEN.
HENRY W. T. BOWYEAR.
ARTHUR DOWNES.

RESERVATION BY MR. W. R. DAVIES, MR. ALLEN AND MR. MEIKLEJOHN.

Education of Blind Poor Law Children.

We agree with the recommendation in paragraphs 176 and 238 (a), so far as it means that it should be obligatory to enable blind children, who are resident in workhouses or boarded out by the guardians, to receive the same kind of education as must be made available for non-Poor Law blind children and for blind children in receipt of outdoor relief. But we see no sufficient reason for altering the present incidence of cost as between the ratepayers of the area of the guardians and those of the area of the local education authority. If, therefore, a duty in regard to the education of blind children in workhouses or boarded out by the guardians is placed upon any local education authority, power should at the same time be given to recover the expenses from the guardians concerned. Alternatively the object desired might be attained by placing upon the guardians, who already have the power to make suitable education available for the blind children under their care, the duty to do so.

(Signed) W. R. DAVIES.
A. A. ALLEN.
R. S. MEIKLEJOHN.

RESERVATION BY SIR ARTHUR DOWNES AND MR. MEIKLEJOHN.

We sign subject to the following reservations:—

I. Paragraphs 218, 219, 220.

It is not clear that a "Ministry of Health" would be qualified to undertake the general care and supervision of the blind, unless it is also the "Ministry of Public Assistance." The term "public assistance" is here used in the sense in which it was applied both in the Majority and the Minority Reports of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws.

The Committee estimate that, apart from the amounts to be expended by the education authorities on the education and training of the blind, an annual expenditure of approximately a quarter of a million would be required by the new department. It is clear that by far the larger part of this would really be for purposes of public assistance. The principles involved do not concern the blind alone, there are other urgent needs, and the time cannot be long deferred when the whole question of public assistance, in all its forms, must be considered, and the existing systems consolidated on a broad and humane basis. In this consolidation any temporary provisions now made for the blind should take their place.

It is submitted that this procedure may solve or elucidate difficulties which are now postponed or else not mentioned. For example, it is proposed in the Committee's Report that, in addition to the quarter of a million for annual maintenance, a capital sum of, possibly, half a million would be needed by the new Central Authority for capital outlay on workshops. It does not appear whose property these new buildings would be; no provision is suggested for adequate public and elective representation and control, central or local, and in regard to this large expenditure and the general administration devolving from it.

II. Paragraphs 233, 234.

It is difficult to see how in Government contracts further preference could properly, or even with advantage to the blind themselves, be given to workshops for the blind. Such preference at the price of the "average accepted tender" has already been conceded; but there is evidence that even the highest accepted price would be insufficient. The position would be unsound. It is admitted that the output of the average blind worker is only equal to about half that of the sighted worker (paragraph 144), and to that extent he must be regarded as inefficient. But, if preference is given to the work of one class, it could not consistently be refused to other classes; the claims of the deaf and dumb, of the epileptic, the crippled, or others, would naturally be put forward, and a slippery slope to the endowment of inefficiency might thus be established.

Be it remembered also, that the workshops now in question would be aided from the rates and subsidised by the State: that their tenders are not always confined to goods actually made by the blind (Q. 8628), and also that claims would probably arise for exemption from the Workmen's Compensation Acts. These Acts, it is said (Qs. 7014-5, 8260), have considerably increased the number of blind or partially sighted workers in institutions. Clearly there would be objections by other traders and workers. Nor do the witnesses agree that preference is desirable. Augmentation of wages apart, "a workshop for the blind stands on an equal footing with a workshop for the seeing: there is no charity about it" (Q. 6629). "We get no preference at all" (Q. 1339); "we do not depend on sympathy, but on quality" (Q. 1343). The soundest position would apparently be to let the workshops run on business lines, and so experience the stimulus of healthy competition.

The application of a minimum wage to piece-work would, of course, be comparatively easy. It is not so clear how to apply it to time-work. Apparently infinite gradations of workers and of work would be requisite in the case of the blind or of other afflicted persons. Otherwise there must be the danger—illustrated in the evidence from New South Wales (Q. 1385-6)—that any flat-rate endowment, whether called "pension" or "minimum wage," must tend to sap the independence of the worker and to weaken his own voluntary effort.

To those who desire to thus avoid the risk of favouritism in the workshop, it may be replied that favouritism can be exercised in many ways; and that a surer guarantee for equitable treatment would probably be found in freedom of appeal to a representative body and in publicity.

(Signed) ARTHUR DOWNES.
R. S. MEIKLEJOHN.

RESERVATION BY SIR ARTHUR DOWNES.

I sign subject to the following reservation :—

Paragraph 222.

The recommendation, that "the examination of the blind should be made only by persons who are registered under the Medical Act and who possess competent knowledge of the "diseases of the eye" should, unfortunately, be qualified by a statement in a memorial from the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom, presented to the General Medical Council on May 29th, 1891, namely, that "it is notorious that the general body of the "profession does not possess a competent knowledge of diseases of the eye." The memorialists added, "In inviting the attention of the General Medical Council to the "desirability of including Ophthalmology as a compulsory part of the extended (five year) "Medical Curriculum, we beg to remind the Council that for some years past Ophthalmology "has formed a compulsory part of the ordinary Curriculum, and of the final examination in "Ireland, and at most of the Continental Schools." (Transactions of the Ophthalmological Society, Vol. XII. (1892), p. 225.) This matter still remains in 1917 as it stood in 1891.

(Signed) ARTHUR DOWNES.

RESERVATION BY MR. MEIKLEJOHN AND SIR ARTHUR DOWNES.

Whilst we are in general agreement with the recommendations and conclusions of the Report, we are unable to subscribe without reservations to those portions of it which call for a substantial Exchequer contribution for the various projects, outlined in the Report, for ameliorating the condition of the blind. The evidence given before the Committee undoubtedly shows that, if more funds were available, the hard lot of the blind, which appeals to the sympathy of everyone, could be alleviated in many respects. It must, however, be borne in mind that the blind are not the only afflicted members of the community, and that any State assistance afforded to them could with equal force be demanded on behalf of, for instance, deaf mutes and the paralysed. It is difficult to estimate with any accuracy what these new demands on the Exchequer would amount to, but beyond question the sums required would be substantial. A policy of State intervention on behalf of the blind and other afflicted classes, so far as this may involve the provision of funds, should, we submit, not be embarked upon until, after the re-establishment of peace, it is possible to ascertain, with an approach to accuracy which is now out of the question, the state of the national finances and the general commitments of the Exchequer.

If and when the principle of State assistance in lieu of, or supplementary to, private charity and poor relief be adopted in the case of the blind, there are the strongest reasons against the Exchequer being regarded as solely responsible for the provision of the necessary funds. There are numerous precedents (it will suffice to refer to the Mental Deficiency Act and the Maternity and Child Welfare grants) where public assistance has been given to supplement private charity for objects considered of national importance, but this public assistance has taken the form of the Exchequer contributing equally with the local authorities. We are of opinion that the legislation, which will presumably be necessary if effect is to be given to the main recommendations of the Committee, should secure the observance of the principle of the responsibility of the local authorities equally with the Central Government in matters affecting the care and welfare of any special class of citizen. It may indeed be anticipated that by contributing to private charitable agencies in respect of workshops and the awards of pensions local authorities will have smaller demands upon them on account of poor relief and workhouse accommodation; this consideration affords additional justification for the propriety of their co-operation with the Central Government in dealing with the problem of the blind.

As regards the provision of pensions for the old or incapable blind, strict regard should be had to the tendency, when State aid is available, for the fount of private charity to run dry. To counteract this, we think that it is essential that all public money, whether derived from Imperial or local sources, which is intended for pensions, should only be given on the condition that an exactly equivalent amount has been raised by subscriptions (as distinct from income from invested funds), and is being applied in the actual grant of pensions by the various charitable societies which will still be entrusted with the selection of pensioners. Such a condition should render the task of the societies in raising money easier, as there

would be an incentive for the public to subscribe, once it were realised that every pound an individual gave would produce a second, ten shillings of which would be provided by the Exchequer and ten shillings by the appropriate local authority.

(Signed) R. S. MEIKLEJOHN.
ARTHUR DOWNES.

RESERVATION BY SIR THOMAS STAFFORD.

I regret I cannot sign the Report of the Committee without reservation, as I am obliged to dissent from the recommendations with regard to the compulsory notification of ophthalmia neonatorum.

- (1) The notification of ophthalmia neonatorum in practice amounts to a notification that the mother is suffering from gonorrhœa.
- (2) The Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, in their Report dated 11th February 1916, decline to recommend the notification of gonorrhœa.
- (3) I am not prepared to go beyond the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases in this respect by recommending the notification of one form of gonorrhœa whilst gonorrhœa and syphilis are not generally notifiable diseases.
- (4) I am of opinion that in Cr  de's method of cleansing and treating the eyelids of all infants after birth we have a more efficacious means of preventing ophthalmia neonatorum than is provided by notification.

With the foregoing reservation on the subject of ophthalmia neonatorum I sign the Report, but on the express understanding that the general recommendations of the Committee so far as they can be made applicable to Ireland shall be applied, so that the provision made for the blind in Ireland may in all respects be equal to that in England and Scotland.

(Signed) T. J. STAFFORD.

APPENDIX I.

WITNESSES EXAMINED.

Sir ROBERT BLAIR: Education Officer of the London County Council.
 Dr. ALFRED EICHHOLZ: H.M. Inspector of Schools for the Blind (England and Wales).
 Miss WINIFRID HOLT: Hon. Secretary of the New York Association for the Blind.
 Mr. ALRIK LUNDBERG: President of the Swedish Blind Association.
 Mr. CHAS. F. F. CAMPBELL: Secretary of the Ohio State Commission for the Blind.
 Mr. H. R. LATIMER: Head Teacher of the Maryland School for the Blind.
 Mr. S. W. HEDGER: Assistant Manager, Sydney Industrial Blind Institution.
 Mr. W. W. McKECHNIE: H.M. Inspector of Schools in Scotland.
 Miss M. ROTHWELL: Head Mistress, Elm Court L.C.C. School for Blind Girls.
 Miss M. M. R. GARAWAY: Superintendent, Linden Lodge L.C.C. School for Blind Boys.
 Mr. GEORGE FLETCHER: Assistant Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.
 Mr. G. I. WALKER: Head Teacher, Sunderland Day School for the Blind.
 Mr. GUY M. CAMPBELL: Principal of the Royal Normal College for the Blind.
 Miss M. H. MURRAY: Teacher of the Blind under the Glasgow School Board.
 Miss M. E. BEASLEY: Formerly Hon. Secretary of the After Care Association for the Blind, &c.
 Mr. W. J. BEES: Inspector of Special Schools for Leeds.
 Mr. W. H. ILLINGWORTH: Superintendent of Henshaw's Blind Asylum.
 Mr. G. C. BROWN: Headmaster of Worcester College for the Blind.
 Mr. W. H. THURMAN: Superintendent of the Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind.
 Mr. A. J. STORY: Headmaster of the North Staffs Blind and Deaf School.
 Mr. W. M. STONE: Headmaster of the Royal Blind Asylum and School, Edinburgh.
 Mr. T. STODDART: Superintendent of the Royal Glasgow Asylum for the Blind.
 The Rev. J. W. ST. CLARE HILL: Principal of the Royal School for the Blind, Leatherhead.
 Mr. HENRY STAINSBY: Secretary General of the National Institute for the Blind.
 Mr. H. W. P. PINE: Superintendent of the Royal Midland Institution for the Blind.
 Mr. J. McNEILL: Chief Inspector of Schools in Ireland.
 Mr. W. ROCHFORD WADE: Representative for Dublin of the National Institute for the Blind.
 Mr. J. H. HEWITT: General Manager of the Belfast Institution for the Blind.
 Mr. W. E. ARMSTRONG: Superintendent of the Richmond National Institution for the Blind, Dublin.
 Mr. MILES PRIESTLEY: Manager of the Royal Institution for the Blind, Bradford.
 Mr. HOWARD MULLINS: Manager of the Incorporated Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Blind.
 Mr. A. V. SYMONDS: Assistant Secretary, Local Government Board, England.
 Mr. ALEXANDER OLIPHANT: Statistical Officer of the Local Government Board, Scotland.
 Dr. E. COEY BIGGER: Medical Inspector, Local Government Board, Ireland.
 Mr. J. FREW BRYDEN: Superintendent of the Mission to the Outdoor Blind, Glasgow.
 Mr. COLIN MACDONALD: Manager of the Royal Dundee Institution for the Blind.
 Miss J. MERIVALE: Hon. Secretary of the Midland Counties Union for the Blind.
 Miss M. A. GILBERT: Secretary of the Home Teaching Society for the Blind.
 Miss E. W. AUSTIN: Secretary and Librarian of the National Library for the Blind.
 Mrs. A. E. EVERETT: Headmistress of the Harvist Road L.C.C. School for Myopes.
 Mr. H. W. T. BOWYEAR: Secretary of the Charity Commission.
 Mr. STUART JOHNSON: Chairman of the Trustees of the Blind Man's Friend Charity.
 Mr. P. M. EVANS: Clerk of the Clothworkers' Company.
 Mr. HENRY H. HYAMS: Secretary of the Institute for the Relief of Blind Jews.
 Mr. GEORGE POCOCK: Joint Hon. Secretary of the Royal Blind Pension Society.
 Mr. W. LEMPRIERE: Deputy Clerk of Christ's Hospital.
 Mr. J. B. LAWFORD: Ophthalmic Surgeon to St. Thomas's Hospital and the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital.
 Dr. E. L. COLLIS: Medical Inspector of Factories, Home Office.
 Mr. BEN PURSE: Organising Secretary of the National League of the Blind.
 Sir WALTER S. PRIDEAUX: Clerk of the Goldsmiths' Company.
 Mr. H. E. PLATT: Head Music Master at the Birmingham Institution for the Blind.
 Mr. H. D. BLACK: Instructor in Typewriting at the Royal Normal College.
 Sir C. ARTHUR PEARSON: President of the National Institute for the Blind, and Chairman of the Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Care Committee.

APPENDIX II.

LIST OF INSTITUTIONS, SOCIETIES, AND CHARITIES FOR THE BLIND, ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE LOCALITIES IN WHICH THE INSTITUTIONS OR THEIR OFFICES ARE SITUATED.

(August 1916.)

The following statement is for the last year for which returns have been received, and is not presented as a complete list of all the societies for the blind.

With regard to pensions only, full information can be obtained from Mr. Stuart Johnson's "Annuities to the Blind" (published by Longmans).

Further information in regard to pensions and all institutions and societies for the blind is given in a pamphlet entitled "Information with regard to Institutions, Societies, and Classes for the Blind in the United Kingdom," by Mr. Henry J. Wilson. Copies can be obtained at the office of Gardner's Trust for the Blind, 53, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

Institutions in Counties and London are arranged alphabetically.

Name.	Object.	Income	
		from Investments in Stock and Real Property.	from Subscriptions and Donations.
BERKSHIRE: Reading Blind Aid Society - Wokingham Municipal Charities (Mrs. Sarah Yarnold).	Care of local adult poor blind of both sexes - Relief to four blind persons in Hurst or Ruscombe parishes.	£ 115 0 0 18 0 0	£ 160 0 0 —
CARMARTHENSHIRE: Carmarthenshire Blind Relief Society.	Provide pensions of 2s. 6d. and 5s. per month	—	49 2 6
CHESHIRE: Stockport Institution for the Blind, the Deaf, and the Dumb.	Relieve blind, deaf, and dumb, and supplement wages to workpeople.	311 5 4	239 9 11
CORNWALL: Dowager Lady Robinson's Fund.	Provide annuities of 10l. per annum in specified localities.	341 0 0	—
CUMBERLAND: Cockermouth: Hudson's Charity.	1l. 13s. 4d. per annum paid to three poor blind over 60.	10 0 0	—
DEVONSHIRE: Devonport and Western Counties Institution. Exeter: West of England Institute. Hazelwood Trust	Instruct and employ the blind - - - Instruct and employ the blind - - - Relief of blind within 21 miles' radius of Loddiswell. One-third of whole income for blind.	390 9 10 792 0 0 729 6 5	49 9 0 435 0 0 —
DURHAM: Gateshead: J. M. Elliott Charity. Sunderland and Durham County Royal Institution.	Provide maintenance, education, and general benefit for the blind in Newcastle and Gateshead. Train the blind, find employment, and see to general welfare.	363 14 6 —	— 389 4 6
ESSEX: Southend-on-Sea: Hawtree House Holiday Home.	Give fortnight's rest to blind. Working in connection with Indigent Blind Visiting Society.	—	92 19 1
GLAMORGANSHIRE: Cardiff Institute Swansea: Glynn Vivian Home of Rest. Swansea and South Wales Institution.	Provide employment for adult blind and supplement their earnings. Provide home for blind and others - - Provide education, ages 5-16, and instruction in trades to adult blind.	195 17 1 49 14 1 56 6 8	478 4 2 51 0 1 325 1 3
GLOUCESTERSHIRE: Bristol: Merlott's Charity	Provide annuities value 10l. per annum to those above 50 years of age and totally blind for 3 years. Must not be in receipt of parish relief or have an assured income of 20l. per annum.	492 8 3	—
Royal School of Industry -	Educate, assist, employ, and visit the blind -	1,692 0 3	233 19 0

Name.	Object.	Income	
		from Investments in Stock and Real Property.	from Subscriptions and Donations.
GLOUCESTERSHIRE—cont.			
Cheltenham and Gloucester Society.	Instruct and give work to the blind	£ 173 0 0	£ 53 0 0
Clifton Home for Blind Women.	Support 12 poor blind women	23 11 6	82 11 6
Gloucester: John Wintle's Charity.	Assist blind in Gloucester and neighbourhood	8 0 0	—
Stroud: Gyde Charity	Maintain, educate, train, support and benefit blind, deaf and dumb Protestant children, aged 16 to 18.	*1,000 0 0	—
HAMPSHIRE:			
Hants and Isle of Wight School and Home.	Educate and maintain blind children, and a workshop.	128 14 10	137 16 6
Portsmouth Corporation Scale Trust Fund.	Provide annuities of 30l. per annum to blind over 30 years of age, resident in Hants 5 years before election.	524 13 5	—
Southsea: Henry Moody's Charity.	Aid blind born and living in county of Southampton.	46 1 8	—
KENT:			
Canterbury: Mrs. Elizabeth Denward's Charity.	Assist 12 blind persons in county of Kent	46 0 4	—
Tunbridge Wells: Workshops for the Blind.	Help the blind, especially those who have lost their sight late in life.	287 15 0	220 1 9
LANCASHIRE:			
Accrington and District Society.	Employ and instruct and visit the blind and do all possible for prevention of blindness.	24 0 0	191 19 7
Blackburn Workshops	Instruct and employ blind	10 0 0	122 4 0
Bolton Schools and Workshops, Marsden Road.		256 12 0	302 11 8
Liverpool Schools for the Blind.	Maintain and educate blind from 5 to 16. Instruct blind from 16 to 45.	1,219 17 10	398 18 2
Liverpool Workshops for out-door Blind.	Train blind and provide work	386 10 11	848 13 5
Manchester: Henshaw's Blind Asylum.	Educate children, train and employ adults, provide home for aged, and weekly grants to poor.	3,561 5 4	499 14 8
Manchester and Salford Blind Aid Society.	Provide homes, occupation, and library, &c.	121 13 8	2,020 12 10
Oldham Workshops for the Blind.	Teach practical skip making and employ blind men in skip trade.	73 19 0	382 16 0
Blind Women's Industries	Provide employment for blind women of the town.	—	300 0 0
Preston: Fulwood Homes	Provide home for children and workshop accommodation.	530 14 11	267 9 3
Rosendale Society for Visiting and Instructing the Blind.	Afford relief and do all possible for prevention of blindness.	51 14 6	133 7 11
LEICESTERSHIRE:			
Leicester Association for the Welfare of the Blind.	Teach trades, give employment, library, give relief, and maintain cottage home.	180 0 0	655 0 0
Miss Sarah Barlow's Charity	Pensions, 8l. 15s. per annum to 10 blind women resident in Leicestershire.	87 10 0	—
LONDON:			
Association for the Welfare of the Blind.	Teach trades, provide employment, and grant pensions to those past work.	1,102 0 0	3,113 0 0
Barclay Workshop for Blind Women.	Employ girls trained at the Barclay Home, Brighton.	1 15 0	395 12 4
Blind Man's Friend (Day's) Charity.	Pensions of 20l., 16l., and 12l. to blind of both sexes.	3,702 0 7	—
Came's Charity	Pensions of 5l. per annum	580 0 0	—
Clothworkers' Company	Administration of various pensions and other funds:— Acton's Trust; Cornell's Trust; Mew's Trust; Newnam Trust; Thwaytes' Trust; West's Trust; Wing's Trust; Moore's Supplemental Trust; Blind Women Workers' Annuity Fund; Fund for Blind of Hastings and S. Leonards; Julia Short Annuity Fund; Elizabeth Love's Charity; Edward Gregory's Charity; Fawcett Memorial Scholarship Fund; Armitage Memorial Fund; Armitage Fund for Employment of Blind Workers; Leeds Embossed Books Fund; Armitage Indigent Blind Visiting Society; General Account No. 2 Fund.	7,619 8 0	—

* Not all available for blind.

Name.	Object.	Income	
		from Investments in Stock and Real Property.	from Subscriptions and Donations.
LONDON—cont.			
Cranborne Memorial Fund	Assist accepted candidates on waiting list of society for granting annuities to the poor adult blind.	£ 18 0 10	£ 10 0 0
East London Home and School.	Provide home and education to children wholly or partially blind, under the age of 16.	32 14 11	95 0 0
Eyes to the Blind Society	Employ blind women and girls, sell and buy goods, and provide workroom.	46 3 8	102 2 0
Gardner's Trust for the Blind.	Assist blind in England and Wales by instruction in music, trades, handicrafts, and professions other than music, and provide pensions.	10,049 17 11	21 1 0
Goldsmiths' Company	Administer following pension funds:— (a) Rachel Farmer's Charity (Pensions for the blind). (b) Harry Osborne Cureton's Charity (Pensions for blind in Middlesex, including London and Westminster, preferring Freemen of the Goldsmiths' Company and of the City of London, or their widows). (c) Goldsmiths' Company's voluntary pensions (Pensions for the blind in Middlesex, Surrey, Kent, Sussex, and Herts).	150 0 0	1,175 0 0
Hon. Miss Frances Harley's Charity.	Pensions of 20l. to blind poor persons	253 8 8	—
Hepburn Starey Blind Aid Society.	Temporal and spiritual welfare of the blind of London.	—	784 0 0
Hetherington's Charity	Annuities of 10l. to blind with certain qualifications.	8,569 1 5	1 0 6
Home Teaching Society (London). See National Institute.			
Howard's Charity	Benefit blind poor of parish of St. Marylebone	21 3 4	—
Humston's Charity (Aldgate Lordship Foundation).	Pensions of 12l. each to blind living in parishes of St. Botolph (within) Aldgate, St. Botolph (without) Aldgate, and certain parishes eastward thereof.	64 5 5	—
Indigent Blind Visiting Society.	Provide instruction, and visitors, guides, and relief where needed.	1,958 12 5	971 16 2
Institution for the Relief of Indigent Blind of Jewish Persuasion.	Grant pensions to the blind of Jewish faith	1,161 12 2	822 6 4
London Association for the Blind.	Train the blind of both sexes in handicrafts and give them employment.	—	2,060 0 0
London Society for Teaching the Blind.	Provide elementary, technical, and higher education, instruct in trades, workshops, &c.	322 6 9	439 12 6
Massage Institution for. See National Institute.			
Moon Society. See National Institute.			
National Blind Relief Society	Provide pensions to the blind poor in England, Scotland, and Wales.	33 14 10	3,161 0 10
National Institute	Promote education, employment, and general well-being of the blind.	1,080 7 5	*27,550 4 10
Brighton Home	Convalescent home for soldiers and sailors blinded in the war.	—	145 12 0
Home Teaching Society	Visit, teach, and assist the blind residing in their own homes.	60 13 1	820 19 8
Institute for Massage	Instruct the blind in massage	—	20 12 6
Moon Society	Publish and distribute embossed books in Moon type.	—	141 3 7
National Library for the Blind.	Circulate books in embossed types and organise voluntary labour to supplement the supply of books.	41 16 4	1,101 6 4
North London Homes for aged Christian Blind.	Provide domestic comforts for inmates	155 1 7	827 17 0
Painters' Company	Provide pensions of 10l. per annum	1,937 0 7	—
Rashdale's Charity	Pensions to blind poor females	25 0 0	—
Royal Blind Pension Society	Pensions to the blind poor	2,343 3 10	6,752 5 2
Royal Normal College and Academy of Music.	Train the blind as piano-tuners, organists, school teachers, shorthand typists, &c.	—	2,372 0 0

* Of this, the sum of 11,887l. 12s. 8d. is earmarked for blinded soldiers.

Name.	Object.	Income	
		from Invest- ments in Stock and Real Property.	from Subscrip- tions and Donations.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
LONDON—cont.			
Society for Granting Annuities to the Poor Adult Blind.	Pensions value 6 <i>l.</i> or 10 <i>l.</i> to the blind poor	847 0 0	1,544 0 0
South London Association	Improve social and religious condition of indigent blind (principally in South London), and assist them when necessary.	87 9 1	265 19 4
South London Institute	Organise work for the blind by providing bureau, polytechnic, and home.	16 0 0	1,346 0 0
West London Workshops	Teach trade and give employment to the adult blind.	49 12 0	505 10 9
Workshops for the Blind of Kent.	Teach trades to the blind of Kent, and give employment.	331 13 1	120 3 5
MONMOUTHSHIRE:			
Newport and Monmouth Blind Aid Society.	Teach and assist the blind in their homes, and provide workshop and shop for sale of goods.	—	143 0 9
NORFOLK:			
Norwich Asylum and School	Teach trades to blind over 16, give employment and provide home for those over 55.	650 7 7	277 17 3
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE:			
Northampton: Northampton and County Association and George Phillips' Trust.	Promote the general welfare of the blind and make allowances to indigent blind persons.	—	288 6 0
Oundle: Clifton's Charity	Assist two blind poor in Oundle	9 1 10	4 8 2
NORTHUMBERLAND:			
Newcastle-upon-Tyne Royal Victoria School.	Educate and train the blind and assist in providing them with employment.	1,033 2 1	630 13 9
Workshops for the Blind	Help and employ the blind	17 14 0	703 2 11
North Shields: Northern Counties Blind Society.	Teach, visit, and employ the blind, and lend them embossed books.	33 14 9	288 12 7
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE:			
Nottingham: Royal Midland Institution.	Educate the blind and teach them trades above the age of 16, provide employment and supplement earnings, and make grants to old pupils and keep in touch with same.	771 12 3	628 12 3
OXFORDSHIRE:			
Oxford Municipal Charities.	Provide annuities for five blind persons resident in the city of Oxford.	91 0 0	—
PEMBROKESHIRE:			
Blind Relief Society	Provide pensions, 5 <i>s.</i> month	—	48 16 3
STAFFORDSHIRE:			
Stafford: Alice Fenton's Charity.	Provide pension to a blind resident in county of Stafford.	5 4 0	—
Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent	Provide occupation for the blind of North Staffordshire.	41 0 7	321 1 9
Walsall, Wednesbury, and District Society.	Care of the blind, and provide employment	—	227 14 4
Wolverhampton Society	Better the conditions of indigent out-door blind of district.	208 0 5	159 10 4
SUFFOLK:			
Ipswich and Suffolk Institution.	Provide relief to the blind	19 0 8	55 18 3
SURREY:			
Leatherhead: Royal School for the Indigent Blind.	Residential institution to educate and train the blind.	7,205 0 0	2,041 0 0
SUSSEX:			
Brighton: Asylum for the Blind	Provide religious and general instruction of the blind.	95 11 8	155 16 2
Barclay Home and School	Provide education of blind and partially blind girls, technical education for adults, employment and home for some old and middle-aged women.	1 2 6	211 7 7
Home for the Blind. See National Institute.			
Catsfield Rectory: Fuller's Blind Charity.	Provide pensions or blind	60 0 0	—

Name.	Object.	Income	
		from Invest- ments in Stock and Real Property.	from Subscrip- tions and Donations.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
SUSSEX—cont.			
Hastings and S. Leonards Special School.	Care for and training blind children too mentally defective for ordinary schools.	—	126 1 0
St. Leonards-on-Sea Convalescent Home.	Provide convalescent home for blind recovering from hospital treatment, and holiday home for blind workers and homeless children.	13 15 2	20 0 5
WARWICKSHIRE:			
Birmingham: Royal Institution for the Blind.	Educate the blind, and train them in some occupation, assist them in starting business, employ workers, relieve needy and visit the aged.	851 5 4	2,166 0 10
William Stevenson Trust.	Provide pensions, 10 <i>l.</i> , to widows resident in Handsworth, blind not less than three years.	116 14 1	—
WORCESTERSHIRE:			
Worcester: College for the Higher Education of the Blind.	Give public school education to blind boys, 8-19, and some older cases.	358 1 7	—
Corbett Charity	Provide pensions to blind poor in city and county of Worcester.	349 12 4	—
YORKSHIRE:			
Bradford: Royal Institution	Provide technical training and employment for the blind, supplement earnings, visit the sick and old.	315 13 5	1,570 7 3
John Harrison Fund, Miss Holloway Memorial, Mrs. Lythall Memorial, Queen Victoria Fund, Ada Wand Memorial.	Provide pensions	265 18 4	—
Cleveland and South Durham Workshops.	Provide training and work, and promote agencies for the blind.	—	419 9 9
Halifax Society	Provide home teaching and assistance at school and in employment.	217 10 5	196 0 4
Hull Blind Institution	Provide occupation, also a library; visit and supervise welfare of the blind.	109 15 10	494 18 4
Leeds United Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and the Dumb.	Maintain workshops for teaching trades and finding employment for the blind; visit and relieve them.	737 11 11	934 3 2
Rockcliffe Home for Blind Women.	Provide home for women	80 19 4	16 11 6
Sheffield Institution	Provide education, technical training, and employment of the blind, grant pensions, and provide home for the blind.	959 6 4	303 18 8
Wakefield and District Workshops.	Provide workshop and find sale for goods. Teach Braille and Moon, and lend books; visit sick and provide benefit fund, and visit aged.	—	423 18 6
Whitby: Workshop for the Blind	Provide workroom and shop for sale of articles produced.	—	13 12 0
Whitby Trust	Provide pensions and benefit blind resident in Whitby urban and rural districts.	40 2 5	15 15 0
York Emanuel	Relieve ministers and their wives, widows and children, in any part of kingdom, afflicted with blindness or idiocy.	*485 18 11	—
Wilberforce Memorial School	Educate and train children, and provide work for adults.	1,769 19 9	431 10 6
Dorothy Wilson's Charity	Provide hospital for 16 women with pensions. Pensions, 5 <i>l.</i> per annum, for eight blind. Educational.	798 7 11	16 18 6
SCOTLAND.			
Aberdeen Asylum for the Blind	Provide industrial training and employment for the blind born or resident in the counties of Aberdeen, Kincardine or Banff.	170 12 4	651 13 5
Town and County Association	Visit and teach the blind in certain counties and lend or give books. Teach and employ them and see to their general welfare.	24 18 4	301 17 11

* Not all this sum is given to the blind.

Name.	Object.	Income	
		from Invest-ments in Stock and Real Property.	from Subscrip-tions and Donations.
Dundee and Lochee Mission to the Outdoor Blind.	Visit and care for the blind. Help them to get pensions, and provide means for operations for the restoration of sight.	£ 50 13 7	£ 346 4 7
Royal Institution for the Blind	Educate the blind and train them in trades, and provide employment and board and lodging when possible, for a certain number of inmates.	498 8 9	904 3 1
Webster and Davidson Mortification.	Assist blind persons and educate blind children.	671 14 3	—
EDINBURGH: Society for Teaching the Adult Blind to Read at their Own Homes.	Visit and teach and supply books to the blind. Provide work, grant pensions, and see to general welfare.	800 11 7	541 6 2
Mrs. Jane Stobie Clark Fund	Assist deserving blind women, and those almost blind; preference given to those over 50.	162 18 8	—
Royal Blind Asylum and School.	Give education and industrial training to the blind, provide work and employment, and supplement earnings. Aid in sickness and old age, and provide pensions.	2,013 0 0	1,252 0 0
Fife and Kinross Society	Visit the blind, teach them to read, and provide literature. Train in home industries, provide employment, and sell their work.	22 6 5	157 17 1
GLASGOW: Royal Asylum for the Blind	Give educational, technical, and industrial training, and provide home to children. Teach trades and provide employment for adults, and see to general welfare.	801 5 1	3,430 10 9
Mission to Outdoor Blind for Glasgow and West of Scotland, Ladies' Auxiliary Mission	Visit the blind in certain counties, teach them to read, and provide books. Give grants.	273 8 11	1,443 13 9
Inverness: Northern Counties Institute.	Visit blind women in their own homes, teach and sell knitting, and provide work. Give help to poor.	74 9 3	468 4 5
Paisley and District Workshop	Educate the blind and train them in mattress and basket making, and provide home teaching.	143 13 1	262 15 1
	Teach occupations to the blind whereby they can earn livelihood with some assistance.	—	271 17 0
IRELAND.			
Armagh: Macan Asylum for the Blind.	Maintain the blind	491 10 5	—
BELFAST: Association for Employment of Industrious Blind.	Teach trades and provide employment, assist and supplement earnings, and pension the aged.	157 15 6	633 4 11
Home Mission	Benefit the blind	1,100 0 0	—
Ulster: Society for Promoting the Education of the Deaf and Dumb and Blind.	Educate deaf and dumb and blind	1,503 0 0	904 0 0
CORK: Asylum for Industrious Blind St. Raphael's Blind Asylum	Maintain and educate the blind Provide home for destitute blind girls. Educated and taught trades, which latter help towards support of the home.	34 13 5	141 2 0
DUBLIN: Association for Relief of Indigent Blind and Library. National Institution and Molyneux Asylum. Richmond National Institution. St. Joseph's Asylum, Drumcondra. St. Mary's Female Blind Asylum, Merrion. Limerick: Asylum for Blind Females.	Assist the blind, poor of Dublin Provide school for the young and home for the aged. Give instruction to help the industrious blind to be self-supporting. Maintain, educate, train and employ destitute blind. Educate young blind girls, and provide home for destitute blind women. Maintain and instruct needy blind women	13 17 10 2,017 18 7 945 0 0 734 9 6 1,220 0 0 152 13 2	152 0 0 397 4 0 30 0 0 194 17 6 1,885 16 10 82 10 1

APPENDIX III.

The Royal Society of Medicine.

SECTION OF OPHTHALMOLOGY.

THE DEFINITION OF BLINDNESS.

Being a Report prepared at the request of the Local Government Board Departmental Committee on the Welfare of the Blind—by a Special Committee appointed by the Council. Amended and adopted by the Council 21st July 1915.

Blindness is, strictly speaking, the inability to distinguish light from darkness. This definition is precise, but too exclusive for the purpose in hand, which relates to the education, employment, and maintenance of the blind. Many persons who can perceive light, and in some degree the form of objects, are yet practically blind as regards the ordinary activities of life, and it would be unreasonable to withhold from them such aid as is given to the totally blind. The task of the Committee, therefore, has been to consider what classes of persons should be regarded as *practically blind*, and how they may best be distinguished from the rest of the community.

In the first place, it must be pointed out that it is impossible to frame any precise definition of practical blindness which would suitably apply in all cases. It is necessary at the outset to adopt different standards for children and for adults, for the special needs of the afflicted children relate to elementary education, while those of the adults relate to industrial or professional training or to the granting of monetary aid. These must be separately considered.

As regards *children*, an authoritative rule is already in existence. It relates to elementary education. The Act of Parliament entitled "An Act to make better provision for the Elementary Education of Blind and Deaf Children in England and Wales" (56 & 57 Vict., ch. 42, September 12, 1893, section 15), says: "In this Act the expression 'blind' means too blind to be able to read the ordinary school books used by children."

This rule appears to work satisfactorily. It is obviously wanting in precision, but this is not necessarily a fault. It would be possible to supplement it by laying down numerical standards, but if this were done it would be necessary to insist that these standards should not be rigidly applied. The reason is that there are many children, e.g., those with high myopia, whose visual acuity is fairly good, but who yet cannot follow the ordinary school course without further loss of sight.

The Committee, therefore, does not recommend any modification of the rule already in force under Act of Parliament with regard to children. It desires, however, in this connexion to draw attention to three matters of practical importance—

(a) For the safe and suitable education of the afflicted children it is not sufficient to class them according to *degrees* of blindness only; it is necessary to distinguish the *nature* of the defects. This can be done only by a person who in addition to medical training has had special experience of disorders of the eye. It is therefore important that the authorities should, whenever possible, entrust the duty of classifying the children in this respect only to persons known to be so qualified.

(b) For children who are too "blind" to read the ordinary school books, but yet too "sighted" for a Blind School, where eyesight is hardly used at all, and where reading is only taught by the Braille method, there is at present in many places no special provision. Where there is no sufficient need for a separate so-called Myope School such children should be taught in special classes in the ordinary schools. Local authorities have power to make this provision. More attention might well be given to the matter.

(c) According to the Act of Parliament, the children whose needs are best met by the special class or the Myope School are classed as "blind." But they are not blind in the ordinary sense of the word. In dealing with them the term "blind" should be avoided as far as possible. It places a stigma on them which their condition does not justify, and raises opposition on the part of parents to their education by the methods which are best for them.

As regards *adults* there is at present no authoritative rule as to what persons should be regarded as practically blind. The standards adopted by philanthropic agencies are far from uniform. As used in the Census the term "blind" carries no precise meaning. This is not surprising, for the only precise definition of blindness which can be given is that which stands at the beginning of this Report, whereas for the practical purposes of social economy and philanthropy a wider meaning must be given to the term.

In the Bill now before Parliament to provide for the Technical Education, Employment, and Maintenance of the Blind, the following definition is given (page 6): "In this Act the expression 'blind' means too blind in the opinion of the local authority to perform work for which eyesight is ordinarily required."

This definition follows the principle already in operation under the Act relating to blind children. It states no precise standard, but leaves the responsible authority free to judge each case on its merits. The Committee is of opinion that this principle is the right one, and that the definition given in the Bill should be adopted, subject to the substitution of the word "essential" for the words "ordinarily required." The need for this substitution may be shown by an example:—

A blind typist or pianoforte tuner performs "work for which eyesight is ordinarily required." Therefore, according to the definition in the Bill the term "blind" does not apply to him. Let the definition read "too blind to perform work for which eyesight is essential," and his case is covered.

The Committee has carefully considered the advisability of supplementing the foregoing definition by numerical standards expressing degrees of blindness. Experience shows that persons whose acuity of vision (refractive error being corrected) is below *one-twentieth* of the normal ($\frac{20}{400}$ Snellen) are usually unable to perform work requiring eyesight, while persons with vision better than *one-tenth* ($\frac{20}{200}$ Snellen) are usually able to perform some such work. Persons with intermediate degrees may or may not be able; much depends on intelligence and bodily strength, and much on the nature of the blindness. A person whose so-called blindness depends on defects in the centre of the visual field may fail to reach a given standard and yet be able to perform some kinds of work requiring eyesight, while another person suffering from great contraction of the field of vision may surpass the same standard and yet be unable to walk alone or to do any kind of work requiring eyesight.

The Committee is of opinion that the numerical limitations mentioned above are likely to be useful as preliminary guides, but that until experience has been gained through the working of the Act they should be regarded as purely tentative. The certifying authority should not be bound by any precise numerical standard.

By what method are applicants for benefit under the Act to be examined and certified as eligible?

The Bill provides that the word "blind" shall mean "too blind in the opinion of the local authority," &c., and it defines "local authority" as "the council of any county or county borough." It does not prescribe the method by which the local authority shall arrive at an opinion. The Committee regards this question as one of great importance in relation to the equitable working of the Act. It suggests that the method should be laid down by law and that in principle it should be as follows:—

(1) Every applicant for benefit under the Act should be duly examined and certified as eligible or ineligible according to the provisions of the Act, by a person or persons approved for the purpose by the local authority.

(2) The local authority should approve for this purpose persons only who are registered under the Medical Act and who produce evidence of possessing competent knowledge of diseases of the eye.

(3) In every case a certificate should be given on a form provided for the purpose. The certificate should state in detail the facts elicited by the examination (including, if possible, the original cause of the blindness), together with the grounds on which the applicant is certified as *eligible* or *ineligible* for benefit under the Act. It should also state whether the case should or should not be *reexamined* at a future time.

(4) All such certificates should be subject to supervision by an inspector or assessor appointed by the central authority or Secretary of State. There should be a right of appeal to the inspector in any case in which the justice of a certificate is called in question, whether in the interest of the applicant or of the public funds.

The foregoing suggestions are based to some extent on the regulations already in force under the Acts relating to mental defects. Certification of the mentally affected is carefully safeguarded in the interest of individual liberty, in order that no person may be brought under the provisions of the Acts without good reason. Certification of the blind will need to be safeguarded not only in order that the genuinely afflicted may receive their due, but that improper claims may be rejected.

Experience shows that many persons are willing to exaggerate their visual incapacity, and some even to feign blindness where none exists, in the hope of obtaining monetary or other advantage. Insurance societies habitually submit claims of this kind to the judgment of an ophthalmic surgeon before agreeing to pay compensation. Exaggerated and dishonest claims are unfortunately not infrequent. In some cases the attempt to deceive is detected easily; in others, only by means of elaborate tests. Every member of the Committee, and probably every ophthalmic surgeon, could cite cases of the kind from his own experience. Here are three examples:—

A young woman, professing loss of sight through accident, was granted compensation at the rate of 4s. 6d. a week. She received it for seven years. She received, in addition, much charitable aid. She was for three years an inmate of a blind institution. Ultimately the Insurance Company, being suspicious, demanded a trial. By order of the judge the patient was placed under the observation of an ophthalmic surgeon and a physician. She was proved to be a malingerer. A severe reprimand was administered by the judge and the compensation was withdrawn.

A young man with imperfect sight obtained a pass permitting him to travel by tramcar free of charge. It was given to him by a non-medical official of a society for the blind. He was found to be in the habit of riding a bicycle to the place where he joined the tramcar.

A man in jail, awaiting trial for burglary with violence, awoke one morning—so he asserted—completely blind. He appeared unable to dress or feed himself. He groped with his hands when made to walk alone. The prison surgeon suspected malingering but could not prove it. An ophthalmic surgeon demonstrated it by means of the prism test. (When both eyes are in use a suitable prism held in a suitable position before either eye leads to an involuntary movement of the eye for the avoidance of double vision.) The man was told that his blindness would disappear as suddenly as it came, and that its continuance would be likely to get him into further trouble. It was gone within a day or two. This man was a dangerous criminal and had been several times convicted. No doubt he hoped that blindness would excite compassion at the coming trial and mitigate the sentence.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the benefits which it is now proposed to confer upon the blind will offer to many persons a new and great temptation to exaggerate their incapacity, and that the establishment by law of an efficient and impartial method of examining and certifying applicants is a matter of far-reaching importance.

The Committee has suggested that the certificate should state, whenever possible, the original cause of the blindness. The chief reason for such statement is that the statistics obtained in this way would prove valuable in relation to measures for preventing blindness.

It has also suggested that the certificate should state whether re-examination at a future time is, or is not, desirable. In the large majority of cases probably a single thorough examination will be sufficient and final, but in some a subsequent examination may show recovery of sight—*e.g.*, cases in which a corneal opacity clears spontaneously with lapse of time, and cases of cataract in which good vision is restored by means of operation. On the other hand, persons who are certified as ineligible when first examined may be found eligible at a later time.

A question of importance remains to be considered. Should assistance be given under the Act to persons who wilfully and unreasonably refuse or neglect treatment which is likely to restore their sight? Should it be given to those who wilfully perpetuate or even cause their blindness by their own act? Such persons are not numerous at present, but they are likely to increase in number unless they are excluded from the benefits of the Act. Neglect of timely treatment in cases of eye disease is already far too frequent. If such neglect should carry with it a reward of 10s. a week for life it is likely to become more frequent. Again, among those who become incapacitated through "tobacco blindness" there are already a few who deliberately choose to remain idle rather than to give up their tobacco. If monetary relief be given in such cases their number will certainly increase.

In the opinion of the Committee the benefits of the Act should not be extended to persons who unreasonably refuse to take measures for the recovery of their eyesight.

In urging that the administration of the Act should be carefully safeguarded the Committee has in mind not only the waste of public money which would otherwise occur, but also the harm which would be done to the character of the persons concerned. In order to do the maximum of good and the minimum of harm the

persistent aim of those who administer the Act should be to provide useful occupation for the afflicted persons and to help them, whenever possible, to help themselves.

PRIESTLEY SMITH,
President of the Ophthalmological Section of the Royal Society of Medicine.

LESLIE PATON,
Honorary Secretary of the Ophthalmological Section of the Royal Society of Medicine.

APPENDIX IV.

PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES TO SOLDIERS AND SAILORS PROVIDED BY ROYAL WARRANTS AND ORDERS IN COUNCIL.

Blinded Officers.

The regulations make special provision for officers who have lost their sight completely through wounds *received in action*, ensuring that they shall not receive less than 300l. a year. They might receive considerably more, especially during the first year.

The rates for totally disabled officers, including the blind, are being increased in the new Warrant, a draft of which has just been issued, and will be from 175l. a year upwards according to rank. In addition it will be possible in many cases to grant an allowance, not exceeding 78l. a year, where the constant attendance of another person is necessary.

In other respects the blinded officer will share the advantages to be given to officers disabled by war service, *e.g.*, children's education allowances, or the alternative pension based on pre-war earnings.

Blinded N.C.O.'s and Men.

The Royal Warrant makes the following provisions for N.C.O.'s and men who are discharged as medically unfit for further service in consequence of loss of sight:—

1. *Total loss of Sight:*

- (a) Flat rate pension according to rank and degree of disablement, 27s. 6d. to 42s. 6d.
- (b) *Loss of Vision of one Eye.*—13s. 9d. to 21s. 3d.
- (c) Alternative pension, 27s. 6d. to 75s., based on pre-war earnings.

2. *Allowance for Attendance.*—A sum not exceeding 20s. in any case where the constant attendance of a second person is necessary.

3. *Treatment or Training:*

- (a) An allowance not less than that corresponding to the highest degree of disablement where treatment or training necessitates the man living away from home.
- (b) A further allowance to his wife and children, or to a dependant, not less than the pensions and allowances to which if eligible, they would have been entitled as widows and dependents of a deceased soldier.

4. *Bonus.*—A sum of 5s. for each week of the period during which a man has been undergoing training.

