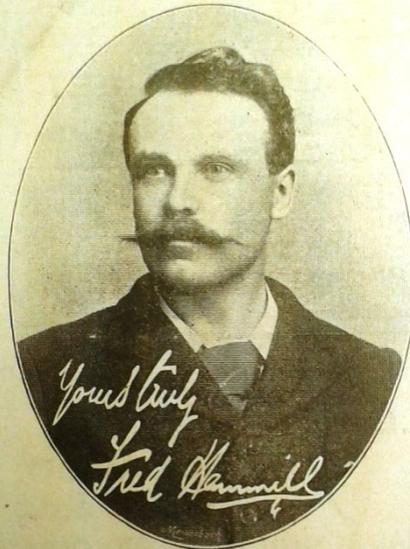


# OUT OF WORK

The Problem of the UNEMPLOYED.

BY



**FRED HAMMILL.**

"I have pointed out to you, to the best of my power, what your duties are. The amelioration of your present condition can only result from your participation in the political life of the nation. Until you obtain the franchise, your wants and aspirations will never be truly represented. On the day in which you follow the example of too many, and separate the social from the political questions, saying—'We will work out our own emancipation, whatever be the form of institution by which our country is governed'—that day you yourselves decree the perpetuity of your own political servitude."—*Joseph Mazzini.*

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# OUT OF WORK

## THE PROBLEM OF THE UNEMPLOYED

THE National and International question of increasing unemployment, affecting as it does all other social and political questions, every industry, class and constituency in the United Kingdom is daily becoming more and more serious. Its increasing magnitude, however examined or analyzed, presents many difficulties in the way of economic and permanent solution. What a variety of social problems are hinged and linked to this one question of forced unemployment! The land question; increased population; invention and introduction of labour-saving machinery and appliances; keen competition between employers, producers, consumers, and middlemen; individual as against collective ownership; and a thousand and one minor questions, reforms and interests which have to be considered.

The unemployed labour world is the cesspool or scrap heap of labour into which helplessly merge the loafer, the dosser and the criminal, and unfortunately the legitimate worker, skilled and unskilled. Public attention during the past ten years has been largely attracted by London riots, agitation, demonstration and discussion, followed with an annual unemployed crop or harvest in

all our provincial centres The ever growing army of starvation and discontent oft comes seething forth from court, slum and alley to give by ocular demonstration and organised procession some practical proof of its reality, its wants, and its requirements, and, if possible, the absolute necessity of public attention and State solution. From every town and city in England the wail of forced idleness, poverty and despair is heard. For years these cries have gone up unheard, unheeded and neglected by authoritative and responsible persons. In some instances temporary relief through over sympathetic philanthropists and charity organisations has quieted the cravings of hunger, but at the same time demoralized the recipient.

See, during the cold winter months mustering on Tower Hill, that rendezvous of outpouring lament and discontent, made memorable by the pleadings and oratory of many an honest cause, some thousands of half-starved, ill-clad, pinch-faced, shrunken, soulless frames, gathered together to march to the West End — another rendezvous — that of wealth, luxury, pleasure and happy contentment. Sickening sight indeed! Yes, in London, the wealthiest city in the world, where scores of thousands of our fellow-workers, fellow-countrymen are exposed and paraded for public view as remnants and outcasts for which our present Society has no room and apparently no care or consideration. Hence there assembles among the mass of waifs and strays, cast-offs

from every trade and occupation, many, very many men who once were the pride of their trade, many who have been gazed on in the ranks of our army and navy as the brave defenders of our country, but now rank in the regiment of unemployed labour, hopelessly anxious for honest employment. True, there are many loafers, chronic loafers, habituals of the casual ward who never did work, don't want work, and never will work, but also on the other side there are men humiliated and ashamed with their helpless position, not asking for charity, not seeking relief, but demanding honest employment which, in England, ought not to be denied them. I have seen these men form into line four deep, quietly, silently and orderly commence their dismal march to the West, passing by way of Cannon Street and Ludgate Circus towards Piccadilly Circus, with the rain descending in torrents, which made many whose only shirt was a thin scarf, look up heavenwards, shrug their shoulders and fall out disheartened. The flags and banners drenched with rain dropped, flapped and clung to their staves, but on went the silent unemployed. Scoffed at by the ordinary London snob; sympathised with and sighed for by many a British heart, they hopelessly trudged along, hardly knowing whither they were going or what they were to obtain. On through fashionable Piccadilly, Oxford Street, the Marble Arch, and into Hyde Park marched this pitiful soulless mass, not to fill their empty stomachs, not to ask for relief, pity or charity, but to

carry a resolution calling upon the Government to propose, suggest or legislate that honest employment by some means should be found them. It may be said that the more respectable worker would not do this. Perhaps not. "Then," it may wisely be asked, "how many are there at home who slowly starve and die in preference to joining processions, seeking and soliciting employment?" A late Report issued by the Government on "Deaths and Suicides from Starvation," furnish us with an answer and ample proof that many prefer death to pauperisation, prefer slow starvation or suicide to the ignominy of sapped independence that charity entails.

Governments of both political sides have vaguely discussed this great question, without either grasping its enormity or foreseeing its dangers if neglected, having so limited their discussions that they hardly touched the fringe of the real question to which are closely attached, an eight hour day; emigration and immigration; pauper aliens; poor law reform; administration or abolition; population; national pensions; allotments; State ownership of land; labour colonies; increase of naval defences and harbours of refuge; labour colonies; opening up of waste lands, etc. Discussion, however, can no longer be stifled, remedies no longer delayed, and the safety-valve of free speech is fast becoming a dangerous valve emitting destructive bombs in place of unnoticed vaporous or gaseous speeches.

Alike in London and the provinces, Municipalities and Vestries have been interviewed, Boards of Guardians have been approached, County Councils have been offered suggestions, and had proposals laid before them, Conferences have been held, members of Parliament. have been written to and consulted, and, under the present Government, the House of Commons have decided, by an overwhelming majority of 175 to 33, that it will turn a deaf ear to the cry of the workless workers. While Mr. Fowler smiled, Mr. Keir Hardie pleaded, Professor Stuart reasoned, and reactionary Balfour spoke words of seeming satisfaction, the indisputable fact remained that London had 200,000 unemployed, 105,347 of whom were chargeable on the poor rates during one month in the past year, or 9,000 more than in the year 1890. Hull has 7,000, Barrow-in-Furness 5,000, Birmingham 5,000, Liverpool 3,000, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northampton, and other industrial centres are similarly distressed: Nationally we have an estimated army of a million-and-a-half of unemployed at certain periods of the year. Statistically and positively proven we have 750,000, who, with women children, and dependants represent 4,000,000 persons. This ill-considered mass numbers almost as many people as lived in England during the reign of Elizabeth. This question, therefore, of the unemployed, with all its varied complications and difficulties, urgently demands above all others the serious attention of every

citizen, whether he be Tory or Whig, Liberal or Radical, landlord or capitalist, church-man or dissenter, church or social reformer, and more particularly of the worker himself.

National and Municipal remedies, permanently established, are needed. The charity blanket of the parson will neither cover or hide this ever increasing social cancer. The soup of the squire inadequately supplies the monster vulture — hunger. Both in their turn have served a temporary purpose and giving temporary relief, have soothed the temporary cravings of starving men, women and children, but the day of sympathy and charity has gone. Honest labour demands honest employment, and it is the imperative duty of a government to see that man has not to choose between starvation or crime, that woman has not to accept either “the crumb of charity or the loaf of lust,” and that their children shall not be stranded in the starving desert of civilization. Government, the largest employer of labour in this country, has the power to set a noble example to private employers by fixing a security and standard of employment for all its workers and servants. A rigid eight hour day should be established in every State department, Factory, Arsenal, Dockyard, Store or office. Trades Union rates of wages should be established throughout with a minimum wage of 24s. per week. These conditions only mean at most “a living wage,” and should also be enforced on every employer or contractor

who does a £'s worth of work for the government. An "Hours of Labour (Crown etc. servants) Bill" is now before the House of Commons, backed by Messrs. Macdonald, Beaufoy, Burns, Evans and Hardie, and is termed now "A Bill to limit Labour in the service of the Crown, of Local Authorities, and of Railway Companies to Eight Hours a day." Clause 3 says: "Any Officer in any department of the public service ordering or requiring any person in public employment to remain at work for a period in excess of eight hours in any one day or forty eight in any one week, except in cases of special unforeseen emergency, shall be liable to a fine not exceeding ten pounds." Were this Bill carried through, though small in its way towards any real solution of the unemployed question, it would mean the immediate employment of thousands of men. And, if this Bill was to do nothing but abolish all overtime, it would give employment to many who are now tramping the streets. Here it may justifiably be said that it is a crime to employ a man for 16 hours a day if another is starving for want of work. An Eight Hour on all railways would at once absorb 100,000 men from the unemployed. The Bill is opposed by Railway Directors and Shareholders, whose only hope, whose only care, is dividends, who never exercise a single thought by what means a dividend be obtained if only it be obtained. Life, limb, humanity, are entirely beside their view of saturated selfishness. The 100,000 additional hands required by an

Eight Hour day can be obtained at a cost or sacrifice of 1 per cent on the distributed profit on all railways throughout the United Kingdom. Not only is this a necessary step on behalf of unemployed labour, but also on behalf of those already employed. Government returns prove that in 1887, 600,000 cases were given where men worked over 13 hours and upwards per day, one case reaching 32 hours without relief. Who can wonder that in 1892, 534 were killed and 2915 injured, and that, in the month of April, 1893, 27 were killed and 174 injured? Here the employed and unemployed may reasonably demand immediate legislation from our present Government. Every trade, industry and occupation can be almost identically treated, hence the general demand for an eight hour day for all trades and industries.

The Government might see that the 18,000 Post Offices were utilized for obtaining accurate and reliable statistical data of the unemployed; or establish a Labour Bureau in every District Council, parish or vestry area completely equipped and systematised. The loafer, tramp, thief and “won’t work” could be distinguished and dealt with distinctly apart from the bona-fide worker.

The House of Commons last year, adjourned for the discussion of “swine fever” (they refused to adjourn to discuss the unemployed question). Several hours of

discussion followed, members were sympathetic and earnest, and even waxed eloquent over the condition of the poor pigs. On the sympathy and broad humanitarian consideration of that generous and august assembly £60,000 was voted to improve the Social condition of the Swine population.

Humane conditions for animals are not denied in this country, Christian England. But, alas! Sorrowful indeed it is to know the truth, that in civilized England to-day the pig is of more value than the human being, and well may the hopeless cry —

“Oh God that bread should be so dear  
And flesh and blood so cheap!”

In this England of ours, while our towns are overcrowded, rural districts are being deserted. While in our Colonies there is bread and to spare, our lands, the people's inheritance, are closed; laid waste and neglected. Rampant poverty, starvation, wretchedness, misery and despair, the outcome of

“Man's Inhumanity to Man,”

can be swept away. The remedy for this evil is in our own hands, an evil which, if not swept away, must be destructive to the very existence of social order, discipline and civilization, for despair knows no control; government must be made to mean government, not neglect; evils cannot be cured by neglect. Thorold

Rogers<sup>1</sup> says, “I have done my best to make people better informed. The misery of the poor was the deliberate act of the legislature, of the justices’ assessments, of the enclosures the appropriation of commons, and the determination, as Mr. Mill has said, on the part of landowners to appropriate everything, even the air we breathe if it could be brought about.”

A commercial crisis, such as that through which we are now passing, brings in its train increased unemployment. The ever-increasing productiveness of human industry causes the crisis to occur more and more frequently: every branch of trade and industry becomes more disorganised, hence the mass of workers find themselves helplessly divided into two distinct armies of employed and unemployed. It is being continuously increased, without much notice being authoritatively taken, and year by year the latter of those armies becomes larger by the rapid multiplication of population, a multiplication which, if continued at the present ratio for a hundred years, will increase our population from thirty-seven millions to two hundred and ninety-six millions of people. During the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the population of England and Wales increased very slowly, in fact was almost stationary, and

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<sup>1</sup> Industrial and Commercial History of England, by J.E. Thorold Rogers (page 54).

did not amount to more than between two and a quarter and two and a half millions of people. As the population increased towards the close of the eighteenth century, it sank deeper and deeper into misery, and can be increasingly traced to the moment of our own time. Here I agree with John Stuart Mill, who said, "It still remains unrecognised that to bring a child into existence without a fair prospect of being able, not only to provide food for its body, but instruction and training for its mind, is a moral crime, both against the unfortunate offspring and against society; and that if the parent does not fulfil this obligation, the State ought to see it fulfilled, at the charge, as far as possible, of the parent." Here is, briefly presented, food for mental thought, and a problem for solution, which must be tackled by every social thinker or reformer, and particularly by every respectable citizen and responsible voter. It may be said with alarming truth, that if you do not settle this question of unemployment, it will settle you. If any responsible person objects, or opposes any suggested remedy I may propose or portray through these pages, my answer is — If you oppose, if you obstruct, if you deny, what have you to offer? What have you to suggest? What do you propose? What is your remedy? It is no use tinkering with question, it must not be ignored, and cannot be delayed, for delay is dangerous — These are the questions which will shortly be nailed on the counter in the House of Commons; and, if those responsible for legislation, for government of the

people, not starvation of the people, refuse to answer, then the House will have to adjourn. Maybe the adjournment will not be according to the formal etiquette of the House; maybe it will take place in a disorderly or riotous manner; but an adjournment there must be, for the automatic closing mouth of labour is rapidly becoming disobedient, and, failing legislation, it is difficult to ascertain what might happen.

The introduction of machinery, and its unavoidable displacement of manual labour, also plays a prominent part in the unemployed labour market. Labour displaced by machinery is manual labour permanently unemployed unless there be an inlet to some other trade, industry, or occupation. Labour unemployed! What is labour? "Labour is human activity destined to be systematically employed in facilitating the production of wealth; it is human activity, the results of which will be for the use of future industry. Labour is the contribution of the present to the future. Labour is industrial continuity." This being so, all labour should be active, and labour inactive is lost labour force, necessitating sustenance from the human activity of labour. "They who know ever so slightly what has been the course of human invention, are aware of how often the impossibility of one age has been the easy process of another. We have no reason to doubt that the same experience will be vouchsafed to future generations. We do not, in short, know all the materials; we are still farther from knowing all the powers. We do

know that the materials are utilised, and the powers discovered by labour, and that to such the idlers contribute nothing. We also know that any given society can maintain only a limited number of idlers, and that these idlers constitute the redundancy of population, the true growth of numbers beyond the means of subsistence — the difficulty of the present, and the danger of the future.”

True, “there is that feigneth himself rich, yet hath nothing. There is that feigneth himself poor, yet hath great wealth.” But there is no feigning about the starving unemployed. Slowly and inevitably driven into the street to hunger, starve or die, is barbarism; not civilization, surely. The unhappy, miserable condition of an honest British workman. Scarcity of food! Abundance of working men! Human flesh and blood decaying, rotting for want of honest employment. What a life! What an existence! What a society — to countenance it! The wonder is that man endures it! Wonder at violent language and desperate action? Wonder at bomb-throwing and anarchy? Remove the cause of poverty, crime, discontent and desperation, and you remove so-called anarchy and anarchic action.

Displaced labour may be easily understood when we are told that at a meeting of the Manchester Field Naturalists it was reported that 44,000,000 cubic yards of soil and rock had been removed in 48 months excavating

for the Manchester Ship Canal. There were 97 steam navvies, and one filled 750 wagons per day, each wagon carrying five tons representing 3,750 tons for a day's work of 12 hours. At a reasonable calculation one machine was doing the work of 2,000 men. The steam power totally employed being 50,000 horsepower.

In agricultural work, two men with a two horse mower can do the work of nine men with hand scythes. Five men with a patent winder can do the work of twenty-four without.

Edward Atkinson, the American economist, proves clearly that four men with the modern machinery used in the United States do all the manual labour connected with raising the wheat and grinding it into flour to feed one thousand people.

Engineers know how the planing machine, shaping machine, slotting machine, morticing machine have buried the hammer and chisel, and how the milling machine can do the work of a dozen or twenty men. In boiler riveting, a machine riveter run by three men and a boy can do the former work of twenty-four men and eight boys.

The new type-setter worked by a girl, can do the work of two and a half men.

The grain elevators, placed in the Mersey Docks in 1880, will do the work of thirty-six men with the labour of five.

A new pneumatic machine, recently invented, empties the grain ships by sucking the grain out of a ship's hold through a large pipe. It has been a great success, and has only one fault, that being the cleansing of the grain by removing the dirt, and so causing it to weigh less than when removed by the old system. This has necessitated the invention of another machine to re-mix the dirt and grain together after removal from the ship, and preparatory to being ground into flour.

A pneumatic spraying machine painted the outside of the Chicago Exhibition buildings, allowing 300 men to do the work of four thousand hand painters. This probably has something to do with there being an army of unemployed in America numbering 2,000,000 persons, and the Coxeyite agitation.

In the year 1586 it took 960 men and 75 horses to raise the obelisk at Rome. In the year 1838 it took 480 men to raise the one in Paris; while in 1878, four men with hydraulic jacks raised the one on the Thames Embankment.

The steam roller, with the patent pick attachment, with two hand pickers does the work on a road of from twenty to forty men with hand picks.

Numerous additions might be given proving the continual displacement of manual labour, skilled and unskilled, by the introduction of machinery, this will suffice for the present.

Mr. R. Giffen, in his "Essays in Finance" (Vol. II., page 350), writes of a class of "five millions whose existence is a stain on our civilization." It is the lot of at least one in five of the manual labour class, and of sixteen in every hundred of the whole population to belong to this class.

Mr. Charles Booth in his books on London poverty, paints no fairy picture but produces statistical facts when he places his figures before us. In his latest volume, just issued, we are told that there is an army of aged persons in England and Wales numbering; 1,372,000 people who are over 65 years of age, and that were they to pass in a procession before us, it would be found that one out of every three was a pauper. There are 400,000 old men and women compelled to seek and ask for parish relief. These veterans of industry receive the same good-bye from the employers that many of our soldiers receive from the Army. Having served their turn, the marching order is get out of it, anywhere, only get out, and make room for better and younger men.

By the selfish, grasping spirit of the Landocracy, these persons, driven from the land to work in large towns, fast become prematurely, old or physical wrecks,

hanging on to life, awaiting the pauper's dole, or the pauper's grave. Migration and counter-migration goes carelessly on between country and town, until energy, vitality, and muscle have gone; then the human scrap heap is their final rendezvous, preparatory to donning the wooden-suit to enter the final procession of a miserable existence. Facts are before me to prove that a better distribution of land would check this deplorable and appalling truth, the lot of millions to-day; if unchecked, the lot of millions tomorrow. The advantages of the country are 'shown by such facts as that, there, life is natural and not artificial; garden work is suitable and more conducive to old age than town or factory life, and garden produce is very valuable to them; there is less work for old men in towns, strength fails sooner, consequently men are thrown out of employment at an earlier age; families are less divided; house room is cheaper and accommodation greater; and neighbourly relations are closer and stronger. Many well-to-do upper and middle class persons, many seemingly well-to-do workmen, also will say, "Let them go into the Union." I ask the middle class persons and all workers to pause, to beware, lest keen, commercial competition and the industrial struggle for a "living wage" places them ere long side by side or in the train of pauperism with these unfortunate people. All are against entering the "House," as Mr. Booth says, but it is inevitable. "As regards entering the workhouse, it is the one point on which no

difference of opinion exists among the poor. The aversion to the house “is absolutely universal, and almost any amount of suffering and privation will be endured by people rather than go into it.” A State pension for all at 55 years of age is the only cure for this increasing multitude of pauperised workers. The State provides £7,588,893 17s. 8d. annually for 162,040 civil, military, and naval pensions, compensations, and superannuations, why not for industrial toilers, the wealth producers? It can be done, and will be done when the workers decide to think and act for themselves.

The Labour Gazette of the “Labour Department” for May, 1894, says — “In the 45 trade societies, with an aggregate membership of 352,806, making returns, 21,669 (or 6.1 per cent.) are reported as unemployed at the end of April, compared with 6.5 per cent. for March, and 6.3 per cent. in the 43 societies making returns for February.” These 21,669 workmen (not loafers) are found idle, with no immediate prospect of employment at the best period of the year.

Mr. Fowler’s circular issued last year, 1893, to 14,000 municipalities and boards, says: — “What is required in the endeavour to relieve artisans and others, who have hitherto avoided poor law assistance, and who are temporarily deprived of employment, is: (1) Work which will not involve the stigma of pauperism; (2) Work which all can perform whatever may have been

their previous avocations; (3) Work which does not compete with that of other labourers at present in employment; and (4) Work which is not likely to interfere with the resumption of regular employment in their own trades by those who seek it. These works may be of the following kinds: Laying out of open spaces, recreation grounds, new cemeteries, or disused burial grounds; cleansing of streets not usually undertaken by local authorities; laying out and paving of new streets, etc.; paving of unpaved streets, and making of footpaths in country roads; providing or extending sewage works, and works of water supply.”

I may here quote two Reports, one from London and the other from Coventry, which might be noticed with advantage by any municipal councillor or board member into whose hands this pamphlet may fall<sup>2</sup>:— “Poplar, London. — Report shows that 1,407 men have been registered by that body since December, 1893, as unemployed, and that work consisting of lime-whiting, tar-paving, concreting, road-making, and stone-breaking, has been provided for 1,109 of these, the men being selected for work by the Unemployed Relief Committees sitting in each district of the Union. The men were employed eight hours a day, and were paid 4s. per day,

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<sup>2</sup> See – “Labour Gazette” (organ of the Board of Trade Labour Department) for May 1894, page 142.

the same men being employed for three days at a time only, the average daily number of men employed being 45.”

“Coventry. — Here the City Council carried out as relief work during the past winter: — (1) The construction of a new sewer; (2) the cleansing of the bed of the River Sherborne from sewage mud. About 20 men were employed for four weeks upon the sewer, which cost £120, and from 20 to 50 men were employed from the 17th of November to 13th April in cleansing the river bed, at a cost in wages of £824. Ordinary wages were paid for the work, and the surveyor reports that as a whole the work was fairly done.”

All municipalities and local boards can do this. If they have no funds they have powers to borrow, so they have no excuse.

Care must be taken that such employment of the unemployed does not deprive the persons so employed of their votes by disfranchisement. It is imperative that this work should be quite apart from Poor Law Guardians (and particularly by way of relief at less than the current rates of wages) or the men will be disfranchised, demoralized and pauperised. I will give here Mr. Fowler’s own statement, it is very instructive on this point. The President of the Local Government Board on the 12th of September, 1893, said, in reply to Mr. Keir Hardie M.P.: — “The law officers of the

Crown have advised that the powers which were vested in owners of parishes under the 43 Eliz., Cap. 2 (passed in 1601), and the 59 Geo. III , Cap. 12 (passed in 1819) are, by virtue of the Poor Law Amendment Acts of 1834 and 1835, vested in Boards of Guardians, subject to the control of the Local Government Board. The result appears to be that the Boards of Guardians have power to purchase or rent land not exceeding fifty acres for any parish, and to open workshops for setting destitute able-bodied persons to work, and to pay such persons reasonable wages for their labour. The law officers further advised that wages so paid would be parochial relief, and would involve the same disfranchisement as other relief under the Poor Laws.”

The last advice or proposition of the law officers is doubtful. and some more definite rules are necessary and ought to be forthcoming from Mr. Fowler. It, however, necessitates extreme caution on the part of the recipient when offered work of this kind.

It may surprise some reader to know that 7,000,000 acres of land “waste and common” were made private property between the years 1760 and 1833. That 9,000,000 acres were closed up in 1854. There is said to be 1,127,676 acres of commons and waste lands in England; 328,972 acres in Wales; and 154,466 acres in Ireland; Scotland is not given. It has again been calculated that, embracing all waste lands, we have in

the United Kingdom 26,000,000 acres of waste land, of which nearly 8,000,000 are situated in England, 27 and 28 Vict., C 114, "The improvement of Land Act 1864 [29th July, 1864]" gives powers for employment. By afforestation (See 20 and 30 Vict., C 62, "An Act to amend the Law relating to the Woods, Forests, and Land revenues of the Crown [6th August, 1866]" 6,000,000 acres might be made forest land and thus replace our annual import of timber.

Numerous Acts might be quoted, giving powers which unfortunately are never exercised. The Government might see that a specially appointed responsible official of the Labour Department searched up all these hidden Acts and make them more generally known through the Labour Gazette. Seeing that so much land now considered "rights common to all the King's subjects" has been made private property or stolen, it would be advisable to put some of the powers into practice by putting the unemployed to work before the land thieves extend their depredations and take possession of it all. To turn for a moment to a branch of this question in which every worker has an almost individual responsibility, are there not many cases where a man is working a number of hours which would give adequate employment to two or three men? There are men who have been physically injured by excessive hours of labour, do any of them reflect that, when their physical strength enabled them to carry on work to

exhaustion point, they were striking a blow at the living power of their comrades? An Eight-Hour Day is our desire, and a step in this direction is the abolition of all overtime. A carman the other day, after working  $24\frac{3}{4}$  hours, retired for a time into a coffee shop for refreshments not a very unnatural thing to do under the circumstances. He proceeded to work on and complete, not an 8 hour day, nor a day of 24 hours, but a day of 38 hours. He had his reward, the labourer was found worthy of his hire. An enterprising policeman was the means of bringing the case into daylight. He discovered a van at a coffee house with no one looking after it — a breach of the police law — brought forth our carman from his much-required refreshment, sent him about his business to conclude his 38 hours day, and summoned him before a magistrate. He was dismissed by his employer, and the case was dismissed by the magistrates. He had a wife and three children, and of course was able under the circumstances to enjoy domestic felicity for an indefinite period. This instance — and who among us could not give more startling cases — of overwork is a case that has been dealt with in a public court of justice. Had it been a case of an overworked horse, justice — police court justice — would not have been satisfied without the infliction of a smart fine. Nay, it more likely would think its vindication was not complete without the imprisonment of the owner of the horse. It would be a very surprising thing for even our blind justice to do, to

punish the overworked horse and let the man who benefitted by it go scot free. Happy horse.

But workers themselves have created the Parliament which has made the laws which can and do protect our horses from ill-treatment and overwork. Is it impossible to give similar protection to our own species? Are our families and brothers - our fellow-workers throughout this great nation — not worthy of at least as much consideration as a horse? Give them equal treatment with horses, and you would ensure that there be no able and willing workers going about hungry and cold and shelterless, and without work. The spectacle of a horse able to work, going about without food or shelter in this country, does not exist, or, in the few cases where brutal masters allow such things, our own laws inflict speedy punishment. How is it that the workers cannot at least do as much for themselves?

A common plan on Labour platforms is to attack the Government for not putting an end to the unemployed. Of blaming the rapacity of the employers, the luxury and idleness of the wealthy classes. Well, the Government have shown a culpable and heartless indifference to this dreadful question, have neglected to alleviate the distress as they easily could by adopting the eight hour day in all departments long ago; in facilitating the local employment of labour on necessary works of public utility; in attempting at all to grapple with this great

difficulty. All this they have left undone. The employers certainly do grind the worker down to the lowest “living wage” or “starvation wage” (there is not much to choose between the phrases). This they do while their own bank balances are growing fatter, and everything goes merrily on, the wealth of the country increases by leaps and bounds, and the political economists can rub their hands over the great result. So many millions sterling added to the approximate total of the nation’s wealth. The nation’s wealth — where is the worker’s share of this? It is securely invested, it is in good, sound, real estate. His share is in the labour Bastille — the poor house. There he will be gently but firmly removed from all domestic care and worry. His coming in and going out will be carefully regulated, his diet will be frugal and healthy, though not, perhaps, as nourishing as in a prison. Yea! the workless worker has much to be thankful for, he is not forgotten in the distribution of the nation’s wealth. But still the workers are not satisfied! They want more. No. I should rather say they want less and more. They do not want the Poor Law Bastille as the refuge of their workless days and old age — that is the mournful few who can hope to see old age. They desire that every man shall have work who is physically fit, and that every man shall have the opportunity of spending his life in labour and in decent comfort. But are the workers sure that all the blame rests with the Government, or the parties to classes. The Government is supine. Is there no other

class that supine too? Look at home. Have not the workmen for some considerable time now had complete powers to mould the Parliament and Government of this country? They can claim in a sense to be the people's representatives. The multitude of labour electors in this country have sent them to be their law-makers and to be their law-administrators, the very men who now cannot find time to enquire into their miseries. These men, who now refuse to attend the demand from or consideration of starving unemployed, are the men that the workers have had the power of accepting or rejecting as representatives. Then why complain? They would not have been able to take up this position in opposition to the desires of the workers if the latter had not by their votes placed them where there are. Are the workers not entirely responsible? The answer is that they have failed in their duty hitherto, they have acted like dumb, driven cattle, they have approached the ballot-box without clearly distinguishing what it was that they were doing. They have hitherto used the ballot-box as children do playthings, and without serious thought of the powers they were conferring, and on whom they were conferring them. The time for playing this farce is over. On the workers and their class through-out the country, depends whether the conditions of Government, the present conditions of law-making, continue. On them and their class, throughout the country, depends whether the

interests of labour will be more truly represented in the future than it has been in the past.

So surely as this Government declined to deal seriously with this great question of the unemployed, so surely will the day of retribution come. We have the remedies in our hands. The powers of government are at our feet. We have the power of delegating authority to our Rulers. If we delegate this authority to those who have no common interest in our in those who have no knowledge of the everyday hardships and struggles of the worker's life, great questions affecting the mass of manual workers, will continue not only neglected, but ignored.

Cardinal Manning said, "It seems almost incredible that in wealthy England, at the close of the nineteenth century, so much destitution should exist, and still more that vagrancy and mendacity should so prevail. It may well be asked: 'Is this the grand total result of the wisdom of our legislators, the efforts of our philanthropists, the Christianity of our churches,' that our streets are infested with miserable creatures from whose faces almost everything purely human has been erased, whose very presence would put us to shame but for our familiarity with the sight — poor wretches, filthy in body, foul in speech, vile in spirit — human vermin! Yes, but of our own manufacture; for every individual of this mass was once an innocent child. Society has made

them what they are, not only by a selfish and indiscriminate almsgiving, but by permitting bad laws to exist, and good laws so administered as to crush the weak and wreck the lives of the unfortunate.”

Henry George truly says, “We cannot go on permitting men to vote and forcing them to tramp. We cannot go on educating boys and girls in our public schools, and then refusing them the right to earn an honest living. We cannot go on prating of the inalienable rights of man, and then denying the inalienable right to the bounty of the Creator.” And we cannot go on with millions of human beings starving and destitute. Look around! Think! Consider! Can this state of things, this state of society continue? The foundations of State are trembling already. The links of society are perishing, are being severed, and the bed-rock of a rotten constitution is being slowly but surely removed by the long pent-up forces now silently at work.

Every great revolution has had a great idea. Every revolution demands a great idea as a centre of action on which to fix the fulcrum and oscillate the lever of reform.

That such a revolution is being produced, that such a centre is being constructed, that the people are being starved into revolution, perhaps unconsciously, but forced into it none the less, is becoming clearer every day. The revolution is coming either by Anarchic

destruction, open revolt and physical force revolution, or immediate constitutional legislation. One of these three forms is certain. We may take our choice, but one of these three we must have in the near future.

The principles of collectivism, of state ownership of the means of production is the remedy, the only remedy for permanently solving the unemployed question. Small questions, of an eight-hour day, temporary employment, etc, are only questions of temporary relief, political and social soothing syrups used during the march onward towards the re-organization and the re-construction of society.

Workers, toilers, slaves employed or unemployed must agitate, educate, or organise. Nothing can be done, nothing accomplished without it. Educated, organised and determined, we are the power.

Place-hunting politicians are not today required, give them their marching orders in the language of Rabelais, "Pack you hence, therefore, you hypocrites; to your sheep, dogs; get you gone, you dissemblers, to the devil. Eh! What, are you there yet? Avaunt! Avaunt! Will you not be gone?" When we unitedly say, "Yes," they will go, and not before. Then we may have what we require, no unemployed, but home comfort, leisure, and a life worth living. This is attainable. Measures are wanted, and men to assist them through. The duty of the workers is to find the men. The men can be found. Will

the workers, the sufferers, the exploited ones support them by vote if found? This is all that is required at present, by which means men will go on our Boards of Guardians, Local Boards, Vestries, Municipalities and the House of Commons, forcing through the principles of collectivism, nationalising the land, for the equal benefit of the whole community nationalising and municipalising the docks, canals, railways, etc.; equally distributing the results of labour for the benefit of the masses. By this means, and this only will autocracy, plutocracy, landocracy, despotism, tyranny and class domination be swept away. Democratic government, control and distribution will then equalise comfort, leisure, pleasure, and recreation. Unemployment, with all the attendant ills of poverty and despair, will disappear. A miserable life struggle will be viewed as the relic of a barbarous individualistic competitive age. Life will be a life of pleasure, it is yet a life of misery. It can be removed. Then let us remove it!

FRED HAMMILL

J. Dowling & Sons, Blue Posts Yard, Pilgrim Street,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne