

view may prove as disserviceable as the narrow one, if it negatives resourceful action. In the United States we do not face the threat of revolution, nor peer into those vacuums which are the sequence of war in Europe. With our natural resources and scientific management, our detachment and initiative, ours is the responsibility to grapple with industrial problems with a freeness of hand that is denied our contemporaries. Out of our strength we should find new ways.

And in taking on the commission it is well for us to distinguish between, as the war correspondents put it, strategy and tactics; between the grand strategy of overcoming the causes of business depression (and its resulting mass unemployment) and the tactics of closing in on unemployment as a recurring and measurable risk of modern production. Gold; trade cycles; war and waste; over-production, under-consumption, uneven distribution; tariffs, reparations, credit—these and a dozen other factors are singled out by economists in their search for major causes. We are told that our current business depression lacked premonitory signals associated with its predecessors. However that may be, the economists, financiers and statesmen will be spending much time in arriving at a universal formula; while a baffled and angry world shouts, "Why?" and cures grow on every bush.

Now the problem of unemployment as it is interpreted by the neighborhood workers of the United States, as it is confronted by all of us in our communities, is something more immediate and manageable than all this—something simpler, and something that cannot wait. Nor is it something to be solved by breadlines, lodging houses or apple selling. Our relief workers ease life where it hurts, yet our emergency funds offer no enduring solution; nor does staggering jobs and passing unemployment around.

What we confront is the practical problem of broken work and broken earnings. It simmers down to the question of an everyday living to cover living every day, of how we can assure this minimum foothold for existence, or the opportunity to earn it, to every wage earner in the richest country the world has ever known, rich in foods and raw materials, rich in productive powers and organizing abilities, which make the denial of that minimum a ghastly joke. (1) "We must make work steadier and more secure. (2) We must make re-

employment swifter when men and women are laid off. (3) We must insure against want the families of breadwinners who seek work and cannot find it."

Sincerely prosecuted, those three lines of action put forward by the settlements would not solve the problem of unemployment or outflank its great causes. But they would cut down its bulk in good times and in bad; and they would bring an orderly easement to wage earning households which now bear the brunt of this recurring and measurable risk over which they have no control.

We are making a belated start. We lack unemployment statistics—a steady stream of factual knowledge as a basis for planning. We let our wartime federal employment service shrivel up and even the pressure of last winter's need failed to pass Senator Wagner's bill to rehabilitate it. We have blocked out procedures for projecting public works so that they may be thrown in when industrial operations are slack, but measures to this end slept at Washington throughout nearly a decade of prosperity, and neither the federal government nor the states and cities were prepared to act on that principle in the current emergency. We have seen individual American employers, and even more convincingly, labor unions and employers in conjunction in the garment trades, demonstrate the practicability of unemployment insurance. One progressive national corporation—the General Electric Company—has instituted it in the midst of this winter's emergency. Governor Roosevelt has advocated it in New York, but as yet no American state has ventured to adopt such a system. Rather the shortcomings of the European systems are dilated upon. They seem outlandish to us in ways that would not be true of our reception of the imported models of a new type of gas engine or a foreign laboratory discovery.

Now while we have the worst unemployment statistics in the world, Professor Paul H. Douglas of the Swarthmore Institute of Unemployment has pointed out that we have exceptional employment statistics ranging back over the years, which would serve us in rating industries and concerns within each industry according to the regularity of their operations. It is conceivable that an American program of employment services linked with unemployment insurance might be geared to these rates, so that as in neither the British nor German

systems, lowered premiums would go with a record of steady work the year round. As a consequence there would be economic pressure at the elbow of every management to diminish irregular employment within its province. As things stand now, to pare down a payroll is the easiest, if most short-sighted, line of business retrenchment. The pressure is the other way. Thus while we have been the last of the great industrial nations to apply the insurance principle at this point, we might easily, under its spur, be first in prevention; for it is in stabilization engineering that American initiative and ingenuity will find a congenial field. Inevitably, one after another we have scrapped the old ways of putting men to work. It is high time we laid hands on the hoary ways of putting them out of work.

Moreover, our experience with mutual insurance projects, with joint control of funds, with employment reserves, with the dismissal wage, with mothers' pensions and workmen's compensation, with work relief, with scientific management, industrial psychiatry and the modern techniques of our personnel departments, would bring fresh elements into such a program. By orderly schemes for protecting broken earnings and broken homes, we would get rid of much broken work.

The case stories of the settlements lay bare as never before the back-breaking effects of change and progress in an industrial civilization borne by those least able to sustain their weight. They uncover also some of our great anomalies:

Animated by co-operative integration we squeeze each ounce of worth out of a carcass or a tree; we draw each stir of power from a ton of coal. But relying upon individual self-interest and intuition we fail to devise plans by which such desirable efficiencies and skills, such tangible bundles of productive energy as unemployed men and women have to offer, can be marketed without losses such as no business could stand without going bankrupt.

Animated by co-operative integration we dovetail the wage earner into a vast mechanism of production, beginning with his foreman and the bench at which he works, and ranging through huge contrivances of machines, power plants, shipping offices, banking and commercial ramifications. But as an unemployed man, we leave him at the mercy of individual self-interest and intuition.

We count it corporate forethought when a great

industry lays by reserves in good times in order to stabilize the dividends it wishes to pay its stockholders in bad times; but only a handful of establishments have tried out employment reserves to stabilize the incomes of their employes.

Animated by co-operative integration we insure every risk from a plate glass window to the education of our grandchildren, but we balk at the idea when it comes to any share of the unwritten payroll of the unemployed.

We have installment buying, part-time payments, all manner of schemes by which as consumers, wage earning households may mortgage their incomes for months ahead; but relying on individual self-interest and intuition we have nothing commensurate to give any security as to that income to such households.

"We recognize," as Miss Hall points out, "that the regularization of industry cannot be carried out by the man whom it most directly affects. We put that up to management. But we assume that by some miracle he and his family can underwrite the irregularities of industry."

In the last twenty-five years we have grappled with the hazard of work accidents. Through our safety engineering we have cut down their numbers and today the whole State of Pennsylvania, for example, does not have such a toll of death at work as Pittsburgh had at the beginning of that period. In state after state we have adopted workmen's compensation laws by which human wear and tear are made a charge on industry, and through insurance we have spread their cost out on to the consumers so that with every yard of cloth or ton of coal or mile of railroad travel we buy, we pay a bit in order that the burden of this risk shall not come down solely on the homes of the killed and injured workers. We make such deaths and injuries more costly to those who can prevent them—and do.

In that same quarter century, with respect to the hazard of industrial unemployment, England, France, Germany, Russia and a score of other nations have devised schemes of protection; we for the most part have left things at loose ends.

Entering into this procrastination, so at odds with our national temper, has been a psychological drag that also had its roots in our history as a people. We still hold to the imagery of pioneer days when we look through our smoke. We count