

individual sufferer but, so far as may be practicable, the prevention of the disease itself. At present there is no attempt to prevent the occurrence of Unemployment, the turning off of men, and the losing of situations.

Unemployment is not merely a question of good trade or bad. We must not allow the question to be shunted because trade is improving. We find at all times, a considerable number of families in need of the necessaries of life, owing to the breadwinner being thrown out of work. At particular seasons of every year, and at particular places the number of such cases doubles and quadruples; and many who were before merely in distress sink gradually into destitution, and in some cases into habitual pauperism. But, whether momentarily greater or smaller, this continual losing of situations and consequent interruption of wages involves, on the one hand, great national waste of productive power, and, on the other, a vast amount of personal suffering and physical and mental degeneration.

The evil, declares the Minority Report, can be stopped. This perpetual creation of *Unemployment can be prevented in the same sense, and probably to the same extent, as we have already prevented cholera and typhus. If it continues, it is because Parliament and the Government have not chosen to prevent it.* To put a stop to it is of all national problems the most urgent; of all political questions the most practical. It must be forced on every candidate for Parliament. It must be pressed, without respite, on every Cabinet.

### REGULARISE THE DEMAND.

Now the first step to preventing Unemployment is to regularise the national aggregate demand for labour year by year. If this aggregate demand is less one year than another, whatever may be our system of Government or taxation, some men must be thrown out of work, whatever we may do for them when they have been thrown out. The Minority Report proposes that the National Government, which already spends more than a hundred millions a year on works and services, should deliberately rearrange that part which is not urgent, in such a way as to give out its orders more when trade is beginning to slacken, instead of evenly year by year. Parliament has already admitted this principle, by telling the Development Commission and the Road Board to act on it. This is how all the schemes of afforestation and land reclamation, road making, and agricultural development ought to come in—not as relief works to be done by the unemployed, but by serving as a counterpoise to the great trade fluctuations; actually to prevent the occurrence of Unemployment. It is for the Government in this way to prevent that periodi-