

he is regularly tramping round the town, asking for work where he knows he will not get it, and bothering mill managers who may be excused for occasionally failing to be polite. Both applicant and Committee know that this is usually a farce, but it is rather a degrading farce for the worker. He asks what Labour Exchanges are for.

THE MARRIED WOMAN.

Perhaps the most difficult problem of all is the married woman. It is common, but not the invariable rule, for women in textile trades to return to work after marriage. Unemployment benefit offers the possibility of adding a few extra shillings to the family income without actual employment and without the expense of paying for domestic help, and in weaving and bleaching many firms are definitely averse to employing married women in the present circumstances. To disqualify all would be a gross injustice to the woman who must work because of the insufficiency of the husband's income, but in many cases the woman herself may hardly know whether or not she would normally have returned to work. Since benefit is available and contributions have been paid for it, it is taken, and the only possible guide to the real motive of the woman, that is, the family income, may not be considered by the Committee.

A word may be said for the young men who appear before the committees. They find it almost impossible to get into the mills unless already trained for the work; employers generally prefer men accustomed to responsibility for permanent jobs, and the young single man has no chance of getting on relief works. He is frequently condemned, but his case is a hard one.

THE POOR LAW.

The connection between the Poor Law and the Insurance scheme is becoming so close that benefit is frequently supplemented by relief, and when benefit stops many claimants fall back on relief. At the Rota Committee a chance remark by a member threw light on this. He described an incident at one of the meetings, and said "The other member was in an armchair, but I was on a bench at the side with the culprits." Certainly the working class does not like visiting the Exchange to draw benefit.

The maximum rate on the scale is £2 5s. 6d. per week, and work is required of the applicant. In no case should relief exceed wages, but as the following wage rates are common

Mill Labourers	34/- per week
Engineering Labourers	38/- (minimum)
Big Piecers	28/- to 33/-

it is seen that wages and relief may approximate very closely.