

ignored did not go far enough. The whole of the Trade Union benefits should be ignored in the case of the applicant.

Trade Unions had a long and close connection with State Schemes for assisting the unemployed, and felt that they had a right to participate in administering Unemployment Assistance on at least as good terms as Unemployment Insurance benefit.

Scales of allowances should be increased to meet the rise in the cost of living. The instruction to officers of the Board to use their discretion in augmenting allowances resulted in anomalies and placed too much responsibility on the individual.

On the Household Means Test it had been noted that this was a matter for the Minister of Labour and that arrangements were being made to meet him.

Lord Rushcliffe said he would be glad if such deputations came to see him more often. He expressed personal sympathy with the views put forward and promised a considered reply. He explained the practice of the Board with regard to increases to meet the rise in the cost of living and asked for instances of anomalies. On the other points raised there could be consultations with the officials of the Board.

(69) Concession by the Unemployment Assistance Board

Following the deputation, the Council received a letter from the Board stating that the first 5s. of Trade Union unemployment benefit received by the applicant or any member of the household would be ignored in arriving at assessments, and that the necessary instructions would be issued at an early date. An assurance was received from the Board subsequently that this concession would include other Trade Union benefit, although there would be difficulty in including strike or lock-out benefit at the present time. While this and other concessions secured will considerably ease the position, in the Council's view nothing but the complete abolition of the household Means Test will adequately meet the Movement's demands.

On the question of administering Unemployment Assistance on the same conditions as Unemployment Insurance, consultations subsequently took place with the Board's officials, as a result of which the difficulties that were in the way of satisfactory arrangements being arrived at for administration of Unemployment Allowances by Trade Unions, who already administer Unemployment Insurance benefit under agreement with the Minister of Labour, were got over. A form of agreement acceptable by the Unions concerned has been drawn up and is being considered by the Departments concerned with a view to its final acceptance. It is anticipated that in the near future an early date will be fixed when the Unions who already have an arrangement with the Ministry of Labour can apply to the Board with a view to administering Unemployment Assistance.

(70) Deputation to the Minister of Labour

Resolutions Nos. 9, 10, and 19 were raised by deputation to the Minister of Labour on January 20, 1933, when the first paragraph of Resolution No. 3—about the abolition of the household Means Test—was also discussed.

The deputation consisted of the following:—

Trades Union Congress General Council.—Mr. H. H. Elvin (Chairman), Messrs. E. J. Chapman, W. Kean, J. A. Newrick, J. L. Smyth (Secretary, Social Insurance Department).

Mineworkers' Federation of Great Britain.—Mr. S. Watson.

Typographical Association.—Mr. J. W. Lowe.

National Union of General and Municipal Workers.—Mr. H. N. Harrison.

National Union of Agricultural Workers.—Messrs. Z. Bemrose, W. A. J. Case, A. C. Dann.

Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen.—Mr. G. W. Thomson.

Mr. R. H. Bernays, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, was present in connection with Resolution No. 19.

The deputation expressed, on behalf of non-manual workers, the disappointment felt at the failure of the Government to raise the income limit in respect of insurance, especially as the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee had recommended such an increase.

Emphasis was laid on the objection of the Trade Union Movement to the Household Means Test, and to the injustice of refusing benefits to groups of workers thrown out of work in consequence of their membership of a Trade Union.

The hope was expressed that the Government would take steps finally, to remove the anomaly arising owing to two separate stamp qualifications in respect of the general and Agricultural Insurance schemes.

Complete overhaul of the Unemployment Assistance scales was urged, and attention was drawn to the wages stop provision. In respect of this, it was claimed that, as Unemployment Assistance allowances are based on bare necessity they should be paid in full, irrespective of any lower amount which an applicant may have been receiving when at work.

Members of the deputation gave detailed accounts of hardship under the various points raised.

(71) The Ministers' Reply

In reply to the deputation Mr. R. H. Bernays, M.P., said that the Government, as advised at the time, could not agree to raise the salary limit of non-manual workers for health insurance.

The Right Hon. Ernest Brown, Minister of Labour, said he could give no promise with regard to the Means Test or the raising of the income limit.

With regard to the injustices, under the Trade Disputes law, to workers exercising their right to join a Trade Union, he expressed the opinion that the law operated fairly for all concerned, but in view of the case put before him, would make further inquiries.

With regard to the two sets of stamp qualifications in the general and Agricultural schemes, the Minister said he had every desire to remedy the situation, but found it could not be done without creating further anomalies, and the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee agreed with him. He would be glad to have particulars of cases, and asked the deputation to keep track of such cases and let him know how they worked out later on.

He did not agree that the time had arrived for a revision of the Unemployment Assistance scales. Matters must remain as they are.

On the question of workers receiving less than the amount of Unemployment Assistance scales because their wages when at work were less, the issue was too big to be discussed adequately at that moment.

Following the deputation, detailed cases showing the harsh working of the household Means Test were sent on to the Minister, who promised to investigate them and let the Council have a considered reply. A lengthy and detailed reply has been received from him which is being investigated. No opportunity will be lost of keeping this matter to the fore, and the Council will maintain their pressure on the Government for the abolition of the household Means Test.

(72) Unemployment Insurance Bill, 1937

This Bill was introduced to the House of Commons in November, 1937. It contained provisions enabling Local Authorities to provide meals to unemployed juveniles attending courses of instruction; proposed to include in the Agricultural Scheme of Unemployment Insurance persons employed in domestic service as gamekeepers (or in certain similar classes of employment), grooms or stablemen, and laid down that the Minister may by Regulation bring into the Agricultural Scheme any class of persons employed wholly or mainly out of doors in an excepted employment in domestic service; extended the crediting of contributions to certain members of the Forces who do not now receive credits in certain circumstances; and proposed to deal with the Unemployment Fund debt in the following manner.

It proposed to allow sums in excess of the statutory £5,000,000 per year paid to the Treasury in respect of the debt to have the effect of reducing the debt by the excess amount paid, whilst at the same time leaving the period for the repayment of the total debt unaltered. The annual debt charge (£5,000,000) was to be reduced proportionately in respect of all sums applied in reduction of debt. Either the reserve or disposable surplus of the Unemployment Fund may be used for these extra payments; but the Bill provided that, roughly, the amount of the additional sums could be borrowed back if necessity arose. It was contended that payment of the additional sums off the debt would relieve the Fund of the difference between what it was receiving in interest on the invested surpluses and what it had to pay the Treasury on the outstanding debt. This, it was said, would release sums for improving the Scheme which would not otherwise be available.

The General Council agreed that the provisions about providing meals for young people at Instruction Centres, as well as the provision about credits to ex-service men, were a step forward. On the question of the inclusion of gamekeepers, water bailiffs, grooms, etc., in the Agricultural Unemployment Insurance Scheme, the General Council were of opinion that they should be included in the general Insurance Scheme except in so far as grooms were employed for the raising of stock. Representations on these lines, and also about the non-inclusion of non-manual workers, were made to the Parliamentary Labour Party prior to Second Reading. Facts in connection with the power taken in the Bill to make increased payments from the Unemployment Fund to the Treasury in respect of debt were also supplied to the Party. The Bill became an Act in February, 1938.

(73) Unemployment Fund Surplus

The General Council were again invited to give evidence to the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee on the question of a disposable surplus in both the Agricultural and General Accounts of the Unemployment Insurance Fund, and the following suggestions for using the surplus were put forward. With regard to the Agricultural Accounts: (1) Abolition of the six days' waiting period; (2) full benefit to be paid for all children; (3) an increase in the rates for single men between 18 and 21; and (4) an increase in the adult rates for men and women. With regard to the General Account: (1) Abolition of the three days' waiting period; (2) an all-round increase in benefit; (3) reduction of men's contributions by 1d. per week and increase of women's benefit to that paid to men so as to establish equality; and (4) the altering of the Anomalies Regulations in respect of married women with a good industrial record since marriage.

On the question of repayment to the Treasury of sums over and above the statutory £5,000,000 per year in respect of debt, which was also under consideration by the Statutory Committee, the General Council, without prejudice to their view that the debt should be cancelled, did not oppose the payment of increased amounts, provided that the Statutory Committee were prepared to recommend a reduction in the interest rates at present paid on the debt. Detailed oral evidence was given in support of these claims.

The Statutory Committee in their report recommended, with regard to the Agricultural Account, that the waiting period should be reduced to three days; a reduction of contributions in respect of persons over 18 years of age; an increase in the rate of benefit from 10s. 6d. to 12s. in the case of young men between 18 and 21; and an easing of the condition for requalification after exhaustion of benefit.

With regard to the General Account, the Committee recommended a lengthening of the benefit period to persons with good insurance records; a shilling increase in respect of adult dependants; and the payment to the Treasury of £20,000,000 of the reserve in addition to the statutory £5,000,000 per annum for the repayment of the debt.

The Government implemented the report of the Committee by regulations, and during the debate on these in the House the Council's points were again put forward, but without success.

(74) Insurability of Employment

The question of the inclusion of private chauffeurs in Unemployment Insurance was remitted to the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee by the Minister of Labour, and the General Council expressed the opinion that these persons should be brought into the Insurance Scheme. The Minister subsequently made an Order, bringing into Unemployment Insurance, as from 4th April, 1938, "persons employed in domestic service in driving or attending to a mechanically propelled vehicle where the employment is neither in a trade nor business carried on for the purposes of gain, nor in horticulture."

As reported to the Norwich Congress (Paragraph 56), draft Regulations on the probable inclusion in Unemployment Insurance of an extensive schedule of persons was referred to the Statutory Committee by the Minister of Labour. The General Council, in conjunction with the Unions concerned, rendered every possible help in obtaining information about the exact conditions of employment of the persons affected with a view to their inclusion