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SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS
LEAGUE OF NATIONS

c/o BUREAU INTERNATIONAL DU TRAVAIL
~~Industrial Relations Counselors~~
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE
GENÈVE

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Dans la réponse prière de rappeler
N°.....

Sept. 14, 1929

Dearest Miss Tarbell,

It was good to hear from you just now! But I have a keepless sort of feeling about writing to you. Do you remember how Rosalind bursts forth with, "You must borrow my Gargantua's mouth!" when she tries to tell Celia everything at once? Well, I have so much to talk over with you that I must throw up my hands and tell you that there's nothing I long for more than a long, leisurely chat with you!

Today I have sent off the rough draft of my book on British unemployment insurance. You know I spent last winter in England. Since then I have delved and dug into documents and have also carried on lively correspondence with many Britishers. I inclose a letter from O'Connor as an example.

Because of my inferiority complex in reg"

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statistics Arthur Young granted my request to hire the most expert statistician in the British Ministry of Labour to check every figure in my report. I find he has corrected many figures I copied from Ministry of Labour Gazettes, Ministry of Labour Reports, Hansard, and other supposedly reliable documents. All of which has served to make me more skeptical than ever of "the printed figure"!

I am hoping the report may be published by December but there may be delays. I have uncarthed new material through the field work I did in studying company plans which cover benefits additional to those paid by the state.

A few weeks ago I attended the conference of Mary van Kleeck's Industrial Relations Association at Plaisance Sherbayern. The subject was "Scientific Management in an Industrial Organization" and I really was petty enough to feel hurt because Mary never asked me to speak or conduct a discussion or anything. She talked a great deal of the time herself and kept harping on the necessity of getting "airplane" views of industry. She always

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visits that people who have been engaged on the ground floor of industry can't really know what it is all about because they can't see the forest for the trees.

Moreover, Mary is obsessed with the idea that I am inclined toward management instead of toward the worker, whereas I have always subscribed to Taylor's view that one must work through management to better the condition of the worker, - as well as through other mediums. I finally got so irritated at her condescending attitude that I had a good talk with her, saying that for years I had been told she had kept me off boards and committees when she had an opportunity to do so, because she always damned me by saying I "represented management". She acknowledged

there had been times she had done so. Well, I really am conceited enough to think I knew ten times as much about "Scientific Management in an Industrial Organization as most of the aeroplane artists who talked about it, and I shall just try to be big and forget about it. It keeps to burst forth to understanding you! A great ream of documents came through from the I. R. Relations headquarters in ~~Prog~~ the Hague yesterday, - chiefly consisting of Mary's remarks and speeches.

Yet I am cross because I have consented to speak to the British Institute of Psychology in October. I must be the kind who likes to be asked but doesn't want to do it!

Please excuse this scrawling. I have an appointment & must run. I shall write you a letter about Geneva some time! In the meantime here are carbons of a letter or rather some letters I had copied to send to my beloved little sister. They will tell you something of my plans.

How are you???

Heaps of love,
Mary Gilson

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Copy. Part of a letter to Tom Spaller from A.H.G.

September 4, 1929.

Dear Tom,

Wanting to save myself every possible minute of time in view of the enormous pile of correspondence that lies in front of me I enclose herewith a copy of my letter of even date to Mary which gives most of the information now available in regard to my proposed visit to Geneva. I will write the Director to-morrow and send you a copy.

Bryce Stewart will not be able to get away before January 1st at best and insome respects I regret now that I have signed up my trip on its present basis as I would very much like to be over there when Bryce arrives for reasons which you will well understand. However, I am going ahead with the original program. Most of all I want to see things in Geneva for myself and play the role of observer. I want to have some nice long chats with you to get the low-down on the situation and I want some leisurely chats with Butler, Johnston, Phelan and some of the others and even the Director himself. I don't mean the kind of a "conference" that results from a talk in the office, but the sort of a chin-chin that one gets in some comfy little place away from the office.

With the change in Bryce's plans undoubtedly your own stay will be lengthened and I am sure you can, if you so desire, plan to remain in Geneva until next summer, and I think the ~~pmk~~ plans for Mary will keep her in Geneva for some little time. I will know better about this after I have had some further conferences with Glenn and we can talk it all over when I get there. ???

I had a fine visit with Dr. Mayo at Silver Bay last week and he was loud in his praises of yourself personally and the job you are doing over there. He is to spend the day with me September 23rd and promises to have a memorandum that will provide us with helpful discussion matter. I hope you had as much pleasure in his company as I anticipated. Personally I always get a great kick and stimulus from my heart to heart talks with him

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Copy. Part of a letter to me from A. M. Young

September 4, 1929.

We arrive at Plymouth October 10th and will go at once to London. We are both delighted that you were able to change your date in London so as to meet us there. Our arrangements beyond that point are somewhat indefinite. Just now it seems that a week in London should suffice and therefore we plan to leave on the morning of October 17th for Brussels which I assume we can reach late that same day. I have no business of importance in Brussels, just one or two matters to take up with the Harvester people there and we are including it in our itinerary first of all because we want to see Brussels and secondly because we want to visit with Miss Ethel Kean who has charge of safety and other industrial relations activities at the European plants of the Harvester Company and we want you and her to meet. We figure that we can get away from there Monday the 21st and motor over to the Rhine that day, taking the steamer trip up the Rhine the following day and proceeding on to Geneva where we would arrive on the 23rd.

Even before the receipt of your letters urging the Italian expedition I had tried to interest Edith in returning via the new Italian boats, but I couldn't get to first base, she has simply made up her mind that she will not travel on an Italian boat and that's that! However, I have persuaded her that after a few days in Geneva both she and you would get a great kick out of going down to Italy as you suggest and she has agreed to this. It would probably mean only about a week for Edith in Italy and you could plan to stay on and have your vacation. I would run down in time to take Edith and the baby back to Paris where we plan to arrive November 9th or 10th, principally because we are anxious to be there on Armistice Day. In order to do this we have changed our original returning sailing plans and now expect to return on the "President Harding" from Cherbourg November 14th instead of taking the "America" on the 9th as originally planned. Of course, Mary dear, if you would prefer to go to Paris with us for a lark it would be a most welcome arrangement, but we can talk it all over when we meet in London.

Wish I should probably do for several weeks

Your friend Lloyd Roberts talked with me from New York while I was at the Brinwood. Unfortunately I had already gone west before his arrival and he tells me that he will have lots of free time while we are in London and was delighted to know that you would be with us there. He offered to make arrangements for our hotel accommodations, but I told him that I thought you would take care of that. What do you say, Mary dear, can you do it? You know what Edith and I like and that is comfort rather than luxury. I hoped it would appeal to you as much as it does to us if we could all lodge together

at the same hotel. Mrs Young and the baby and I could accommodate ourselves in one very large room with three beds or two connecting rooms. We would like a bath, or if a suite with your own room as part of it were available the idea of a community bathroom for our party would be all right with us.

Edith said that your threat that we would have a wild woman on our hands when you arrived sounded good to her, she feels just exactly the same way and I have an idea that we are all of us going to have one grand and glorious lark. There is one sure thing, and that is that we won't put too much business into our program and also please make a careful note that this news of yours to not go with us to Brussels doesn't register at all. I know you will get a kick out of that trip and I am very desirous that you meet Miss Kean and some of the other Harvester folks in order to develop those contacts. She will be invaluable to you in some of the work you are interested in.

When we finally get to Geneva I hope there will be no plans of elaborate entertainment. Tom has written me a very nice letter wanting to know just when we arrive so that he and Lorraine can have a little dinner party. That sounds awfully good, but let's not go much beyond that. We will have plenty of time for my business affairs after you and Edith strike out for Italy and for the few days we are in Geneva before that let's plan to have some good old talk fests and some little trips that will enable you and Tom and I, and of course with Edith, Lorraine and the children along, to get off by ourselves and talk things over.

There are lots of things I want to write you about which can best be deferred however until we have a chance to talk them over. Glenn indicated to me that you were planning to be in London a week or so before your paper on the 12th to gather up the final strings on the famous unemployment book. Let's hope they will be easily and quickly gathered and all tied securely in the last final knot.

Are you perfectly willing to make the arrangements for the hotel in London? Miss Kean will take care of us in Brussels. If you are not planning to be there in advance of our arrival or if this chore you do not relish please do not hesitate to say so and I know that Lloyd Roberts will be glad to assume the burden. Regula and Miss Barber entertained him royally while he was here and I think he feels somewhat under an obligation to us for this and other favors.

I could write several more pages but if you could see the pile of correspondence on my desk after two months' absence you would wonder that this letter is as long as it is. Cheerio Mary, it seems great to be figuring the actual date we shall see you again and will have the chance of so fine a visit as is indicated. We all love you more than ever and

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are tickled pink that we are going to have you all to ourselves.

Greetings from all, as ever, your old pal,
(Signed) Art.

P.S. Present developments are that Bruce Stewart won't be able to get to Geneva before Jan. 1st at best.

c.c. to Mr Spates.

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Copy.

12th September, 1929

T.J.O'Connor, Esq.,
1, Temple Gardens,
London, E.C.4.

Dear Mr O'Connor,

It was most kind of you to write to me so fully concerning the effect of unemployment insurance on the responsibility of employers and employed. I frequently heard the same charges you make when I was in England last winter but was unable to procure any proofs. It would be very valuable to have data which would enable one to compare the situation of seasonal workers before and after unemployment insurance. Of course workers in the building trades get a high rate of wages, as you say, because they are engaged in intermittent work, but many people engaged in the millinery and garment trades are poorly paid and I doubt whether they would be able to save enough to tide themselves over slack seasons. When the general employment situation is good they can obtain other jobs but when it is not it is a different matter. However, what happened to the low paid seasonal worker before the introduction of unemployment insurance in comparison with what happens to him now is conjectural in the absence of supporting data. If you have any idea where I might procure any such data I would be very grateful to you if you would tell me of it. Mr Arthur Young (my chief) and his wife will land in London on October 10th or 11th, and I expect to be in London at that time, so I shall have an opportunity to do any necessary field work to strengthen my report.

Thanking you heartily for the help you have given me, I am

Very sincerely yours,

This is only one of the many charges made against unemployment insurance.
M. B. G.

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Copy.

1, Temple Gardens,
Temple, E.C.4.
6th September, 1929.

Dear Miss Gilson,

I am obliged for your letter of the 3rd of September. What I had in mind on the subject to which you call my attention was that with the coming of unemployment insurance, Industry, i.e. both employers and employed, found themselves divested of the responsibility which had previously attached to them of keeping their personnel engaged in slack times. This is particularly noticeable in an industry for example like building, the particular instance of which which was mentioned to me by a high Official at the Ministry of Labour.

Prior to unemployment insurance the more skilled grades in the building trade (e.g. Decorators, Moulders, Painters, etc.,) enjoyed practically a salaried position. When they finished work upon a contract made by their employer, they were nevertheless kept on by the firms in the interval between then and the next contract, so that their employment was continuous, although the work upon which they were engaged might not be.

Now, however, that both Masters and Men have to contribute large sums to the unemployment insurance fund, it occurs, as you might expect it would, that both contributors to the fund make drafts upon it when a contract is concluded. Thus when Painters, Decorators, etc., conclude a contract job now they are immediately stood off until the employer starts his work on a fresh contract and in the interval they draw out of work relief thus swelling the apparent total of unemployed although in fact they are not a portion of the unemployment problem at all and while in work they are paid by reason of its intermittent nature such a high rate of wages that averaged out it should and did in former days, supply they with a reserve to tide them over slack times.

The same applies to seasonal suspensions of work, and thus we have the weekly unemployment figures swollen with a large number of people who receive a sufficient wage if spread out evenly over the whole year to maintain them and their families in reasonable comfort.

You will appreciate that there are numerous industries in this country in which there is an intense seasonal demand for labour, e.g. hat making, millinary, drapery trades, etc., where during the rush periods men and women can earn very high wages indeed. In the absense of unemployment insurance a portion of this wage would go into reserve as savings against periods of

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short time. Now, however, the tendency is to disperse it rapidly in the knowledge that slack times bring unemployment relief which at any rate provides a bare subsistence.

Many industries in this country have, so to speak, organised themselves upon the dole. Instead of spreading work out evenly over the week, even involving short time working, they now work full time or even overtime for a week or ten days and close down for a minimum of four days or stand their operatives off half at a time in order to enable them to draw unemployment benefit. This occurs extensively in the coal trade and many of the Co-operative Societies work on the same principle, so that in these cases unemployment benefit is definitely being used as a subsidy to wages. The result of these considerations is that the weekly unemployment figures can be more truly said to constitute an index of industrial efficiency rather than an index of actual unemployment which exists at any given time. There is of course within the total what the Blanesburgh Committee called the "hard core" of unemployment consisting of round about 300,000 or 400,000 persons who are chronically out of work for periods of over three months. These are our real unemployment problem while at least 200,000 or 300,000 of the remainder are "ins and outs" who appear in the returns through the operation of the methods I have been describing.

I understand that the present Government has under consideration the extension of unemployment insurance to farm labourers. If they do so the principle I have been writing of will at once become apparent. At present no landowner ever stands a man off though there are many times when there is really very little for a man to do, e.g. during the hard frost lasting over several weeks which we had early this year. Something was found to be done for the man, a little hedge cutting or ditch trimming, although the work was really economically unremunerative. Quite obviously and properly a landlord cannot contemplate turning his men adrift at such a season and moreover if he did so they would probably drift elsewhere. But what would be the result if unemployment insurance applied to Agriculture? Then both masters and men would have contributed considerable sums of money to a fund established against this very contingency, and naturally and properly the men would be stood off to draw their relief and the unemployment total for the week would go up. This would not really mean that unemployment had increased but the figures would be no more than an index of the activity of the industry during a particular period. Of course stock men on pasture farms would still be employed more or less continuously but in the arable farms I think we should get something very akin to casual labour, men employed when the ploughing, etc., was necessary, and put on

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the benefit when the work was done instead of as at present having another job found for them on the farm to keep them going even although it need not be particularly remunerative to the landlord.

I trust that you may find something in these points which will be of assistance to you in the work you are doing.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) T.J.O'CONNOR.

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