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MEMBER OF AMERICAN ENGINEERING COUNCIL



Office of the Executive Secretary

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December 19, 1931.

My dear Miss Tarbell,

I take pleasure in enclosing a typewritten copy of a report presented by Dr. John V. N. Dorr as Chairman of the Institute's Committee on Technological Unemployment, which is a summary of a more detailed report of October 19, 1931 by the same committee.

Should you want to study this interesting problem further I am sure that by referring to Dr. Dorr direct you may obtain a copy of the full report.

I am taking the liberty of sending a copy of this letter to our President for his information.

Yours very truly,

Executive Secretary

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East Nineteenth Street,
New York City.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGICAL UNEMPLOYMENT

The Council received under dates of June 20th and September 1st, two communications from Mr. L. W. Wallace of the Department of Labor stating that Congress had authorized and instructed the Department of Labor to make a continuing study of Technological Employment and a Committee on same had been found to study the problem and advise as to the program to be adopted. Mr. Wallace as chairman of a Sub-committee on Technological Studies had been instructed to develop a practical method whereby the Labor Department could assemble, analyze and disseminate data on technological unemployment and asked help of the Institute in connection therewith, submitting an analysis, definitions and a questionnaire, with request that a report be presented by October 10th. The following Committee was appointed at the September meeting of the Council - G. J. Esseln, Crosby Field, Wm. H. Gesell, Wm. C. Geer, Martin H. Ittner, W. S. Landis, C. E. K. Mees F. W. Willard and myself, as chairman, and with Crosby Field, Secretary.

The Committee presented a preliminary report to the Council on October 9th and with its approval submitted same to Mr. Wallace.

This report pointed out that while we used the term Technological Unemployment, the subject really was the Study of Technological Advance, and that such advance produced both unemployment through the introduction of Labor saving products obsolete, and additional employment through the production and handling of new products.

As this Advance had been continuous although accelerated in recent years, the great contrast between the employment situation in 1929 and in the past year made it evident that the net result of the two forces could only be a minor factor in producing present conditions.

The report answered the broad questions submitted as far as possible and transmitted suggestions of various members on the subject. It felt the danger existed in that the result of such investigation might lead to bureaucratic control.

J. V. N. Dorr