

PREFACE

Doctors meet many people who are hurt by the current level of unemployment. These include:

- # young people, still seeking their first job months after leaving school - and wondering whether the fault lies with themselves or with society,
- # older people who have been retrenched because they were unable to adapt to new technology or to maintain the pace demanded of many workers today,
- # ex-workers of all ages who have been replaced by a machine, or "put off" following a company merger or because their employer has closed down,
- # handicapped persons who are often "last on and first off" - and who are thereby denied employment that could bolster their self-esteem and help them to live with their handicap, and:
- # many who are dissatisfied and relatively unproductive in their present job, but who are afraid to relinquish it lest they, too, join the unemployed.

These people all suffer emotionally. Some also suffer physically, because they cannot afford optimum food, clothes or housing, or meet the cost of medical and dental care.

Therefore, unemployment is not merely a social blight. It is also a medical problem, and a general practitioner may justifiably enquire into the causes of unemployment and seek remedies for it. Furthermore, a doctor is equipped for this task, through his training in diagnostic detective work. If this training succeeds with purely

medical conditions, it should help with problems that affect the nation's socio-economic health.

Emboldened, I offer the following thoughts on unemployment, and make suggestions that - in my view - would ameliorate it.

Les. Hemingway., M.B., B.S.
WARRNAMBOOL, VICTORIA

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