

Ordinary folk do not, in their normal life, run into opportunities for personal service in social work. They are shy about offering their services even if they know their services are sought; they quite justifiably question their ability to render service feeling that they do not understand "how the other half lives"; they are repelled by dirt, disease, and rough manners.

The social workers in the agencies, institutions, and Social Centres frequently fail to arouse, develop or hold the interest of such volunteers as do offer their services, because of lack of time to give to them, lack of understanding of the difficulties mentioned above, and not infrequently because of their own limited conception of their own work.

Social work of any variety can be presented in such a way that it will challenge the ambition, the courage and the ability of the most forceful and able men and women our Universities can produce.

There is nothing inherently wrong with the personal service of social work which should make it fail to appeal to young men and women. If it does not appeal, we may assume that we are either painting the picture of actually doing sloppy sentimental work, which fails to attract our vigorous young men and women because it fails to challenge the best that is in them.

I do not intend to leave the question without a constructive suggestion, which was made two years ago to another informal group after the Canadian Conference of Social Work met here in 1921.

We need a thoroughly well-qualified person to operate a personal service bureau,

1. to tell people what opportunities there are,
2. to fit the right people into the right places.

I believe the right person is available and a person who would be a valuable addition to our teaching staff at McGill University in the Department of Social Service.

CONCLUSION.

Some of us who have spent the greater part of our adult lives in social work find it hard to realize that the average person simply does not think about the economic effects of social maladjustment.

To the thoughtful social worker, the tubercular man, the syphilitic girl in hospital, the boy thief in a reformatory, the dependent widowed mother whose husband was killed by an unguarded piece of machinery and the vagrant beggar present themselves first and foremost as so much economic waste, a dead loss to be debited to the operation account of Canada. To the social worker, they appear, as they are in fact, vast consumers of wealth producing nothing, absolute parasites living at the expense of those who produce wealth.