

Day Shelter for Unemployed Men

Last winter practically no provision was made for shelter during the day for the army of homeless men. As a result they walked the streets in cold and wet weather or sought shelter in stations, stores, taverns, etc. This was obviously unsatisfactory, but so rapidly had the need for actual relief arisen that our effort was concentrated on supplying the basic necessity.

It is largely to the credit of Mr. George Mooney and Capt. William Bowie that the present shelter on Vitre St., east of Bleury was created. These two gentlemen, impressed with the necessity of providing wholesome occupation for the hordes of unemployed men compelled to spend day after day and even month after month in idleness, drew the attention of the Council to the desirability of creating a place where, through recreation or education, some of the evils of prolonged inactivity might be mitigated. A committee was formed composed of the following:- Dr. Frank D. Adams, Chairman, Geo. S. Mooney, Father Jos. Fallon, Emile Benoit, Dr. F. G. Pedley, Carl Ruckman, Rabbi H. Stern, Wm. Bowie, T. Morley Ewing, L. E. Brittle, C. H. Colson, Dr. W. A. Gifford, A. Stanley Rough, W. F. Shepherd, Rev. G. Guiton, D. J. Van Bommel. Dr. Adams has approached the problem with great energy and efficiency and has, with the help of his Committee, created a centre of activity which is, I believe, unique on the continent. The actual conduct of the place is in the hands of the Parks and Playgrounds Association. Capt. Bowie has given a great deal of time to its organization and Mr. Stanley Rough has remained as supervisor.

The Montreal Tramways were public spirited enough to make available the old St. Laurent School on Vitre St., now their property, and have expended a considerable sum of money in refitting the place for its present purpose. The Montreal Relief Committee has also taken a great deal of interest in the enterprise and has voted a sum of \$2,000. towards its operation. In addition a large number of private subscriptions have been made by interested citizens. Three wings of this large structure are now in use and some 4,000 men use the place daily. The recreational activities there range from card playing and checkers to theatrical entertainment in a specially equipped theatre on the top floor. Among the thousands of men attending the place, a considerable amount of histrionic and vocal talent has been found and the concerts, which are conducted daily, are furnished with talent for the most part by the men themselves, although individuals in the community have been very generous of time and talent in behalf of the centre. The Anglican Church has assumed responsibility for this function of the Shelter and Mr. Guiton and Mr. Shepherd have undertaken the actual supervision. The United Church has created a large library and reading room where thousands of books and magazines are available to the men. Rev. Mr. Gifford supervises this.

Perhaps the most constructive part of the Shelter's activities are the educational classes which are being conducted daily in English, French, arithmetic, book keeping and automatic engineering. Some 400 men have already taken advantage of these classes and are pursuing their studies with energy and faithfulness. No disturbance of importance has occurred in the Shelter despite the large number of men attending.

This concludes the recital of the activities of the Special Committee on Unemployment and its associated sub-committees. It will be appreciated that since the last report, there has been an enormous expansion of work due partly to an increase in unemployment distress, an increase more than double that of last year, and partly to a desire to handle the matter more effectively.