

# Civic Wood-Cutting as a Solution of Unemployment Problem

Results Attained by City of Winnipeg Were More Successful than was Anticipated

By Frank O. Fowler, Mayor of Winnipeg.

*The Canadian Forestry Magazine recently asked Mayor Frank O. Fowler of Winnipeg for a statement on the efforts of Winnipeg last winter to combine unemployment relief with the cutting of hardwood for fuel. The following account is a most interesting one.*

**T**HE CITY of Winnipeg, like many other cities in Canada, was faced with an acute unemployment problem during the winters of 1920-21 and 1921-22. To deal with this problem a joint agreement was entered into whereby the Federal and Provincial Governments and the City each assumed a share of the cost of relieving persons destitute through unemployment.

A considerable number of those requiring assistance were physically fit men without dependents and it was to care for these men that the camps for cutting cord wood were organized by the joint committee handling the matter. Unemployed men were engaged to go to these camps on terms similar to those prevailing in privately operated cord wood camps, the men being paid at the rate of \$1.50 per cord and charged for their board, transportation and cost of washing blankets, etc.

## Inexperienced Help

A large percentage of the men had absolutely no experience at bush work and the Committee, when organizing the camps was of the opinion that a considerable loss would result, but felt it was much better to put the men to work than to keep them in the City without work at a cost of \$1.00 per day each.

It is very gratifying to say that the plan worked out very much more successfully than was anticipated. In the case of a few men their earnings were not sufficient to meet charges for board, transportation, etc., but by far the greater number

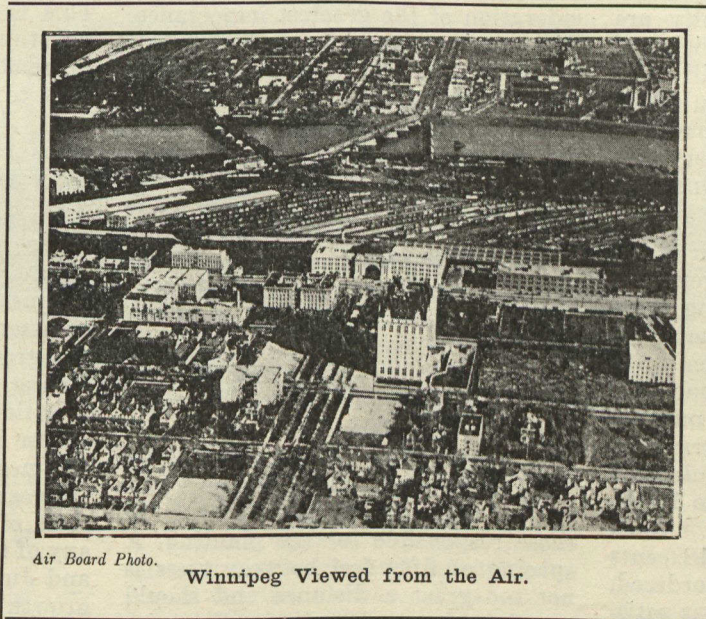
had substantial credit balances at the end of the cutting season and came back to the City in much better physical shape than when they went out to work. A very important phase of the matter is that a large number of the men on returning, stated that they had always been afraid to attempt bush work, but that they would have no hesitancy about taking it up in future; therefore, in the Committee's opinion

showing would have been much improved:—

Total number of cords cut.....	4,476
Total credit to the camp including wood cut at \$1.50 per cord, which was sold to the Provincial Government and taking credit for what it would have cost to keep the men in the City.....	\$13,556.06
Total charges against the camp.....	11,861.40
Credit balance.	\$ 1,694.66

There were a total of 236 men at the camp for an average of 21 days. The average net earnings, after deducting charges for board, railway fares, etc., was \$23.38; the highest amount earned by one man was \$108.60. Of the 236 men sent to this camp only 50 of them failed to earn sufficient to pay their board, etc., and the average amount of debit balance in their case was \$5.85. The average earnings of men who stayed in camp 30 days or over was \$49.07, or practically an average of \$25.00 per month.

In reference to the disposal of the wood cut; the largest quantity of it was made use of in caring for families of unemployed, the balance being sold in car load lots at \$7.50 per cord on the open market. This price of \$7.50 per cord comfortably covers the cost, including freight, stumpage, interest charges and other contingencies.



Air Board Photo.

Winnipeg Viewed from the Air.

the big thing that has been accomplished is the making of a number of experienced bush-men out of men unwilling to try this work.

## Financial Statement

Some figures in connection with the operation of the largest camp organized last winter are here given, and it might be mentioned that this camp was only operated for two months. Had it been operated for the entire cutting season the