

The labour test can be satisfactorily applied only in connection with a casual ward for the reception of tramps and vagrants ; while a casual ward, in which turbulent characters must often be received, can be well administered only under civic authority and the superintendence of the police.

For the benevolent efforts of voluntary visitors in connection with the House of Industry and other organizations the hearty thanks of the community are due. But voluntary visitors cannot be always disengaged and able to meet an urgent call. It seems desirable that in cases of urgent distress there should be an officer responsible to the public for doing what may be necessary, and doing it without delay.

In view of these facts and for these reasons the members of the Conference beg most respectfully to submit to the consideration of the Council the following resolution which was unanimously passed at one of their meetings.

“ Resolved, that in the opinion of this Conference it has become desirable that a public institution should be established, under municipal authority, for the relief of urgent cases of distress and for the reception of vagrants of both sexes, such institution to be provided with a casual ward, and with the means of applying the labour test to tramps”

Five thousand dollars a year are now granted by the city to the House of Industry. So much of this sum as is expended in lodging and feeding vagrants might be transferred to the casual ward of the City. The sketch of a simple building with a dormitory for men and another for women, a kitchen and a house for the superintendent is sent herewith, and the estimated cost of its erection is about \$5,480. The cost of keeping each waif would be from twelve to fifteen cents *per diem*. If the means of setting them to work were, provided the expense would be reduced. The annexation of the casual ward to the House of Industry, if found desirable with reference to the site, or for other reasons, would be perfectly compatible with the objects of the present proposal, provided the casual ward were under municipal control.

In addition to stone breaking, for which not even every male vagrant is fitted, other simple employments might be introduced. In Montreal, splitting and binding kindling wood is adopted as an employment. In the Institution at Detroit common chair-making is the occupation. Jealousy is sometimes aroused among the working classes by poor house or prison labour, which they fear will compete with their own. But these unfortunates must be fed ; if not set to labour, they must be fed entirely at the expense of the community ; and it is hard to believe that by doing the simplest and coarsest work they can take the bread out of the mouths of others.

For those urgent cases of distress or of wanderers needing to be forwarded to their destination, the task of dealing with which falls at present on the Mayor, the Conference proposes that a Relieving Officer should be appointed.

These municipal provisions for vagrants, tramps, and urgent cases would form as it were the foundation of our whole charitable system, while for other purposes the superstructure of voluntary effort and organization in which the zeal and liberality of our citizens are nobly manifested, would remain intact.

The House of Industry, relieved of the casual ward, which is evidently the most troublesome part of its functions, and also relieved to some extent by the City Officer of the duty of visitation, might be devoted more to the reception of the aged and infirm.

To provide for the transmission of waifs to their homes, with a proper division of the expense between the different municipalities, and to prevent the improper transmission of the destitute from other localities to Toronto it is obvious that general legislation must be obtained.