

REFORMS ARE NEEDED

Speakers at Associated Charities Meeting Reveal Startling Conditions Here--What They Want

Three subjects of great importance to the community were dealt with at the annual meeting of the Associated Charities which was held last evening in the board of trade rooms. The urgent need for these several reforms was ably urged by the speakers who presented them, and resolutions were adopted calling for steps to alleviate the conditions described.

The demands made were for a prison farm or farms, for a detention home for delinquent girls, and for evening classes in the public schools for boys and girls who are compelled to go to work before completing even a common school education.

Reports were presented showing a busy and successful year and all the officers were re-elected for another year. The meeting was called to order by the chairman, W. S. Fisher, who expressed his regret regarding the smallness of the attendance. The minutes of the last annual meeting were then read by the secretary, Miss Grace O. Robertson.

The financial report was submitted by the treasurer, William Young. A summary follows: Receipts: Balance on hand \$90.90, City grant 300.00, Contributions 515.73, Interest 4.78, Total \$811.31. Expenditures: Balance on hand \$810.67, Paid in since books closed 38.00, Total \$848.67.

The secretary submitted her annual report reviewing the work of the year. During the year they received 1,988 applications. Of these 530 were for employment, 171 were seeking relief, 16 asking for transportation, 11 requests for children for adoption, 7 women asked to have their children adopted, 43 men asked for a night's lodging, 39 requests for clothing, and the balance were from persons seeking work and employers seeking help.

Police Magistrate Ritchie, in seconding the resolution, said: "It has always seemed to me that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Statistics show that ninety per cent of all arrests are caused by liquor. We license men to sell liquor and then arrest the men to whom they sell it. When they come before me they must be fined or sent to jail until they get the liquor out of their systems. So far as I know I have never taken a dollar from a man who had a family dependent upon him. What we want is to save the men from themselves."

Rev. R. A. Armstrong was then called upon to speak on the need for the establishment of a prison farm. He said, in part: "The humanizing of the prison class is a great problem, perhaps not to be solved in our time. One of the

remedies suggested is the prison farm, no longer an innovation but a tried success in other places.

"In Europe, as well as in our own country prisoners are being given more freedom and more scope and the experiment has been found successful."

"In our own county, a bill was prepared and sent to Fredericton with the endorsement of the council, but was thrown out by those in authority."

"In considering this subject there are three factors, the state whose laws are violated, the prisoners who have violated the law and finally those dependent upon the prisoner, and the prison farm seems to be the best solution for all three."

"From an economic standpoint it is best because it enables a man to continue his earning power instead of making him a burden on the community."

"The mere fact that it takes the drunkard off the streets is an advantage of the state and he is taken to a place where he is given a chance to rebuild his health amid uplifting surroundings. There are men who want to give up the liquor habit but have not the power to do so and the prison farm gives such a man the opportunity he needs."

"Again it has always seemed to me a silly thing to thrust men into jail and leave their families dependent upon others."

"Finally, the prison farm gives a better opportunity for a prisoner to work for the support of himself and his family."

Resolution: "From its benefits to the state, the prisoners and those dependent upon him, I cannot see how anyone can oppose the establishment of a prison farm and I have much pleasure in moving the following resolution: 'Whereas, in many of the American states, and especially in the Canadian province of Ontario, the establishment of prison farms to take the place of the common jails for drunkards and other delinquents has proved to be a real reform, of benefit alike to the delinquent and the community. Therefore resolved, That this annual meeting of the Associated Charities of St. John respectfully urge the provincial legislature to make provision for the establishment of such a farm or farms in the province of New Brunswick.'

"And further resolved, That the municipal council of the city and county of St. John be heartily commended for its attitude on this question, and urged to continue its efforts to secure such an institution to improve the conditions at present existing in this city and county."

Police Magistrate Ritchie, in seconding the resolution, said: "It has always seemed to me that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Statistics show that ninety per cent of all arrests are caused by liquor. We license men to sell liquor and then arrest the men to whom they sell it. When they come before me they must be fined or sent to jail until they get the liquor out of their systems. So far as I know I have never taken a dollar from a man who had a family dependent upon him. What we want is to save the men from themselves."

"We want to prevent the sale of liquor as much as possible and I would like to see the government pass a law forbidding treating in the bars."

"Since last January there has been a great amount of pocket peddling around

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Have you heard about Peps? Peps is a new scientific preparation put up into tabloid or pastille form, which provides an entirely new and effective treatment for coughs, colds and lung and throat troubles.

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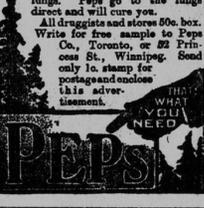
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For that cold, that night cough, that touch of bronchitis, don't dose your stomach! The trouble lies in your lungs. Peps goes to the lungs direct and will cure you.

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St. John, especially on Sundays. It should be made impossible for retailers to sell liquor by the bottle to be taken off the premises.

"If we can have the law amended there will be very few people to be sent to either the present jail or the proposed prison farm. Between the two there is

no doubt but that the prison farm is the better, but I would like to see the law amended so we could cut off the supply of prisoners for either."

Rev. Dr. MacVicar. Rev. Dr. J. A. MacVicar spoke of the success of the farm at Guolph and said that the cost should set an example in these great moral movements.

The chairman referred to a prison farm for boys near Montreal which had been of great value.

Children on the Streets. Adjutant Cummings in opening the discussion on the presence of children on the streets at night said: "I have been interested in the prison farm project but if it is good for men and boys why not for women and girls also?"

"While I would not say that St. John is any worse than other cities there are conditions here which should be remedied."

"If you are not familiar with these conditions a tour of the city after night would reveal many things that would make you blush."

"There is a great need for a detention home in the city of St. John, in contact with worse women she herself will become worse."

The speaker then gave details of the carrying out of a number of unfortunate girls of this city who had become mothers, many of them under 16 years of age, without wedlock. He urged the necessity of a detention home to care for such cases.

He then gave instances of deplorable homes, under which it is impossible for girls to grow up with any chance of developing into good women.

Charges Laxity. "In addition to the laxity of the home," he said, "there is also laxity on the part of the police. The police warn men off the street corners but overlook the little girls in the squares who are carrying on with men."

"In addition to these things which aid the downfall of girls there is the great fact that when a girl once falls she is kept down."

"In spite of this," he said, "how many men can you remember who have been brought before the court charged with breaking up a home or ruining a woman? Why should the women suffer while the men go free?"

"Why should we have to provide detention homes for the victims of the hands who wander about this city? We find little girls wandering about our streets late at night taking the first steps which will lead to their downfall."

In closing Mr. Cummings moved the following resolution: "Whereas, There is disgraceful and humiliating evidence of the demoralization of young girls, who are mere children in the city of St. John, and 'Whereas, There is far too much laxity in permitting children to go about at night unaccompanied by a parent or guardian, and subjected to evil influences, the fruits of which are but too apparent on every hand, and 'Whereas, The common jail is no place for such delinquents, either boys or girls; therefore

"Resolved, That there is great and urgent need of a shelter to which such delinquents might be sent while under detention; and further

"Resolved, That an appeal be made to the proper authorities for a more rigid enforcement of the laws relating to the presence of children unattended at nights in the streets and alleys of the city."

Rev. M. F. McCutcheon. Rev. M. F. McCutcheon on seconding the resolution said that those who attempted to alleviate the case of unfortunate found the stream of such persons ever increasing and his has forced attention to the care of the children in order to cut off the supply of delinquents.

"We talk of juvenile crime and we find that most of it is committed at an hour when boys and girls should be at home and in bed."

"Just go along the streets and see what delinquency meets the eye. 'We know that the people on the other side of United States boundary line are stirred to the depth by recent revelations regarding the way of immorality which is sapping the foundations of society. To one who is familiar with conditions among children of school age in St. John the amount of immorality revealed is almost unbelievable."

"If such things can exist in the schools how much worse will it be in the dark streets and alleys. For sixty years we have had a law limiting the hours during which children are allowed on the streets, but its enforcement has been overlooked and the time has come when we must face the need for it and seek its enforcement."

Rev. Dr. Raymond. Ven. Archbishop Raymond said that had never known conditions in St. John to be more depressing. He referred to the kind of homes many of the children come from, saying that it is no wonder they want to get away. He believed that housing reform would help to solve the problem. He did not think the church could do its whole duty by acting as the good Samaritan, but might accomplish more by ridding the road of the robbers.

Rev. Mr. Porter. Rev. F. S. Porter said that truth of the statements of the previous speakers had been forced home to him in a most painful way.

The facts regarding the boys and girls of the city gathered by a young man who was an adept in work among children were appalling.

The speaker believed that juvenile delinquency is almost always preceded by parental delinquency.

Protestant Home Needed. Magistrate Ritchie drew attention to the fact that while a detention home is being suggested for girls awaiting trial, there is absolutely no provision for Protestant girls who are brought into court and sentenced. He would be glad to render any assistance he could in securing such a home for Protestant girls, as the Catholics have the Home of the Good Shepherd.

Continuing, he said that the previous speakers had only touched on the fringes of the matter, the cases which become public are only a very small proportion of the most awful cases which the public never hears about, adding: "I am tempted to ask, is this St. John or is it Sodom or Gomorrah?"

Speaking of the home life in some of the poorer districts of the city, Rev. H. I. Pierce said that he had been in places where he did not see how people could lead the right kind of life.

School Buildings. The chairman then presented the following resolution: "Whereas, the people of St. John have made a large investment in the public school buildings of the city, which valuable plant is in use less than one-half of the time; and 'Whereas, it is a well known fact that approximately 90 per cent of the boys and girls attending our public schools find it necessary to leave school and become wage earners at an early age and are therefore unable to

benefit of the full course provided; and 'Whereas, the use of the school buildings in other cities for evening classes for the benefit of those who wish to continue their education without interfering with their employment has proved of immense benefit; therefore

Resolved, that the city council and board of school trustees of the city of St. John be requested to make provision for such further classes of this kind as it may be possible to inaugurate and gradually expand, using for this purpose the public school buildings."

This, Mr. Fisher said, is the ounce of prevention needed in dealing with the problems already discussed. He spoke of the progress along this line in Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec. In Toronto alone they expect to spend four or five million dollars within the next few years for just such purposes, although on a wider scale. He also referred to the success which had attended the introduction of manual training in the public schools.

Ahead of St. John. In seconding the resolution, Mr. Belding read an extract from a Halifax paper outlining the practical course of instruction provided by evening classes and asked why Halifax should be so far ahead of St. John in this respect.

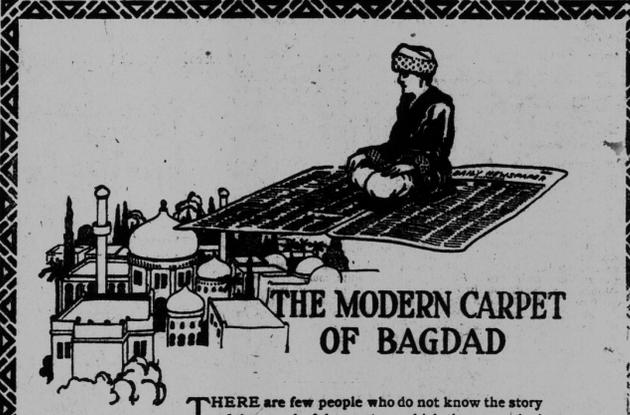
He pointed out that \$600,000 is invested in the school buildings of St.

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John and for this investment the city gets only a few hours' use. In American cities the schools are being used not only for educational classes but also as social centres for the whole community. The resolution only asks for a very small beginning in this direction. Officers. The election of officers followed with the result that the following were again chosen: President, W. Shivers; Vice-presidents, Rev. G. P. Scott, Hunter White, Mrs. Franklin St. and Mrs. George F. Smith; Treasurer, William Young; secretary, Miss G. O. Robertson; members of hon. management whose term expired year, Hon. R. J. Ritchie, A. M. B. Rev. R. A. Armstrong, Mrs. J. Thomson, Mrs. J. V. Ellis and Thomas Walker. The meeting adjourned.



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