

### How the Paris Municipality Assist the Unemployed.

By Edward Conner.

(CONCLUDED)

The State declining to settle the next to insolvable problem, the municipality of Paris stepped in, and pluckily took the matter in hand. It proposed to organize institutions capable of substracting or removing thousands of work people of both sexes from the operations of the *Bureaux de Placement*. The council has twenty *arrondissements* or mayoralties throughout Paris, and in each of these it opened a registry office of its own, wherein to *gratuitously* record all offers of work, as well as applications for work. It has further granted a subvention of 35,000 francs a year to aid the development of the municipal scheme, by way of an experiment, which is still but in its infant stage, though doing well; the latest reports to hand of its working are full of bright promises. The subject it is true had been "nibbled at" already since some years, but strictly speaking, it is only now it may be said, that the project in question has been taken up boldly. So perfect and satisfactory is the municipal scheme that the scope of the arrangements excludes all fees; therein lies the commanding power of the council, as compared with the *Bureaux de Placement*.

In the year 1896, the latest official statistics published, there were received at the twenty Paris mayoralties, 52,955 applications for work; 32,603 of these were from females. There were 45,107 offers of work; of which 31,026 were for women. The number of offers accepted was 34,236; of these, 18,290 represented permanent situations, and 7,401 were of a temporary kind; or 25,691 in all for women. As compared with the global total for the year 1895, 374 fewer applicants obtained work, while in 1896, 409 more persons secured permanent employment. The latter was, on the side of the men by 1,044, while there was a decrease of women by 635. It is indeed interesting to record that the total demands for occupation, represent nearly the half of the customers that formerly belonged to the private registry offices. In the general table of twenty-six different professions, there were included either for permanent or temporary employment the following:

PROFESSION.	DEMANDS.	OFFERS.
Valets, . . . . .	200	75
Houseporters, . . . . .	1,413	379
Waiters, . . . . .	725	430
General Servants, . . . . .	11,457	10,852
Cooks, . . . . .	1,680	949
Charwomen, . . . . .	4,843	3,234
Laborers, . . . . .	3,046	988
Errand men, . . . . .	4,034	4,756
Seamstress, . . . . .	3,662	3,636
Artificial Flower-makers, . . . . .	845	1,214
Milliners, . . . . .	398	395
Apprentices, . . . . .	2,068	3,030
Jack-of-all-trades(women)	5,972	7,360

It is satisfactory to add that the number of employers offering work also increased in proportion. The selections made from the general table of the twenty-six different classes of operatives of unemployed of both sexes, attest the real services rendered to a crowd of corporations, whose members have had more or less to depend upon the ordinary *Bureaux* and the private offices. In the municipal scheme it will be seen that there is neither intermediary, nor any fees exacted; the applicant is at once placed in communication with the employer of labor. In the global results of the divers men and women, namely, 9,406, that was above the one-sixth of the total demands—52,955—for work; while the offers for employment were 9,378. The section "divers" will, however, require further explanation, as the idea moves onwards. Under the heading of "Divers," or "Jack-of-all trades," are included persons belonging to no fixed profession, who are reduced to work for their living; the *non valeurs*, in a word; the applications will also require to be better sifted and classed, considering they comprise many useful and educated persons. The twenty mayoralties are not uniformly patronized in any case. For instance, only one had more offers for work than applicants in search of employment, while some of the offices were fortunate enough to secure a larger percentage of work for the unemployed than did others. These indications point to the necessity of effecting interchanges between the twenty mayoralties—the more so as there can be no rivalry, since the elements of success are practically the same, to procure as much as possible, though the distribution of labor must be better methodized than it is actually. More, the offices should all be connected by means of the telephone; this is essential, in addition to having relatively uniform but different office hours devoted to attendance of employers and applicants for work. The hours for attendance of women are actually in the morning, while that for men is in the evening. It would also be well to have the Municipal Labor Office situated inside the mayoralty building itself, and not as, in some cases, in an outside tenement. Further, a registered list of the applicants ought to be carefully posted up for reference and control, while the accounts should be systematically kept and officially inspected. The cost of managing the bureau is at present very unequal, and requires reforming, though their work is dissimilar. The lowest annual expenditure per office was 1,200 francs in the fourth, and the highest, 3,300 francs in the fifteenth *arrondissement*, or ward. The third mayoralty expended 5,504 francs, and only received 2,500 francs by way of subvention. Assistance is contributed from other sources of course, but no general conclusion as to expense can be formulated until both receipts and expenditure be methodically conducted hence the difference and fluctuations. Some of the offices, on the contrary mani-

fest the wish to save, which is an excellent check upon extravagance, provided it is sagaciously managed. The average cost of an "application," relative to work is 43 Centimes (100 centimes equal 1 franc) in the first, while it is six francs in the twelfth *arrondissement*! On a year's transaction, the first ward had a balance of 662 francs, while it was as high as 3,913 francs in the ninth—all a question of economy, combined with efficient good management. Some of the offices have also private resources. The average cost of "obtaining a situation" was one franc to 1 franc, 70 centimes.

The municipal *free* registry offices in Paris have indeed proved to be a grateful and necessary help to thousands who were too poor to fee intermediary agents who secured their employment. The municipal plan places or enables unemployed individuals to come into immediate contact with those in search and in need of some of the twenty-six classes of labor, previously alluded to, leaving both sides to independently arrange their terms.

The official free registry offices accept no responsibility; they simply bring two interested parties together *free* of all cost. There is no doubt that there is plenty of room for that excellent idea to be further developed. There are several journals representing the working classes in France, and that insert demands for, and offers of work gratuitously; all the *kiosques* along the leading thoroughfares in Paris, exhibit each morning fresh lithographed sheets of labor vacancies, as well as the name of the *Bureau de Placement*, where further information is to be obtained. In the densely populated quarters of industry, such as the Rues and Faubourgs de Saint-Denis, du Temple, St. Antoine, etc., certain public places have their walls positively carpeted as it were with manuscript advertisements emanating from persons of both sexes in want of occupation, as well as from employers also in need of hands. These accessories, apart from the relatively few paying newspaper advertisements, and the private and paying *Bureaux* have not prevented the municipal council of Paris from successfully conducting *free* registry offices; on the contrary, the latter are patronized more than ever. In 1896, there were 52,955 applicants receiving 45,107 offers of work, of which 34,236 were accepted by both sexes; who might have been otherwise more or less thrown upon the city's asylums in order to be alleviated and to say that these municipal *free* registry offices are but in their embryonic stage of formation. Judge then what the results will be when they are in full working order.

#### The Need of the Hour.

"What I want," remarked the autumn bride, who was arranging for a \$500 trousseau on a \$50 father, "is a going-away gown that isn't a giving-away gown."