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Unemployment and the Municipalities

Unemployment is increasing to an alarming extent in the industrial centres of Canada, and as in 1915, when industrial conditions were bad throughout the Dominion, the unemployed are looking to the city halls to ease their condition. In the city of Toronto, on April 22, three hundred out-of-works marched to the City Hall and there presented to Mayor Church a resolution demanding "to be gainfully employed immediately, or failing this, allowance to be granted at the rate of \$15 for single men and \$20 a week for married men, with an additional \$2 for each child. Be it further resolved that failing this, they adopt such methods that will accomplish the results desired."

The latter part of the resolution, which was in reality a threat to create a disturbance if the demands were not complied with, was met by the mustering of the police at police headquarters. There was no disturbance. The mayor, with his well-known diplomacy, saw to that. Be that as it may the Toronto incident is an indication to what extent hungry men with hungry families will go when driven to it, and it must be remembered that thousands of these men have been out of employment for months. And the unemployment problem is not confined to Toronto by any means.

What the municipal councils can do under the circumstances is hard to say for undoubtedly every municipality is doing all the public work that is necessary, and to carry on more is to add an increased burden on an already heavily taxed people. Of course, with the summer coming on some can go on the land, but not many as the large proportion of men now out of work are mechanics and clerks, whose training has absolutely unfitted them

for farm work. According to bank reports this summer is going to be one of the hardest for industry in the history of Canada, the reason given being that no business can be done with the present high prices prevailing.

One of the principal industries affected is the building trade, especially the building of private dwellings which means not only present unemployment but an increasing shortage of houses. Many thousands of men in moderate circumstances having got tired of paying excessive rents intended this year to build their own homes, but high costs have stopped them, they choosing to take the lesser, of what they think two evils by renting. What is to be done? Every attempt made to bring the financier, the supply man, the contractor and labor together would seemed to have failed. Each keep trying to pass the "buck" on the others. No one will take up the responsibility of forcing the situation which common-sense says would go far to solve the problem as far as housing was concerned.

A FAIRY GODMOTHER.

Last year we published an article in these columns from the pen of Mr. John Kidman, in which he suggested that Canadian cities follow the example of certain English cities that had each adopted some town located in the devastated territory of France or Belgium. We note with pleasure that the City Council of Montreal have passed a resolution to give practical assistance in the reconstruction of Avion, a little town near Lens. In this way Montreal becomes the fairy godmother of one of the stricken towns of France. What other Canadian city will follow her splendid example?