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R.C.A.F. BENEVOLENT FUND  
SPEEDS AID IN EMERGENCY

By Kenneth C. Cragg  
ONTARIO--The child was dying. The father, an LAC in the RCAF, was overseas.

Application was made to the RCAF Benevolent Fund. The child and his mother were speeded to a city where the former received the best care medical science could provide. He recovered.

An officer's wife, on the way to a West Coast station, slipped and fell beneath a moving train. Both legs had to be amputated. Medical expenses plus the care of their two children were far beyond the officer's means. The burden was eased by a substantial grant from the fund.

These are but two of scores of case histories in the records of the fund. There was the recent case of Mrs. Archie MacDonald, mother of triplets. Through some error, the Dependents' Allowance Board had slipped up on payments in spite of repeated appeals.

Quick to Act

The story of the Fort Erie woman's plight appeared in the papers. Benevolent Fund officers were immediately on the telephone learned basic facts and a cheque was on its way to Mrs. MacDonald immediately.

Their only quarrel is with Mrs. MacDonald, her husband and her husband's O.C. They ask why all three did not apply to the fund when Mrs. MacDonald did not receive her allowance payments? Dependents of air personnel as well as pensioners, have been advised that the fund is standing by to help them in event of distress.

The fund and what it will do to alleviate distress, has been bulletined on every station board in the country. MacDonald's own station, through its canteen funds, contributes to the Benevolent Fund.

Its active executive officers admit, and sadly, "We have had trouble in getting across to the Air Force what the fund is prepared to do."

Can Do Plenty

That it can do plenty, is clear. It has some \$800,000 on hand and it expects to contribute approximately \$750,000 to the backlog. It believes that its program is wise and that it is administered on a sound basis and in a spirit of common sense.

Most of the money comes from air personnel through voluntary contributions of one per cent of the gross sales of RCAF canteens and messes; donations by service personnel and civilian sources, and proceeds from

sources such as sports events, air displays and divine services.

The fund was established originally to supplement the assistance normally available from Government agencies. In its present form, it was set up as a company, as of April 1, last year, and is administered by a directorate, mostly civilians who are interested in RCAF welfare.

Available To All

It is acknowledged there has been coolness to the fund among personnel on the assumption that it was being built up for the permanent force and that, declare the men who administer it, is distinctly untrue. Their slogan is: "The fund is yours--use and support it."

The story behind it is simple. It is recognized that government agencies act slowly and when that results in distress, the fund can step in and make advances. It is recognized also there are instances of distress--and sickness to dependents is a major cause--from which relief cannot be obtained through Government agencies.

Each station has a sub-committee that is headed by the C.O. and that sub-committee is empowered to grant up to \$250 by way of a loan. In principal cities and towns there are civilian committees, which are authorized to grant up to \$150 as an initial loan.

The main thing is, once distress is established, the loan is made, and the distress is relieved. Terms of repayment are settled afterwards.

In the event that a Government agency is responsible, the fund takes action to see that the job is done by the agency.

Active officers in charge of administration at headquarters: Treasurer, Sqdn. Ldr. F. Lorenzen, secretary, Flt. Lt. A.L. Bell (the secretary, incidentally, lost a leg in an engagement over the Mediterranean off French Morocco and spent many months in a prison camp); and claims committee secretary, Flt. Lt. J.J. Carson, all stress that the fund has had "the utmost co-operation from responsible Government agencies."

His Majesty The King is the fund's patron, and it has the backing of men like Air Marshals W. A. Bishop and Robert Leckie, Deputy Minister H. P. Gordon, H. G. Norman of Montreal, Mr. Justice Savard of Quebec, and C. L. Burton of Toronto, the latter the representative of Ontario.

--Reprinted from Toronto Globe & Mail