

## CHILD WELFARE IN THUNDER BAY DISTRICT.

The main factors in the development of child life are Parents, Home, Companions, School and Church; each of these having a place in the equipment of a child for the battle of life.

With the records we have regarding the prevalence of Physical Degeneracy, Mental Deficiency, and Moral Perversion as causes, direct or contributory, of youthful delinquency we must recognize the importance of safeguarding the Springs of Life. Our business with the parent then first is to prevent the marriage and reproduction of the physically and mentally unfit; until we have adequately dealt with this problem we will have the delinquent, youthful and adult, to provide for. The strongest human influence brought to bear on child development is that of the home, it is only as the home becomes non-efficient that the influences of the street are paramount in character building. Standards of living as expressed in the home are determining factors in character-development of the children growing up in the home. And with the realization of this comes the sense of responsibility, as individuals and as a community, for conditions as they exist to-day in our District, and elsewhere in our Country Conditions of overcrowding, where a family or in many cases more than one family live in one room, where in addition to the family of the proprietor there are from ten to twenty boarders living in a six-roomed house, under such conditions it is impossible for these living as they are forced to do without privacy, or even the decencies of life to become Canadians in the best meaning of the word.

The expression given to social life, the wear and tear upon the nervous system of individuals by enforced close contact with others, the loss of the quality of delicacy, are perhaps more than we realize entering into the production of petty crime. In addition to this there are questions involving the health and physical well-being of those occupying such houses, one can hardly call them homes.

When we are considering the influences brought to bear upon the development of the child by companions, we are in contact with the problem not of individuals alone but the community. Children are essentially social in their instincts which in the case of the boy manifests itself in the "gang," and the influences of this social life upon the individual is that of the total of the homes represented acting upon that individual. Side by side with the efforts that are being made to safeguard child-life and to secure to every child a reasonable share of happiness and a fair prospect for the future, there are existent conditions which in a large measure duplicate and multiply the problems attendant upon such work. To remove children from an environment of indifference, ignorance and vice in order that they may have the opportunity, otherwise denied them, of becoming helpful members of Society and self-respecting citizens, and at the same time to allow conditions to exist which directly and indirectly contribute to children becoming neglected and delinquent is to nullify our work. Children are removed because of immoral conditions in the home, because of drunkenness or other vice on the part of the parents, or because the home is an unfit place by reason of neglect or depravity for such child; and yet our indifference regarding the needs of men is so great that we allow a number of families, two or more, to occupy and live in one room, and that a number of families, or a family and several boarders are crowded together in one house with no separate conveniences, no privacy, no home life possible, is quite a recognized thing, and we pass by on the other side with the remark "Foreigners." When we realize the meaning of the facts that can be proven from records, that the average of convictions of those born in America of foreign parents is three times that of the native-born American; that the second generation of those coming to us from other countries is twice as criminal as his father, and three times as criminal as the native born we will not rest until a solution has been reached in regard to the living conditions amongst the "Foreigner."

The relation of the School to the Child should be more than merely the presenting of the