

*The Address—Mr. Woodsworth*

through these offices 583 married men with 1,630 children, making a total of 2,781 persons and 146 single men, making a total of 729 cases and 2,927. This certainly indicates an abnormal condition. Winnipeg, during the time of depression, is the focal point to which the unemployed of western Canada come in the hope there will be a better chance of getting work, and consequently it is called upon to look after persons who are not really citizens. These persons might be called "Dominion citizens at large," but at the same time they cannot be allowed to starve and this is one of the reasons why Federal aid is sought. Of the total of 583 families now being cared for, representing 2,781 persons, 202 cases are families of returned soldiers or over one-third of the total. In the case of single men, unfit for farm or busy work, the percentage of returned soldiers is considerably greater, out of a total of 146 men there are 104 returned soldiers. I quote for your information the particulars in regard to several typical cases in the classes of "returned soldiers" and "Dominion Citizens at large."

From England, three months, ex-army No. 203, married, three children, wife pregnant. The above-noted man arrived from England the latter part of September and with the exception of a few weeks work in October has been a public charge. His health is poor and his eldest child is only fourteen. This family, due to the condition of his wife, are unable to support themselves, having no person with an earning power in the family.

Ontario resident, No. 27, three months in Manitoba, married, one child, wife sick. The above man left Ontario to farm in Alberta in the spring of 1922. Attempted to return to Toronto and obliged to stop over in Winnipeg on account of wife's confinement. Is destitute and wishes to return East.

Soldier settler: returned soldier, married, six children. This man had farm under Soldier Settlement Board for three years, but was obliged to give same up this fall. Came to Winnipeg and with exception of temporary employment at Canadian National shops on arrival, has been out of work. No employment for two months before registration.

And there is a long list of similar cases which the mayor assures us are typical. This condition is not confined to Winnipeg. For example, in the city of Montreal an organization which is under the direction of one of the most capable and careful social welfare experts states:

The general secretary of the Montreal Council of Social Agencies is of the opinion that there is just as much unemployment and just as much distress this winter as last. In his report for last year he states that 1,777 came or were directed to them for assistance of one kind or another, as against 1,400 in 1921. Sixty per cent of these cases were classed as "sickness," and this amounted to about 1,080.

The report says:

Much of this illness had been preventable were it possible to provide right living conditions for these families. Among citizens who have sufficient means to live in houses decently built and properly heated, who have plain, wholesome food to meet the demands of normal appetites, who have proper clothes to secure protection against heat, cold, wind and rain, and who can enjoy recreational facilities, there is comparatively little illness. But to the man and woman who must leave a cold flat to face colder weather with thin clothing and poor shoes, who knows not the luxury of the necessitous pair of rubbers and work for hours in wet foot gear, to the ill-fed scantily clothed youngsters

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who lose much of the value of schooling because they are not in a fit physical condition to enable their mental equipment to assimilate the knowledge presented, illness of a more or less serious nature is a very constant and disagreeable visitor.

We in this country might well set our own house in order, might very well care for the thousands, the tens of thousands, of people who are more or less living the life described by the general secretary of social agencies, before we begin to talk very much of bringing in more people to swell the ranks of the unemployed. If my memory serves me aright, the government last year accepted a resolution which was passed by this House, that it was a certain responsibility of theirs to furnish a scheme to provide for the unemployed in Canada. We have yet to hear what policy the government is going to adopt on that point.

An immigration scheme has been mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, and that scheme has been outlined and given to the press by the Acting Minister of Immigration. We find that it is proposed to adopt a progressive immigration policy again, to carry on an advertising campaign in the older lands and in the United States. We are told that our free lands are exhausted. Before, we had free lands to offer. We no longer can offer free lands in western Canada, and we are told that the immigrants who are desired are the tenant farmers and agricultural workers. For a great many years in this country it was our ideal for Canada that every man who went to work on a farm might ultimately own a farm of his own. Now it seems that that time is past and that all that we can offer as an inducement to the immigrant is that he may become an agricultural labourer or a tenant farmer. Secondly, we are told that we are to have household workers. I suppose that means young girls who will, for a time, serve in the homes, in the cities or on the farms. I might say that they are not going to remain very long in that condition and that that is not going to be any very great addition to the whole population and the permanent productivity of this country. We are told further that we are to have orphan children brought over to this country. I verily believe that if we would give simply half a chance to the people who are already in this country, they would be able to rear children in Canada instead of having to go overseas to secure them. This is a real trouble. To-day, whether in the rural districts or in the urban districts, the ordinary wage earner finds it is practically impossible to bring up a family in decency. Further, we have been told during the last few weeks