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 14R Front Street East, TORONTO

# CANADIAN WOMEN'S SOCIETIES

What Is Being Done the Length and Breadth of Canada  
**"GIVE WORK"**

## What the National Council of Women Has Done

**WAR**—the needs of the Red Cross—women and men thrown out of employment by the sudden dislocation of industry—

What could be done?

Vancouver, Winnipeg and Toronto women organized their activities. Largely, they were women of the Local Councils, but special organizations were effected to meet the situation as, in Toronto, the "Toronto Women's Patriotic League," which a local newspaper, trying to compliment, calls a "Hive of Industry."

Well, it is.

"We are keeping 200 women going in the house," said Mrs. Willoughby Cummings, Secretary of the National Council. The Red Cross wanted supplies. Women wanted work—had to have it. The T. W. P. L. organized the situation.

"When," said Mrs. Hicks in her report, "in our first enthusiasm, we met in what is now our home, would we have had the courage to take up this work could we have foreseen its growth and its ramifications? Perhaps not; but we have the courage to continue it, because our success has taught us our strength."

Mrs. Hicks expressed that sympathy of the workers for each other which a common social work has given: "When we think of the close association with each other that our work has brought, we shall, I think, be humbly grateful for the privilege that has been ours."

For the Red Cross 82,000 articles at a value of \$34,206 were supplied.

The point is that a large part of these supplies were made by women sewing, who would otherwise not have had employment.

## At the Patriotic Headquarters

The work developed. Women out of employment were registered and the files now show nurses, stenographers, domestics, charwomen—all women who terribly need work. Unfortunately, there is not enough work for every one. There is, to be sure, always a demand for domestics, and many people suppose that this should meet the employment question for women.

The effort to connect the unemployed women with the housekeepers who need service is interesting. Some ladies undertake to train office girls; in some cases this is successful; in most, the conclusion is not always so happy, for the girls want the work for which they have been really trained—who can blame them? The Y. W. C. A. give a two weeks' free course in domestic work, especially in cooking, for unemployed office girls who intend to take domestic positions. These have been successful, but, frankly, office girls do not like taking positions in households.

A branch of the employment bureau work is managed by Mrs. L. A. Hamilton who gets places for those who are willing to go to the country. This has been most satisfactory. Applications from the country are required to be signed by the Women's Institutes—who are here as in every other instance the readiest means of getting in touch with the country. On the other hand, urgent as are some of the demands for "help," no one is sent out for whom references have not been obtained. Great care is taken that employers and employees should be suited to each other.

Out in Vancouver the situation was handled as this special report shows:

"An office was taken and full classified registration of all unemployed women commenced. Offers of homes were requested and loans were made to those in immediate straits. Positions found, mostly domestic, at reduced wages for inexperienced girls. Carvel Hall, a 33-roomed place was taken, with rent provided by citizens, and furniture loaned or donated, and funds for emergencies volunteered. This place is now fitted out with bed-rooms, cafeteria, club room, reading room, little reception rooms for men friends, offices and big work-rooms."

## In Winnipeg

Mrs. R. F. McWilliams, corresponding secretary of the Winnipeg Local Council of Women, writes:

"About the work done by our Local Council in the way of helping people to get work, I am sending you a copy of the statement of our work, which was prepared about two weeks ago, immediately after we closed our bureau of work for women, on February 1st."

"We opened this bureau on September 10th, at the time when unemployment had reached a very acute stage here and it was open steadily until the first of this month. It was run under a committee of the Local Council, Mrs. T. R. Deacon being chairman with a secretarial board of Mrs. L. B. Copeland, Mrs. C. W. Nash, Mrs. A. A. Percy and myself. We had two paid workers doing the actual office work, but all the interviewing of applicants, whether for work or workers was done by volunteer workers. We were able to have two or three on duty every day during that time while the chairman or one of the secretaries supervised the work. We kept it up until it was quite apparent that there was no longer any need for what was after all only an emergency aid."

## And Yet—and Yet—

What is the disease of which these are the symptoms? For symptoms they are

—symptoms of bad social conditions, and although they have been treated so nobly by these public spirited women, back of the apparent symptoms there is a chronic state, unorganized and uninvestigated, which must sooner or later be met.

Shall we meet it now? Or shall we just alleviate its worst and most apparent symptoms and leave the social disorganization untouched?

In this light the last speech given before The Canadian Women's Club, Toronto, has a practical bearing, more especially as Mr. Arthur H. Burnett, Director Division of Public Service, Department of Public Health, Toronto, spoke with the directness and authority of an expert who knows his work.

## Relief and Unemployment

"The Department of Health," said Mr. Burnett "is interested in unemployment for this reason: It is our business to lower the mortality rate. Unemployment means lack of food, lower vitality, disease, and death."

"Two classes of persons must be considered: the non-able bodied the able-bodied."

"The Department of Health should deal with the non-able bodied; if they are not dealing with them, they should. This should not be by charity, but through Social Insurance."

"With respect to the able-bodied who are unemployed there is only one solution: Work. Men are asking for work and we give them charity. Charity is doing a lot of harm right now in Toronto."

"It is not a question of kind heart; there is need of competent expert handling of the situation. Our present dabbled at charity is ineffective. In one week one man who took addresses of men who asked for money saying they need work, got six fraudulent names and addresses."

"We must know our problem before we can deal with it. The need of work is evident enough. In Hamilton, 1500 men applied when 40 were required. We must have an exact census, and an adequate Labor Exchange, to include all classes, with men, women and juveniles, in separate rooms and provision made for those handicapped. Co-operation of both employers and employees is needed."

## A Labor Exchange Needed

"At the present time there are maladjustments: (1) as to place, when there are situations vacant in one city, and unemployed in another: (2) as between occupations, as in handling ice in summer and coal in winter: (3) as to time, for more are unemployed in winter than in summer. Many crowd into a few callings while other industries are short of help. In summer time, farm and construction work, etc., suffers from lack of labor, while every winter the larger cities have numbers of unemployed looking in vain for work. There are also the newly arrived immigrants."

This last sentence reminded me that Mrs. Torrington, President of The National Council, in speaking to me of some of our problems, mentioned especially the training many of our immigrants require.

Mr. Burnett, followed with the closest attention by the women of the Canadian Club, said:

"I must say with respect to the work of a Labor Exchange, that it is not sufficient to recommend any man for any job. It must be done with discrimination and be followed up to see if employers and employees are suited. Information should be guaranteed, but not jobs. The parties should do their own bargaining. And the State must do this."

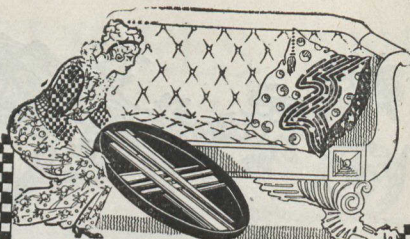
An adequate Labor Exchange would regularize industries, and, by getting suitable persons in the right positions, where they would stay, would decrease the cost of training new hands—a great loss in business. It would also reduce the hours of labor, for many at present are working overtime. The school age would be raised. Old Age and Mothers' Pensions would be provided, and a training colony for unemployables be established. This last is especially good, isn't it? Insurance against unemployment must also be provided.

"And we will do this," said Mr. Burnett, "because work will increase the purchasing power of these persons and because there is an enormous economic waste in unemployment."

In short, it's bad business for Canada to have men and women unemployed.

With which thought, Mr. Burnett left the subject for the consideration of The Canadian Women's Club.

*Club Woman*



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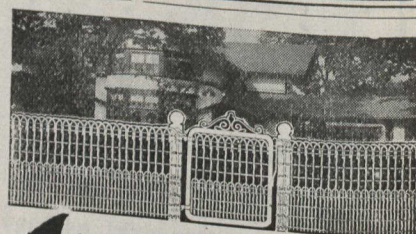
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