

Children's Aid Work Reviewed

Annual Report of Secretary
Submitted by J. Leslie
Axford

INCREASE IN WORK

At the annual meeting of the Children's Society yesterday, J. Leslie Axford, secretary of the society, submitted the following report:

Brantford, Dec. 12, 1918.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I beg to report to you the following for the year ending October 31st 1918, as follows:

239 complaints investigated.

41 children involved in the complaints.

34 children were made wards of the society—24 from Brantford, 10 from Brant County.

2 were committed to industrial school.

66 children were placed in foster homes.

60 children returned to the parents.

198 applications for children received.

185 were maintained in the shelter.

22 days were the average stay.

11 was the average number per day.

4091 days was the total stay for the year.

80 were girls.

101 were boys.

4 were mothers with their children.

33 came from Brant County.

115 came from Brantford.

37 came from other municipalities.

44 cases in juvenile courts.

113 children discharged.

\$1,559.15 was received at this office.

Increase in Work

During the year there has been a marked increase both in the work undertaken and also in the interest manifested by the people.

This work had its inception here in Brantford on February 1, 1894, when the first officers were elected. From this small beginning, it has grown to its present form, and this is only one of the many societies that are now operating in Ontario, under the supervision of the Provincial Government through our superintendent, J. J. Kelso, who we all admire and love.

The best welfare of children has been our sole concern for in this enlightened age no boy or girl should be allowed to live in wretchedness and degradation without education or any incentive to good citizenship. We have received children from all kinds and conditions of homes, we have responded to all calls, whatever their origin.

ever their religion, or whether Jew or Gentile, we gave all the same treatment and constantly endeavor to show them the brighter and better side of life. This work has not been really charity and yet it was prompted by the deepest and strongest love.

Now more than ever, it is necessary to prevent the reckless squandering of our most precious possession, the children. Now, as never before, we should fit ourselves and our children for the life and citizenship in this new era which the termination of the war has brought in.

Need Higher Education

The call will be insistent for training men and women in the world's rebuilding, and we must not relax our efforts to keep every boy and girl in school until 14 years of age at least, and as much longer as it is possible. This has been hard to do on account of the great demand for production, and it has been doubly hard to keep the boy that has passed the entrance at school. The abundance of work and abnormally high wages offered gave boys and girls a feeling of independence of restraint and induced habits of extravagance.

Also the habit of shifting from one job to another has given our city as a result of war conditions. We have some who believe that the job of a child under school age is necessary for the support of the family. In justice to the child and the future welfare of the municipality, and not the child, should support be given by pensions or otherwise. Premature work means a sacrifice of education, of health and of future earning powers. That this province is fully alive to the need of better education is shown by the appointment of Dr. Cody as Minister of Education. We all look to him for better conditions, and we will not be disappointed.

We have men in Brantford who get more excited over their pipe being closed up than they do over their boy playing truant, and we have women who have a greater interest in the picture shows than they have in their children.

This lack of parental interest in the welfare of their children, as very marked each year, and to such we can justly attribute many of the cases we have had to deal with.

It was necessary, as much as we regretted it, to send some to the Industrial School. Our most earnest efforts have been to keep boys and girls from being sent there.

This has resulted in not only a great saving to the city and county in dollars and cents, but the children have regained an honorable place in life.

It is the endeavor of this society to place these "human plants" that have been stunted and distorted in their growth, both physically and morally, in a soil that will foster and stimulate the latent good and also counteract undesirable or vicious tendencies. Each child is a problem, some have to be transplanted several times before satisfactory results are attained. Because the child is an imitator he learns habits of thrift and self-reliance from his foster parents, and also the latter parents find a development of a latent tendency to be their having the child in their home.

The investigation of cases of juvenile delinquency disclosed the fact that a large portion of the complaints among the boys arise from entering buildings, railroad cars, etc. with intent to steal, trunks, running away from home and general disobedience to parents.

In the majority of these cases the cause can be traced to inferior home conditions and lack of care and training on the part of parents. Too often the child's education is that of the street.

The co-operation of all citizens is

earnestly desired that everything be done to protect the girl or boy who is possibly being cruelly treated or driven to a life of crime.

Let us all bear in mind we have not a past but a future.

It is to be hoped that there will be no slackening in the agitation for better milk for Brantford children.

Our motto is "Service." "Serve and not to be served." In this we have been called upon to work at all hours and it has not only taken our manual labor but also the very best of our mental efforts. We have given of ourselves, our courage and our faith. At times it has been very hard to maintain health of body, vigor of mind and strength of spirit, yet we could not afford to lose any of these qualities as all are so essential to our best work.

The two weeks holidays this year was much needed and greatly appreciated.

Because of the great increase in the cost of everything it was a continual problem to keep within the monies provided for us as well as we did. We have aimed to give these children a home, as good as any would have, had they had good homes of their own; in this we have had a large measure of success. The children of the public schools of our city came to our help in a most substantial manner last fall by having a "Vegetable Day."

Besides vegetables we got many other useful things such as eggs, fruit, money and clothing. This is a splendid idea, and should be an annual affair. This year we have received an unusual number of useful gifts from the Women's Institutes of the county, of clothing, vegetables and fruit.

To all those who have so generously contributed money, supplies, comforts and pleasures to the shelter during the past year, we offer our heartfelt thanks, and where so many have shown kindness, it would be impossible to particularize.

Looking back over our year's work I do not think we have any reason to be ashamed of what we have done, but we might have done more, but with the facilities at hand we did our best.

We have suffered by the grim

reaper again in the death of our past vice-president, Richard Sanderson, and others who manifested a deep interest in our work, in a practical manner.

The press of our city and county have at times been most courteous in publicly given our work and to those we owe and extend our hearty thanks.

The doctors, the dentists and the merchants have been most obliging and attentive, and have given freely to our needs for which we extend thanks.

In closing this report, I want to record the pleasant relationship that has existed amongst the members of the board of management of this society and the great harmony that has governed all its deliberations. There has been no discord whatever, and every member has worked with one object in view, and that was the furtherance of the work the society is engaged in.

I wish also to record our sincere appreciation of the advice and counsel of His Honor Judge Hardy, and the splendid support given by the Shelter by the Pansy Club this year, in again filling our coal bin and supplying other needs.

Respectfully submitted,
J. L. AXFORD.

ACTION DISMISSED.

By Courier Leased Wire.

Montreal, Dec. 12.—In the Superior Court yesterday Mr. Justice MacLennan dismissed the action of Dame M. Crowley, widow of Michael Keating, against P. R. Johnson of Montreal, and A. B. Mackay, of Hamilton, from whom as owners of the Lake Steamer Sarnia, she claimed \$5,000 under the Workmen's Compensation Act, alleging that defendants were liable for her in this amount for the irreparable fault which caused the death of her husband, while he was working on board the steamer named, at Montreal, on November 4, 1917.

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