

MONTREAL'S SOCIAL WELFARE PROBLEMS

(By JOHN KIDMAN).

The following article by Mr. John Kidman relates only to those charities undertaken by Protestant organizations and does not touch the larger charitable work under the care of Roman Catholic and Jewish organizations. Every Roman Catholic Parish in the City of Montreal has its own district and complete organization under the direction of the parish cure or priest. These organizations include the different religious orders in so far as their charities affect the different parishes, so that there is no overlapping in effort and direction. It may truly be said that the Roman Catholic Churches in Montreal, as indeed in the whole Province of Quebec, look well after their poor.

The Jewish population of Montreal, which number approximately 75,000 has its own charitable organizations.

Montreal Council of Social Agencies.

The poor in mind, body and estate constitute a problem for every growing city, and from the time that the French settlers inhabited the City of Montreal, its poor and unfortunate have always been well looked after. In the early days the alleviation of distress was in the hands of priests and nuns for the most part, but as the English-speaking and non-Catholic population increased, there sprung up institutions and societies that joined in this work, which were not necessarily under the direction of the church, though the Protestant churches have done their fair share in initiating and maintaining benevolent and philanthropic institutions and movements of every type. But to-day the situation in Montreal is that there is a certain broad recognized line between charitable and ameliorative work conducted by the representatives of the two faiths just as there is in regard to the administration of education. It is an amicable and a natural arrangement. At the same time, there are many places in which both races and faiths meet in these institutions. The leading city hospitals bearing English names are open to all, and many of the societies and associations which assist in the solution of various social problems, societies such as the Charity Organization, the Society for the Protection of Women and Children, the Prisoners' Welfare, Child Welfare, and the Salvation Army Social Department, minister to all sections of the community.

The gradual growth of these organizations had, in the natural course of events, led to some overlapping of effort, and for some years past it has been realized by social workers that there existed a need for linking them all up by a central council which would readjust, where necessary, and bring together for common effort its constituent units.

Thus came into being the Montreal Council of Social Agencies, representing Protestant and non-sectarian agencies. In the fall of 1919 there was issued a report of a committee which had arranged for a survey of such agencies, for which task the services of Mr. J. Howard K. Falk, Director of Social Service at McGill University, were secured. The scope and modus operandi of eighty agencies were examined; accounts and income were analyzed; the composition of executive committee or boards in relation to ability and fitness reviewed, and the general provision for any one phase of social effort—such, for instance, as the care of aged dependents, or the provision for crippled children—was summed up.

The agencies were divided up into groups or divisions, the first of which was for the sick and handicapped. Under this heading came four general hospitals, five special hospitals, one insane hospital, four institutions for tubercular patients, two convalescent homes, four dispensaries and

clinics, and four institutions for blind, deaf and dumb or otherwise defective children. This category, it should be borne in mind, excludes all but Protestant or non-sectarian agencies.

In the division for dependents and partial dependents, there was only one society, the C. O. S., affording both temporary and permanent relief. There were four other agencies affording temporary help. For night shelter and temporary lodging, there were four institutions for men and two for women. There was only one institution offering a permanent roof for the aged and infirm of both sexes. Five institutions among other operations, helped the unmarried mother. Free employment bureaux were provided by six agencies, three for each sex. Three agencies had summer camps to enable the poor to have short trips to the country. In the education and recreational division there were four university settlements, one downtown club for boys and one for girls; also boy scouts, girl guides, boys' naval brigade, playground, Daily Vacation Bible Schools, Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. For sailors there were two institutes for the Protestants and Catholics, respectively.

Financial Problem.

Montreal, like other cities on this continent, has long felt the need for placing on a proper basis the financing of its benevolent and social agencies in such a way that the citizen would not be appealed to for every individual agency, such appeals averaging two or three per day. When the scheme for this federation of social agencies was first conceived, it was hoped by some of its supporters that a solution would be found for this problem by a plan for federating the budgets of the agencies affiliated to the council. But while the committee which made this survey made no recommendation as to financial federation, they expressed the belief that this should come as a development at a later date, when the majority of the agencies had proven their sincerity by showing their ability to co-operate for common action in social reform and education.

In an analysis of income of sixty-five agencies which was in the report of this survey committee it appeared that the total revenue from private or charitable sources was \$884,000, and from public sources, i.e., provincial and municipal grants, \$322,000, but this latter amount was practically divided between three or four big institutions such as, in most countries, would fall entirely upon the local county rates or the public exchequer. The outstanding feature in the examination of means employed to raise revenue for these agencies was that the appeals were made to and seemed to be responded to by a very limited number of business houses and private citizens, which means that a certain section of the population is continually giving, while another section never gives.

One question which has been put by some persons in regard to this council of social agencies is: "Is not this the function of the Charity Organization Society?" As a matter of fact, the functions of the Council of Social Agencies cover a very much wider scope than that of the Charity Organization Society. The latter came into existence to deal with the misfortune and poverty of the community, to bring together the efforts of various societies which existed for the purpose of helping the poor and the sick; but it never undertook to handle the co-ordination, say, of child welfare work, of hospital areas, or of providing, or obtaining the provision of special accommodation for certain types of delinquents.