

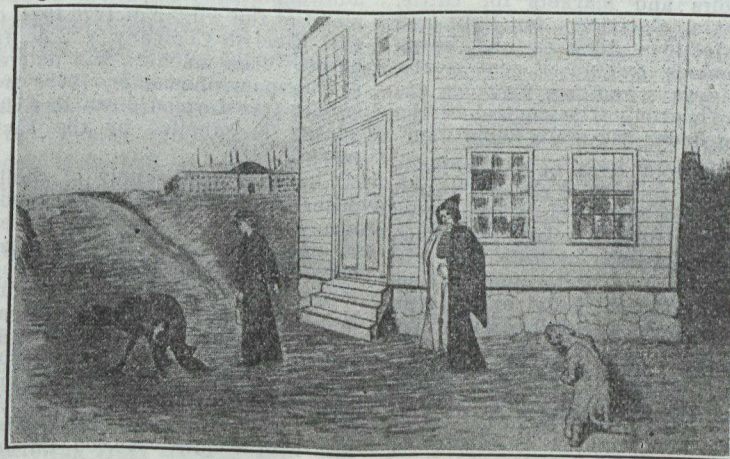
THE MOTHERS' ALLOWANCE ACT IN ONTARIO.

It is safe to say that no more popular piece of legislation has ever been passed by any Government than the Mothers' Allowance Act that is now being put into operation throughout Ontario. It was endorsed by both labor and capital, societies, secular and sectarian, and by probably all the fraternal and benevolent organizations of the province. Who set this thing going? Many have helped it along in recent years, including the National Council of Women and the labor leaders, but we recollect years ago hearing J. J. Kelso declare in eloquent and emphatic terms that financial help for worthy widows in rearing their children was one of the great essentials—a cure instead of a palliative. Knowing, therefore, that he advocated this advance step when no one else believed it practicable, we took the trouble to look up reports which he made to the Ontario Legislature as Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Here are some extracts from Government blue books that anyone can readily verify at a public library:

be worthy of careful consideration. It would really be the greatest economy in the long run to support deserving mothers in their own homes so that they could devote all their time and attention to the training of their children. Not long ago I knew of a case where a woman left in this position was induced by some ladies to put her five children in the orphanage and take a situation. The cost of maintaining the children in this way, if given direct to the mother would have enabled her to maintain a simple little home and to the children would have been preserved the inestimable blessing of a mother's care and attention. This is a work, that it seems to me might usefully engage the attention of the churches. But from whatever source it comes, some plain of aid should be devised that would keep mothers at home to look after their children."

Taken Up in United States.

Mr. Kelso was an active member of the National Conference of Charities and Correction of the United States, and in 1902 was elected vice-president. His reports were regularly sent to social workers in the States as well as Canada, and were widely influential in bringing about im-



"When the widow goes forth to drive the wolf from the door, neglect and vice seize upon the children."

Report of 1895: "Widows and others applying for release from parental responsibility through poverty should be assisted to keep the home together rather than encouraged to part with their offspring. The aim of the Society through all its work should be to elevate home life and strengthen and ennoble family ties."

Report for 1896: "There are poor, but respectable mothers who require help, and this should be given them in their own homes either by the municipality or Church organizations so that the home may not be broken up. It no real charity or help to a poor mother to close up her home and send her children, one to this institution and one to that, thus robbing both of the ties and influences that are after all the only thing worth living for."

Report for 1897: "I have always contended that if there is any one obligation more than another that should rest upon the public conscience both of the church and community, it is the obligation to assist widows and deserted mothers to maintain and educate their children in their own homes; for it is a fact that goes without saying that nothing else on earth can replace a mother's care and influence."

Report for 1900: "Deserted mothers and their children.—In towns and cities I have found that a good many of the children who find their way into industrial and other child-saving institutions have come from homes where the father is either dead or has deserted the family, and the mother is compelled to go out working to provide food for the children. The boys and girls left all day without guidance or restraint soon become unmanageable and are brought before the magistrate for unruly conduct or pilfering. These cases are of such frequent occurrence as to

proved social conditions. In 1911 the first Widow's Pension Act was passed in Missouri, the movement rapidly spreading until a few years later it was world-wide. And strange to say, Ontario was behind even its own sister provinces in taking up this worthy cause. The indications are, however, that she will soon surpass them in her zeal to make up for lost time.

GENUINE CONSERVATION IS STATESMANSHIP.

When any such undertaking as the development of a natural resource is proposed, if that development is to be made under government control and regulation, it at once appears to arouse the fear that it is to be somehow the beginning of a malevolent policy called "conservation," and conservation has had a mean meaning to many ears. It connoted stinginess and a provincial thrift, spies in the guise of Government inspectors, hateful interferences with individual enterprise and initiative, governmental haltings, and cowardices, and all the constrictions of an arrogant, narrow and academic-minded bureaucracy which cannot think largely and feels no responsibility for national progress. The word should mean helpfulness, not hindrance—helpfulness to all who wish to use a resource and think in larger terms than that of the greatest immediate profit; hindrance only to those who are spendthrift. A conservation which results in a stalemate as between the forces of progress and governmental inertia is criminal, while a conservation which is based on the fuller, the more essential use of a resource is statesmanship.—G. S. Franklin.