

GIVE US ANYTHING, IS CRY OF 1,000 MEN AT CIVIC BUREAU

The Social Service Employment Agency Besieged by an Anxious Throng.

LONG LINE AWAITS
HOUR OF OPENING

Work Will Be Provided for 250
To-morrow by the Civic
Departments.

THE NEED IS VERY URGENT

Robert Rose of 39 Bridge Street,
Single, First Man to
Get Job.

Almost 1,000 men, whom lack of work had cast in precarious circumstances, waited before the new employment bureau of the Social Service Commission at 11 Colborne street this morning. Although it was given out that the doors would not be opened until 9 o'clock, hundreds put in an appearance as early as 7.30, and in an hour's time a line which had been formed under police guidance reached from the door of the offices to Yonge street; and it was not long before a second line had to be formed, tailing off in the opposite direction. Men of all ages and all nationalities were there. Laborers predominated, but almost every trade or occupation in the city was represented. Most of the applicants were shabby, and disconsolate, the expression of many clearly showed that, under the stress of repeated disappointments in their search for a job, hope did not run high that this last resort would end their troubles.

Men were there of all ages. Youths of eighteen stood next to men of fifty, while here and there a grey-bearded old man of seventy could be seen. Austrians, Jews, Russians, and Polacks mingled with men from the Old Country. Men who had drifted to Toronto from Cobalt, from the C. P. R. construction camps in the north country, from farms, and from as far west as Van Horne, lined up with local teamsters, firemen, tailors, stone-cutters, tinsmiths, sawyers, ironmoulders, waiters, clerks, porters, plasterers, laborers, and so forth. Often a single house would send as many as four or five, and in one instance six Polacks gave the same address.

First Summons For Fifteen.

When at 8.45 the first fifteen were summoned into the hastily fitted-up office on the first floor of the building, the whole line surged forward with excitement. The fifteen stumbled up the stairs and filed into the room, where Mr. Edwin Dickie, Mr. John A. Torry, and Messrs. W. B. Taylor, and N. W. Plunkett, of the Y.M.C.A. Labor Employment department were in waiting. Here the method of dealing with the applicants was as follows: Cards were

served out which the men were asked to fill in, giving the particulars of their case. On doing this an identification card was given, with the promise of notification later in the day of the work to which they had been assigned. The cards filled out will be classified and as many as possible of the applicants will be accommodated with those offers of employment which the commission has so far received.

In this connection it may be stated that the Works Department has notified the Commission that work for 150 men can be given at once to two shifts a week, each man to work eight hours a day at 25 cents an hour. Later 200 can be accommodated, and in the event of a snowfall there will be sufficient jobs on hand to provide employment for 1,100 at the same rates. Other offers are coming in rapidly. One manufacturer is so altering the shifts in his plant that he can temporarily employ twice the usual number of men, and has in addition forwarded a cheque for \$100 to assist the Commission in its work. There is no doubt that very shortly employers will make room enough in their institutions to satisfy the present demand.

Cards Eagerly Seized.

The scene in the office this morning was very significant of the state of affairs among the unemployed. The applicants in most cases eagerly seized the cards, and the room was silent except for the laborious scratching of pens. One man in ten could not write, and every few moments some foreigner appeared whose knowledge of English was insufficient for him to understand the queries put to him. Interpreters amongst the other applicants were set at work, and at a long table one man would be filling out the cards of half a dozen of his less erudite fellow-countrymen. Even with this assistance, however, the officers in charge found that the situation could not be coped with, and it was decided to order the men to take their cards with them to their homes or to some place where their needs could be satisfactorily met, with orders to bring them back as soon as they could. When this determination was made, the whole line was sent up the stairs and in one door and out another, cards being dealt out to each man as he entered. A continuous stream of at least six or eight hundred passed through the office in this way, and this number, added to the 200 who filled out the blanks previously, brings the total of those dealt with up in the neighborhood of 1,000.

"Anything" in Way of Work.

In the blank space opposite the query "Willing to work as—," there appeared most often, when the cards were handed back, the single word "Anything." Often the applicant was more determined to make his willingness to work quite clear, and such expressions as "Yes—any kind" and "Anything. Am good with the pick," were read. Telling a tale of downfall, amongst the usual scrawling calligraphy of an illiterate laborer appeared a fine, business hand. To the question "How long out of work?" one read anything from "A week" to "Four months." Often gratuitous information was given. "Live with mother, 79 years old. Been doing odd jobs. Any work," was the inscription on one card, and although the stories of most men bore a similarity, many cases of unusual hardship were registered.