

# CENTRAL BODY TO LOOK AFTER THE CITY'S UNEMPLOYED

**All the Local Charitable Institutions and the Unemployed Themselves Will be Represented on Committee Which Will Aid in Distributing the City's Grant of \$5,000.**

A central organization for relief work, to co-operate with the city's officials was organized yesterday afternoon at a largely attended meeting in the city. His worship Mayor McVeity presided. It is intended that the sum of \$5,000 which will be voted by the city council on Monday next, on the recommendation of the board of control, shall be spent in a manner which will render the greatest benefit to the greatest number. All the fraternal societies and organizations which undertake relief work will be included in the membership of the committee.

At the request of Mr. William Boon, who said he was one of the unemployed, the names of two who represent this class were added to the committee with power given them to add two others.

## UNITED RELIEF COMMITTEE.

The following resolution was moved by Mr. A. W. Fleck, seconded by Mr. J. B. Fraser and eventually adopted:—

"Resolved that a united relief committee be appointed to co-operate with the civic authorities in relief work and that the following persons be invited to constitute that committee, with power to add to its members.

"The president or other appointed representative of each organization carrying on relief work in Ottawa, and Thomas Ahearn, J. Roberts Allan, T. C. Hate, Robert L. Blackburn, Russell Blackburn, Gerald H. Brown, Dr. J. L. Chabot, H. W. Chamberlain, F. P. Bronson, Alder Bliss, Levi Crannell, Hon. W. C. Edwards, Col. C. A. Elliot, Sir Henry Egan, J. B. Fraser, A. E. Frupp, M.P., G. A. Magrath, W. E. Matthews, J. E. Macpherson, John R. Reid, P. D. Ross, W. H. Howley, Col. J. W. Woods, W. Y. Soper, W. M. Southam, J. Manuel, Ward C. Hughson, J. A. Machado, H. J. Thomas, A. W. Fleck, Dr. H. Aml, E. C. Whitney, Norman Smith, D. Hossack, Col. D. T. Irwin, Sir Louis Davies, C. H. Beddoe, C. H. Ritchie, John Harbour, J. C. Watters, Wm. Lodge, P. M. Draper, W. H. Dwyer, J. M. Garland, E. H. Scannell, and that Dr. James W. Robertson be convener of the committee.

The names of John Lyons and Lorenzo Gulbrandsen were added to the committee.

## LADIES' COMMITTEE.

Later on motion the following women's committee was chosen by the following resolution:

"Resolved that a women's auxiliary of the United Relief committee be appointed and that the following ladies be invited to constitute that committee with power to add to its members: Mrs. T. W. Crothers, convener; Mrs. Taylor McVeity, Mrs. Adam Shortt, Mme. LeLievre, Miss Edith McPherson, Miss Frances Scott, Mme. Coderre, Mme. Bruchesi, Mrs. Levi Crannell, Mrs. A. J. Freeman, Mrs. Margoches, Mrs. J. B. Fraser, Mrs. P. D. Ross, Mrs. H. Aml, Lady Foster, Mrs. Norman Smith, Mrs. Wilson Southam, Mme. Audette, Mme. G. H. Babin, Mrs. Herridge, Mrs. A. G. Mather, Mrs. Bryce Stuart, Mrs. R. Blackburn, Mrs. (Judge) Gunn, Mrs. J. C. Watters, Mrs. C. G. Pepper, Mrs. F. A. Heney, Mrs. Ellis, Lady Egan, Mrs. J. P. MacLaren, Mrs. Farling, Mrs. A. Rosenthal, Mrs. Davis.

## DR. ROBERTSON.

Dr. J. W. Robertson said the organization was indebted to the mayor for the opportunity to help under the most unusual conditions.

"Whoever is to blame for these conditions," said Dr. Robertson, "we cannot lay the blame at the door of any poor family in Ottawa. We come as a body of volunteer helpers deputed by nobody to do what we can to aid."

Referring to the extent of the need, the speaker said those in a position to know all said there were more than four times as many applications for work and fuel than usual, and there was less on hand wherewith to supply the need.

"If it's four times worse now than in common years," he further said, "then something unusual should be done."

Regarding the kind of people who need help, the doctor said: "Poverty is no disgrace now this year in Ottawa." Families in Belgium who had lost their all through the war were "exalted in the realm of heroism," and could not be called usual cases. So in Ottawa, the conditions were unusual, and it was not the usual people who were in want—not the usual "behind-hand" people.

Several cases were cited by Dr. Robertson of local conditions. One was of a woman, whose husband was dead, holding a two months' old baby on one arm and ironing with the other hand, while three children were out begging for food.

## PARTICULAR CASES.

Another case was of a woman whose husband was out of work eight months. She did not want to sell her furniture, but in a week would have to if aid did not come. This was through no fault of hers.

Dr. Robertson then went on to outline the manner in which the city's grant could best be spent. It should not go for luxuries, but for necessities. It should not be administered in a manner which would humiliate or pauperize, but rather tend to encourage those who were being assisted.

The plan adopted in Hamilton was outlined by Dr. Robertson. There a warehouse was secured, businessmen's committees formed, and only men to look after the business end. A women's auxiliary was formed to comfort and look after the families. The food is bought wholesale, and good and sufficient quantities are provided for each family in need. The average cost of food for a family of five is \$2 per week, and this includes all the staples. Anyone may secure a week's supply on making representations—there is no list—but each case is investigated and record kept so supplies can be sent the following week. Dr. Robertson said 1,028 families were being dealt with. The cost of the food was \$1,492, barely \$1.50 per family per week.

## AN ADDITION SUGGESTED.

Dr. Robertson suggested that in Ottawa an order for 25 cents per week be issued to each family for groceries, so that small articles to fill in with the regular order could be purchased.

After the motion for the appointment of a committee had been put by Mr. A. W. Fleck, Mr. William Boon, who said he was one of the unemployed stated that while he had

no doubt of the sincerity of Dr. Robertson, he was opposed to the grant being made. He said that the proposed committee was composed of gentlemen who had never been victims of unemployment and had never known what it was to want. He urged that some of the unemployed be represented on the committee.

"Do any of these gentlemen know what it is to be hungry?" he asked. "Do they know what misery is? I refuse to degrade myself by being made the tool of anyone who may capitalize poverty and use it for their own purposes. Why has not Dr. Robertson put some of the representatives of the unemployed on this committee? Why not try and have work started by the city which will help us? Mr. Clarey told us there would be work but that some parties were holding it up. I refuse to be a pauper."

#### MUST KNOW OTTAWA.

Dr. Robertson in reply said that any one who knows Ottawa or Canada could have any other idea but that "to labor is to live and to go idle is to kill part of oneself." For himself he had oftentimes labored without pay and now was devoting his energies to the Red Cross work without remuneration. There were many things which could not be re-adjusted until the war was over and employment was one of them. He said the proposed committee neither seeks nor is willing to spend any money. The city's funds will not be voted to it, but the members are willing to volunteer to work with the civic authorities and act in an advisory capacity.

"If our friend comes to the warehouse he will have a job," Dr. Robertson said in conclusion.

Mrs. Adam Shortt explained the work undertaken by the women of the city in the Welfare Bureau, the results of which she placed at the disposal of the committee. Mrs. Shortt said so many organizations were doing relief work they were over-lapping.

#### ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY.

Mr. E. J. Laverdure, on behalf of St. Vincent de Paul society asked that a portion of the \$5,000 to be voted by the city council be apportioned to that organization. He gave statistics of the charitable work being done by the various councils of the society in the different Roman Catholic parishes. Every member was an expert in the work, and no expert secretary needed to be hired nor warehouse to be secured or clerks to do the work.

Rev. C. Seymour Bullock regretted that anyone should undertake to widen the gulf between the volunteer workers, such as would compose the committee, and the unemployed whom they were seeking to aid. He opposed the suggestion of Mr. Laverdure, saying that those seeking relief might be of a different faith and hesitate to seek relief from the St. Vincent de Paul society. He urged that no racial or credal distinctions be drawn but that the committee be appointed to work in the general interests of all the needy.

#### UNEMPLOYED REPRESENTATION.

That the unemployed should have some voice in the matter was the opinion expressed by Mr. John Lyons.

Mr. Fleck stated there were no objections to the committee being enlarged. This was provided for in the resolution.

Mr. Boon, again addressing the meeting said he stood for Canadian citizenship and by doing so upheld the dignity of the working classes. There were a number of societies who capitalized poverty and exploited it for their own benefit. Why not include the name of the woman with the baby, whom Dr. Robertson had spoken of and others who were suffering. They would know best the remedy.

"Do you suggest any way in which they may be included?" the mayor asked.

"I move that for actually unemployed men, if possible four who have been hungry should be added to the committee," Mr. Boon replied.

The mayor explained that this was indefinite and that names should be given.

Mr. William Northwood on behalf of the St. George's Society expressed approval of the plan for cooperation by the committee with the civic authorities, and Rev. Mr. Housefield also added his word of commendation. He also stated that the clergy were not so lax in their duty to the indigent.

#### ADDITIONS TO COMMITTEE.

"Why not add Mr. Boon's name to the committee?" Mr. Fleck asked.

Mr. Boon, however, moved that the names of Mr. John Lyons and Mr. Lorenzo Gulbrandsen be added and this was agreed to. Mr. Boon, however, stated he was opposed to the \$5,000 grant but as it would likely go through he would like to have these men on the committee with power to appoint two others.

Ald. Fisher said some commendation was due to the board of control and council for its work in this connection. He questioned which was better, to have a civic overdraft or to provide for those out of work. The latter to him seemed the best course.

After the appointment of the ladies' committee a hearty vote of thanks was passed to His Worship for his kindness in presiding and for the great interest he took in the work.