

Unemployment And Its Solution

Mr. Burnett, of the Department of Public Health, gave a very practical address yesterday before the Women's Canadian Club, on "Relief and Unemployment." His insistent plea for the solution of the present conditions was WORK, NOT CHARITY, and this required not only sentiment and kind hearts, but intelligent understanding.

"It is social insanity," said the speaker, "to permit useful men and women to be at loose ends and not be productive of work."

Now was the time to face things and to act, applying scientific methods to this problem of the nation as we now apply scientific methods to every matter of importance.

We must exercise our brains to provide work, said Mr. Burnett, and not give instead a dollar to every man who came to the door begging.

Instead of giving the man charity give him work, and a whole lot could be done right now, urged the speaker.

It doesn't pay for a well-to-do man to go down to tend his own furnace, probably in a thirty-dollar suit, and muddle with the ashes simply to save fifty cents. Similarly it is false economy for the same man to attempt to do painting about his place. He spoils more than he saves. Thus Mr. Burnett urged that people hunt up the odd jobs around their homes through which they could provide at least some employment, and at the same time benefit themselves. Whitewashing may need to be done, broken windows repaired, door knobs or locks mended, and so on.

Other means which were suggested as solutions of the problem were establishing an efficient labor exchange, to include all classes, and to classify according to skilled, unskilled and farm hands.

"We could place a number of farm hands now, but we don't know where to put our hands on them," were his words, which it is sincerely hoped may reach some of the unemployed men who would do farm work, and who by applying to Mr. Burnett of the City Health Department at the City Hall, could doubtless be given positions on farms.

Old age pensions, mothers' pensions, putting up public buildings in hard times, raising the school age and thus keeping young people at schools where they would be becoming more efficient, and also leaving their positions open to men and women, were other suggested plans. Also the working out of an unemployment insurance was mentioned as an ultimate thing to strive towards.

Another suggestion was to provide tools, as picks and shovels, for laborers who otherwise without tools lost the chance of work.

Improving roads, settling Northern Ontario, and using vacant city lots for potatoes were other plans mentioned.

We need more constructive and more productive work, - said the speaker. The loss of labor is an economic loss to the whole country.

It was a national question, and to be handled adequately must be dealt with by the nation.

Mrs. Starr, president of the club, presided at the meeting.