

convicted of such offences is sent, after a short term in jail, to the compulsory colony," from which he is released at the expiration of his term with a small sum as compensation for his labor. "Neither colony is self-sustaining, but it is at least several times less extravagant than the maintenance of the same number of persons by the State in city poor houses and jails, and it at least removes the unfit from competitive life and reduces the problem of the city."

#### AID ASSOCIATIONS.

This system, as you will have observed, sir, deals with the two classes those who are willing to work but cannot find employment, and the vagrant class. There was organized a few months ago in the city, which, along with my colleague, I have the honor to represent in this House, a society modelled after similar societies in the leading cities in Great Britain and in many of the United States, and called "The Associated Charities." These societies are sometimes called "aid associations," a much better and more appropriate name. The purpose of this society is not to dispense relief directly, but to receive applications for aid and report the facts as to each case to the proper charitable society.

In doing this work its officers are in constant touch with those who need assistance, and through a system of registration will be able to trace to a large extent the history of each case. Such societies in all our large centres of population, acting more or less in concert and bearing possibly the same relation to the Government in the matters of supervision and control as the Children's Aid Societies, could, it appears to me, very efficiently take the place of the voluntary society under the Dutch system. They would appeal most strongly to the charitable for such financial assistance as they might require to carry on their operations, because the work done by them would be not only of a preventive character but of positive and permanent benefit to the individual and through him to the State.

#### THE PROVINCE'S PART.

The Province, if a plan similar to the one I have outlined were adopted, would require to do but little more than it is now doing. A home for the "farm colony" could be found by the setting apart of a suitable area from some of the free grant lands. In addition some inexpensive buildings would be required as a temporary home for the members of the colony until they could be placed in permanent quarters, and a superintendent to direct and instruct them. The city society would be responsible for the temporary maintenance of its wards until they could become practically self-sustaining, only those who were able and willing to work being sent to the colony along with their families.

Referring to the question of placing the unemployed upon the soil the Superintendent of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, in a recently published report, says:—"The experiment has convinced me thoroughly of one thing, and that is, if you will let the poor of your large cities get to the soil and properly guide them for a year or two they would become not only self-supporting but in a little while do much more. They could be so guided that in a few years they would own their homes, and a citizen who owns his home is always the best kind of a citizen."

That, very briefly, is the Dutch system of dealing with the unemployed in the cities who are willing to work. Whether the other phase of the system, viz., the "forced labor colony" for tramps and vagrants, should be taken up is a matter that would require very careful consideration. Treatment of that class must be preventive rather than curative, although there is no manner of doubt but that it is an infinitely cheaper

more healthful plan from the point of view of the reformer than the maintenance of individuals of that class in city institutions. It is quite probable that something in that line will eventually require to be done. It is estimated that there are 86,000 tramps in the United States who cost the country in one way and another \$17,000,000 per year. No doubt many of these men "took to the road" because they could not find regular employment. Had an effort been made at the right time to retain them in the ranks of the toilers probably a considerable percentage of them would be honest workers to-day.

And therein lies the great value of the voluntary system.

There was held a few days ago in the City of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, with an attendance of some 500 persons, the first annual convention of the Wisconsin Anti-Tramp Association. The purpose is to form a similar association in each State of the Union; these associations together constituting a national association to be called the American Anti-Tramp Association. Though this tramp question may not be a live one with us to-day it will soon become one unless steps are taken to anticipate such a result. Now, sir, from what I know of the average working man, he does not want charity, but aid, to help him earn a living for himself and those dependent upon him by honest toil.

#### THE DUTY OF THE DAY.

As I have said, the problem is a serious one, and the plan I suggest might not, probably would not, meet the whole difficulty, but I am firmly convinced that it is worth a fair trial, and I also believe that we will not be doing our full duty, in view of the importance of the question and the persistence with which it is pressing for solution, unless, in conjunction with the voluntary assistance of those whom we might interest in the scheme, we make an honest effort to accomplish at least something in the direction I have indicated. We are told that every able-bodied immigrant is worth \$1,000 to the country. If, therefore, we can reclaim from the ranks of the unemployed even ten such men per year we will have greatly enriched our country, and made honest and self-respecting those who, becoming discouraged in the battle of life, would otherwise probably drift into the costly ranks of the criminal classes. Can we engage in any more noble work than that? The earth is broad enough, and the bounties of God's providence ample enough for the necessities of all His creatures. Let us do what we can so to adjust these bounties to the wants of each, as that every honest man can earn an honest living.

#### THE MOTION PASSED.

Mr. Whitney said that he was not sure of the drift of Mr. Bronson's motion. They all knew that there was a great deal of distress, and they knew from Scripture that there would always be. It was their duty to try to mitigate the consequences of such distress. All the House would sympathize with the object of Mr. Bronson's motion, and would welcome any move in that direction, whether it was simply to settle the newer lands of the Province, or help to do away with the distress. It would be futile to enter into details upon the subject. Without binding himself to agreement to every proposition which the Government might bring down, he would express his sympathy with Mr. Bronson's object.

Hon. Mr. Hardy said that no more worthy object could attract the attention of the House, and that Mr. Bronson would have its entire sympathy in his effort. No definite rules could be laid down as yet in dealing with the problems of poverty. Mr. Bronson had not said whether he would leave the matter altogether to the voluntary societies, or whether he would go further. He would say that it would be perfectly right for the cities to aid in the work, as they are more especially the sufferers from this evil. Mr. Hardy added that there would have to be some form of selection, as the more able-bodied would alone be able to go out to the newer districts.

Mr. Marter expressed his sympathy with the subject, and said that he would suggest that some of the burdensome requirements be removed from the free grant lands; the term before a deed is issued might be made three years, as in Manitoba and some parts of Algoma, and not five years, and the settler might be allowed to own everything on his land.

Hon. Mr. Ross said that the House could not too soon begin the consideration of the question of how to prevent poverty. He noticed some of the characteristics of charitable work, such as that men aided one year were almost certain to need aid next year, and thought that a transfer back to the land might arrest the early stages of such poverty. He noted the great decrease in juvenile crime caused by the children's aid act, and expressed his cordial sympathy with the motion.

Dr. Willoughby observed that the question was one on which both sides of the House could agree, and said