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Children's Aid Society Work In the Province of Ontario

Many Interesting Facts and Figures in the 31st Annual Report of Superintendent J. J. Kelso. Report for the Year of Inspector for Cochrane District C.A.S.

In referring to the number of societies and clubs in town The Advance last week classed the Children's Aid Society as a "Patriotic Society." The Advance does not believe that any other classification would as fully cover the good work of the Children's Aid. For this reason the C.A.S. should be of special interest to all good citizens.

The report of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario for the year 1924 has just been published, and in this report Mr. J. J. Kelso, who for over thirty years has been in charge of this work, reviews the activities of the C.A.S.

In the introduction to this, his thirty-first annual report, Mr. Kelso says:—

"The work of caring for neglected and dependent children of the Province during the year 1924 has shown much progress. There has been steady growth both in the interest and support of the community and in advanced standards of efficiency. More children have been materially assisted than ever before, without undue disturbances of the family relationship. Hundreds of our best citizens have given freely of their time and means in the direction of local organization, and this has always been one of the highly commendable features of the work. All who have been in any way associated with the movement have realized that enthusiasm for the children's cause is vital, that indifference retards progress, and that energy and sound sense in administration are bound to produce excellent results."

Mr. Kelso mentions the increased interest manifested throughout the Province in regard to Child Welfare, social clubs and other bodies vying with each other in work for crippled, ailing or neglected youngsters. There are also sixty officials now in the Province devoting full time to C.A.S. work.

In addition to the general work of investigation, interviews, correspondence and other details, regular visiting of children in foster homes has been maintained by Local Superintendents, with the result that the wards of the Society are receiving the best of care.

In addition to keeping foster parents up to the mark and encouraging them in praiseworthy service, the close inspection made has resulted in some instances in children being removed from homes which were not considered altogether suitable or where there was lack of congeniality. These wards have been transferred to other homes without much difficulty.

Mr. Kelso says that much progress has been made in respect to finances. Increasing knowledge of the objects sought and organized effort has resulted in a large amount of money being raised to carry on the work of the various societies. Women's societies, municipal councils, fraternal organizations and private citizens have

contributed generously to the maintenance of the shelters, all realizing that prevention is better than cure.

Since the Act of 1921 came into force many persons have legally adopted their foster children. The unfortunate position into which the child has been thrust through death or negligence has been counteracted by the measure of happiness through this Act. Mr. Kelso instances a case of a wealthy lady who was living in constant fear of losing the foster child to whom she had become greatly attached. The Act allowed her to legally adopt the child and so set all her anxieties at rest. The Act has many times over demonstrated its value and usefulness, and under its benign provisions, says Mr. Kelso, over two thousand children have been satisfactorily provided for.

Special attention is given in the report to the "Unmarried Parents Act of 1921." The C.A.S. inspectors are taking the keenest interest in this new work,—the protection of the child born out of wedlock being their first thought and secondly the girl who has erred. In 1924 about 1,200 cases were dealt with. Previous to this Act, there was no methodical enforcement of the father's financial responsibility, and when special cases were followed up and funds secured, the amount was either absorbed in expenses, or partly given to the mother, the maintenance of the infant usually devolving upon the municipality or private charity. Under the old system, the fathers were also induced under threats of exposure to give over large sums, without any guarantee that the child would receive proper care. All that is changed by the Act, the whole work being carried on by the C.A.S. In Cochrane District fifteen cases have been dealt with by the District C.A.S.

The number of children made wards of the C.A.S. during 1924 was 773, of which number 620 were Protestant and 153 Catholic. Mr. Kelso remarks that it will be interesting to note that the total number of children received under the care of the societies and department from the inception of the work to December, 1924 was 24,771, with at least 200,000 other children indirectly aided, protected and in various ways surrounded with beneficial influences.

Of the 773 cases dealt with in 1924 there were 212 under four years of age; 265 under ten years; and 296 over ten years. The children were dealt with as follows:—placed in foster homes, 277; placed in shelters, 238; placed with parents on probation, 111; placed with relatives, 44; in infants' homes, 32; in institutions, 31; in detention homes, 7; in hospitals, 5; in other institutions, 24; died 4.

The chief reasons for committal are given as follows:—Unmarried Mothers, 180; immorality and neglect, 162; desertion, 120; conditions of poverty, 50; death, 73; separation, 32; feeble-mindedness, 19; cruelty, 7; other causes, 51.

Since the Unmarried Parents Act came into force in 1921, there have been 3,141 cases dealt with under this statute.

A financial statement shows the standing of the various C. A. societies. Cochrane District Society for 1924 had receipts of \$2,754.52; disbursements, \$1,816.04; leaving a surplus of \$938.48.

In connection with the Report for the Province, the following statistics of the Children's Aid Society of Cochrane District, will be of interest:—

For period beginning May 1924 to October 31st, 1924.

Applications for children	4
Received from Juvenile Court	22
Children made wards of C.A.S.	11
Children sent to Industrial School	6
Complaints Received	12
Investigations at homes of children	18
Mail received	150
Mail sent out	168
Office interviews	9
Visiting wards outside of City, mileage covered	700
Court attendances	20
Wards placed out	11
Wards visited	20
Warnings given	1

For the period beginning Nov. 1st, to July 30th, 1925.

Applications for children	5
Received from Juvenile Court	18
Children returned from Shelter to parents (not wards)	1
Children made wards of C.A.S.	9
Children sent to Industrial School	4
Complaints received	48
Investigations at homes of children	50
Mail received	175
Office Interviews (about)	39
Parents or Guardians prosecuted	4
Visiting wards outside of City, mileage covered	950
Court attendances	42
Children interviewed	5
Wards placed out	5
Wards returned to Shelter	1
Investigations—Mileage travelled about	3050
Warnings given—children on probation	3

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(2) The watershed of Kapuskasing River, District of Cochrane.

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James Lyons,
Minister of Lands and Forests,
Toronto Ont.

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Toronto, June 9th, 1925. 24-35.



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