

### The Bridge of Sighs

At the gate of a cemetery there is a certain bridge—"A Bridge of Sighs". Many a widow passes over it to return to a home from which Death has taken husband and father.

Death is not a tragedy. Tragedy strikes the living,—those who are bereft of their natural provider.

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### Confederation Life

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## Thirty-fifth Annual Report Ontario Children's Aid Work

J. J. Kelso, Superintendent of the Children's Aid Department, Toronto, Tells of Work in 1928. Deserters of Families Should be Severely Dealt With. Wards of Children's Aid Societies Make Good in Life.

The thirty-fifth annual report of Mr. J. J. Kelso, superintendent of Children's Aid Societies in Ontario, has been received by The Advance, and contains much of general interest. The report covers a wide field, dealing with the Children's Aid Work, the Children's Protection Act, the Adoption Act, and the Unmarried Parents' Act.

"In presenting this, the thirty-fifth annual report of the Children's Aid Branch," says Mr. Kelso, "it is a pleasure to observe that the good work done by the Children's Aid Societies of Ontario is yearly becoming better known and understood, and consequently is meeting with greater recognition and appreciation. Through the frequent meetings, publicity given to proceedings, correspondence of officials, information conveyed by members, etc., silent influences for good are steadily permeating society even to the furthest limits of our far-flung province, and the general result is undoubtedly to be found in a better social atmosphere and greater happiness in home life. It is true, as the newspapers constantly remind us, there are tragedies happening all around us—family quarrels, separations, desertions, crimes,—but the number of these is after all

comparatively small and merely represents the ripple on a placidly-flowing stream. Our local committees and Children's Aid superintendents are the preventive and healing agencies constantly at work, and the hundreds of letters and reports that daily pass over this desk bear striking testimony to what is being accomplished. Auxiliary commissions and welfare organizations are also doing their part to improve social conditions, and, altogether it can truthfully be said that Ontario is, as it always has been, a leader in social welfare and progress."

Mr. Kelso proceeds to point out that the very success of the work constitutes a danger that should be guarded against. Municipal councils have given such generous support, knowing the value of the work, that there is a tendency to the lessening of private interest and benevolence in the matter. The work depends so much for its real success on the maintenance of the individual interest of good citizens in each locality that this feature should not be overlooked. Also, the superintendent, asks for the guarding against any tendency to allow parents and relatives to escape from the responsibilities that rest upon them. The home is the best place for a child, even though there be poverty there. In concluding this part of his report, Mr. Kelso says:

"For these and other palpable reasons it will be agreed by all thoughtful readers that our first duty is to maintain the home, removing whatever difficulties and disadvantages may exist so that parents and children may grow up happily together, each a comfort and support to the other. Only in this way can the best interests of the whole community be protected and safeguarded."

Statistics of the work are also very interesting. During the year 1928 there were 706 children made permanent wards of the Children's Aid Societies by court order. The total number of children who have been placed in the permanent care of societies since the inception of the work is 27,949. There are nearly 9,000 now under supervision. The average number of children made wards each year for the past six years is 790. Each year a number of children are made temporary wards for a period of from three months to a year. There were 283 temporary wards committed to the societies of the province last year. Of the 706 wards in 1928, there were 547 Protestant children and 159 Roman Catholic children. There were 368 boys and 338 girls. The ages of the wards for 1928 were as follows:—under 3 years, 71; between 3 and 7 years, 93; between 7 and 11 years, 94; between 11 and 14 years, 61; between

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14 and 16 years, 49. The reasons for commitment of the children are given as follows:—neglect, 236; desertion of father, 91; father in prison, 82; born out of wedlock, 123; theft or delinquency, 18; truancy, 12; immorality of parents, 49; parents separated, 17; orphans, 27; no means of support, 51.

Wards released from supervision during the year, 720. Wards visited during the year, 5,791. In reference to the Roman Catholic wards, Mr. Kelso's report says:—"The supervision of these children is in the hands of Mr. William O'Connor, who has for many years now been a most able and efficient assistant."

"The annual reports of the fifty-five Children's Aid Societies, as well as the daily correspondence with active workers, indicate a high degree of organized public service," says Mr. Kelso. "In every country and in every district, however remote, there is the necessary machinery for prompt action, and our various local superintendents accomplish most praiseworthy results." A list of the Children's Aid Societies in Ontario is given with officers for 1929. Among the North Land societies noted are:—Algoma and Sault Ste. Marie, J. A. Hussey, president; J. P. Reed, secretary and inspector. Cochrane District, G. A. Macdonald, Timmins president; A. G. Carson, secretary and inspector. Nipissing, A. Jackman, president; Chas. F. Browne, secretary; John Brown, inspector. Sudbury, Mrs. R. R. McKesock, president; Mrs. M. E. McFadden, secretary; W. Greenwood, inspector. Temiskaming, G. T. Hamilton president; J. R. McCracken, secretary and inspector.

Referring to preventive work, Mr. Kelso says:—"One of the many important duties of the Society is to check the development of conditions that are likely to lead to child wastage. This most interesting and necessary work impels one to believe that if a child is to be saved to the State, his early life must be guided into the proper channel so he may grow up into manhood with a true conception of his value to the community. To accomplish this the home must be adjusted to meet the condition required of good citizenship. The future of the country largely depends on the training of the youth, and home surroundings either make or break him. The burly parent whose speech is worse than Billingsgate and whose actions are so degraded and low invariably impresses the child, and his susceptibility imbues him with the thought that what the father does is quite proper for the son to adopt as his standard of life. To change the child's mode of living is a difficult matter as he is a natural imitator and it takes much time and arduous work before he can be raised up from a low standard to a higher plane of life. The question arises, "How can the child be saved from these sordid conditions? Timely intervention of the Children's Aid officer, in most instances, has the effect of adjusting the home. Trained by experience he is able to counsel and advise the parents, pointing out to them their responsibility and showing them the proper way to care for their children. This work is of great value to the community as it places the responsibility on the parents, who, unless they are of the degenerate or mental type, will rise equal to the occasion and make the home a fit and proper place for the upbringing of their offspring. Thousands of homes have been intact through the wisdom of the officer and the child's future life safeguarded."

Mr. Kelso answers the question, "Do wards of the Society make good?" by an emphatic Yes! "The percentage is on a par with all other children, and if the foster parents can give them the benefit of a good education, they will often make a greater success of life than those who have always been enjoying the comforts of a good home. It is not to be expected that out of the great number made wards that all will succeed, but with few exceptions it can be said that they have become good citizens and justified the motto, "Better to save the child than reform criminals."

Under the heading of "Family Deserters," the report contains the following paragraph that deserves the widest publicity and the fullest consideration:—"Probably more than any other cause, family desertion on the part of the father leads to children being committed to the Society or to a reform school. We are too easy with these offenders. The chief difficulty in securing remedial action is the expense involved in locating and bringing back these men, and to meet this it would be advisable to set aside a fund for this

special purpose. One man whose three children were supported at public expense in an Ontario orphanage, was found to be earning ten dollars per day across the border, and it seemed no one's business to follow him up. Many similar cases exist where men could and would pay if they knew they could not escape. This is a point where greater watchfulness should be maintained."

There are good words for vocational training, the advantages of country life, and other matters of interest in connection with child welfare work.

There are also chapters on legal adoptions and on the Children of Unmarried Parents' Act. Under the latter act, there were 1,865 cases dealt with in 1928 in the province. Of these, 208 were what may be termed "repeaters." From July 1st, 1921, to Oct. 31st, 1928, there were 9,782 cases dealt with. A total of \$467,315.87 has been disbursed in that period, this money being received in the main part from the fathers of the children.

In concluding his report, Mr. Kelso says:—"It has been our aim to carry on this work for children without unduly disturbing the family relationship. While at the moment there may be a serious upset, time with its healing and soothing influence may be counted on to bring about the desired improvement and life may even be enriched by the temporary trouble or disagreement in the home. The sacredness of the family ties has been constantly emphasized, and the duty and responsibility of parents pointed out. It is no part of our work to relieve parents of their children—nor would it be to their interest to encourage such a policy. All we can reasonably be expected to do is to safeguard the home and encourage parents to be faithful to their trust. There are, of course, conditions that cannot be readily adjusted and where only decisive measures prevail, but the patient and hopeful worker can often find a way out that will be the ultimate good of all parties. Love and sympathy can do more for the alleviation of ills than can ever be hoped for through severity or legal restraint. It is in this faith and spirit that we have striven to serve."

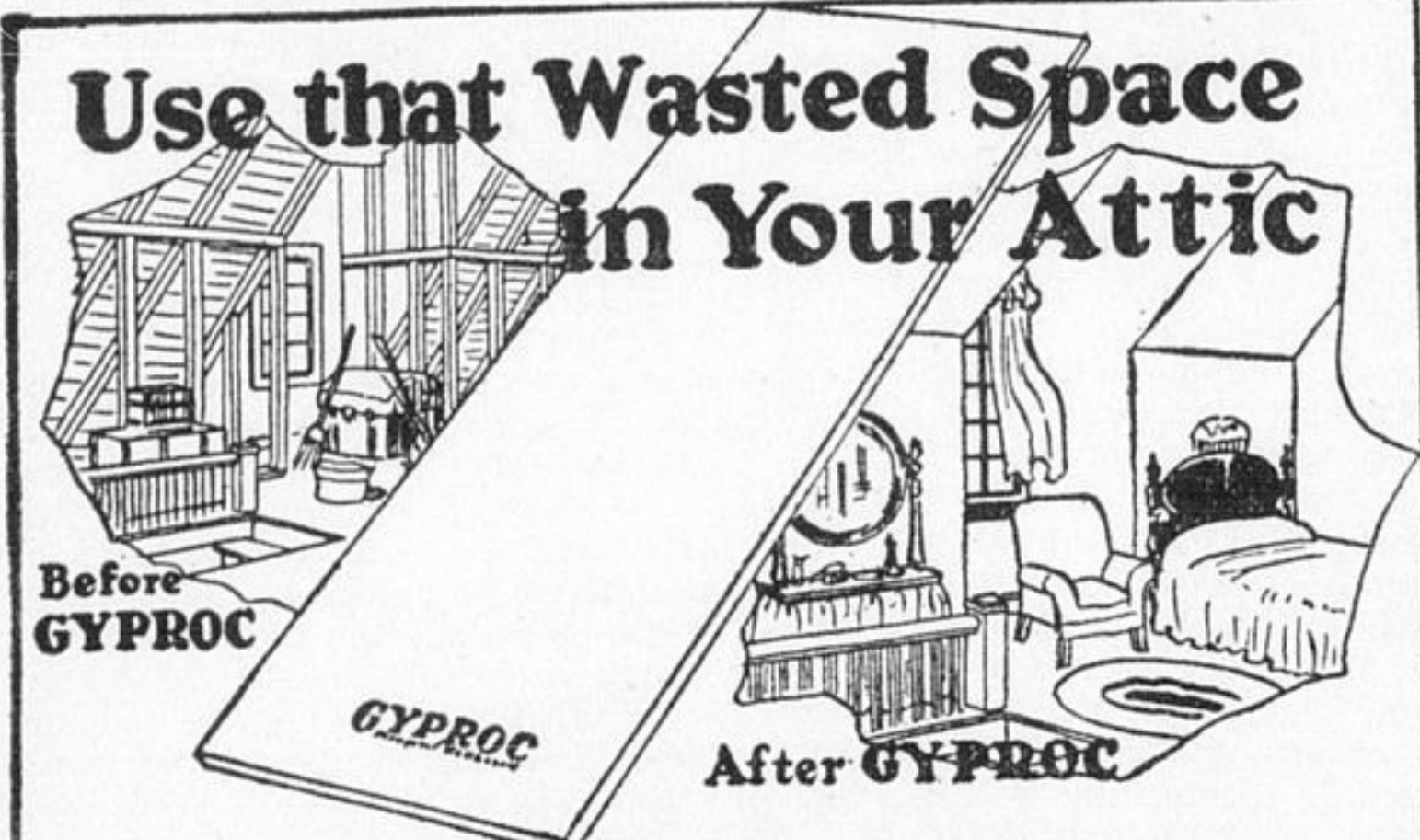
Stratford Beacon-Herald:—"We have the habit of spending our money in United States no matter how hard they hit us in return. They never stage Canadian weeks in United States cities; they never try to encourage their people to find out just how many things we have for sale—but they did that in Glasgow. And they are doing the same thing in other parts of the British Empire. Isn't it about time we woke up to the fact that we would be well advised to spend our dollars where people are friendly toward our goods, and willing to do business with us on the basis of buying and selling on fair terms with the fewest possible barriers in between?"

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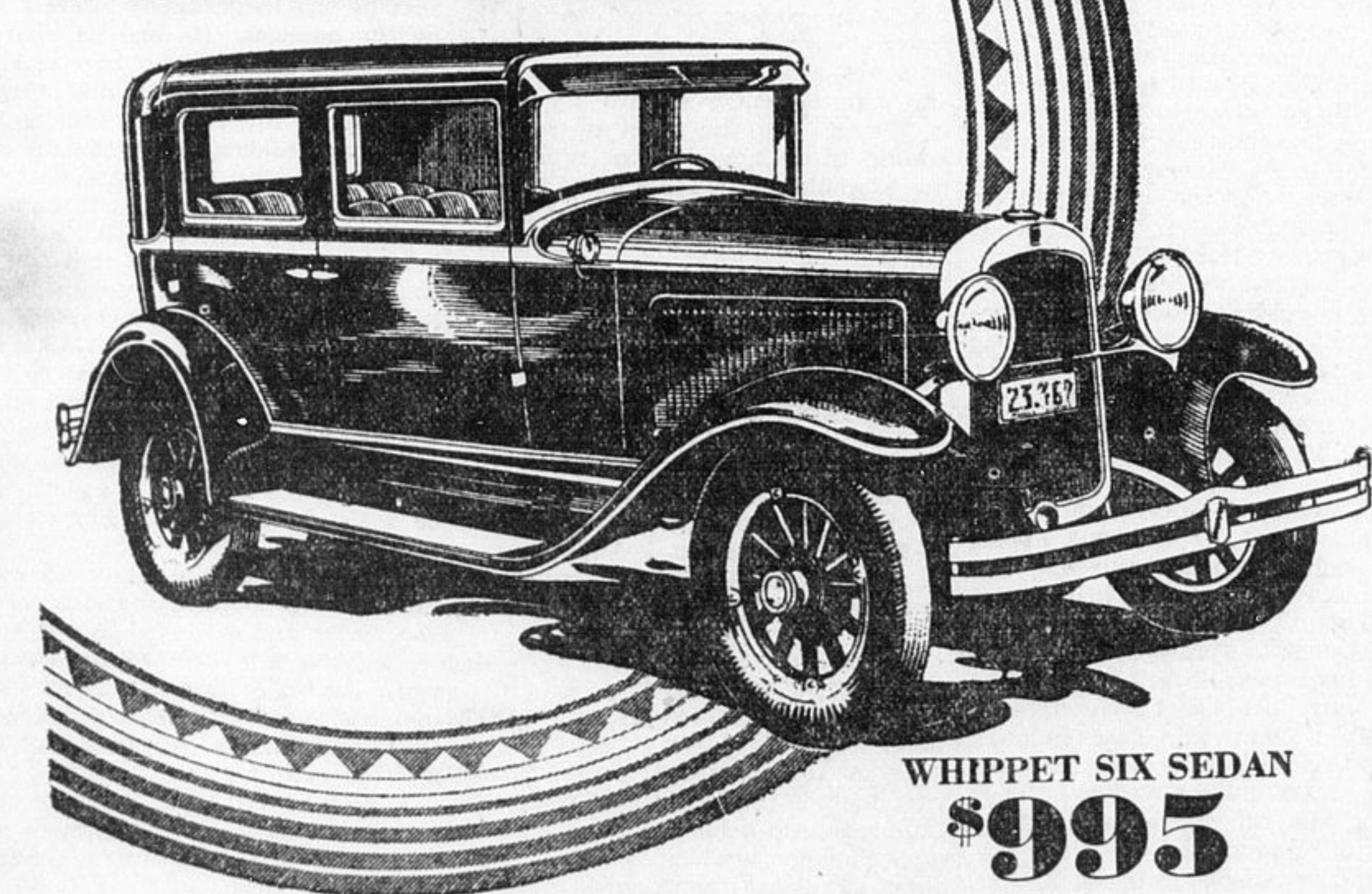
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Through the Ages

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LONG ages ago, a prehistoric man, making his way through a growth of wheat, stopped to ponder the waving heads of apparently wild grass.

He sampled a plump pellet of grain. A vague thought stirred in his mind. Gathering an armful of wheat, he brought it to his mate. She ground the kernels between two rocks to make them easy to eat. There in that prehistoric field, the story of flour began.

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