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WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 12th

FIRE UNDERWRITERS AND COUNCIL

We publish elsewhere in this issue the letter sent by the Board of Fire Underwriters to the City Council and discussed by the latter at its last regular meeting.

The letter speaks for itself and it is gratifying to note that the recommendations made by the Underwriters were generally concurred in by the City Council. Both Mayor and Councilors freely expressed the opinion that the fire fighting equipment of the City must be kept up to the highest point of necessary efficiency at whatever cost and the opinion was also expressed that the citizens would cheerfully back up the Council in any necessary expenditure for this purpose.

The Underwriters' recommendation with reference to the Silsby engine was fully concurred in and action had been taken by the Fire Committee before receipt of the letter. The recommendation to procure extra hose was also concurred in and assurance was given that it would be acted upon.

With reference to the fire alarm system recommended by the Underwriters there was considerable discussion, some defects in the present system were admitted but on the whole the consensus of opinion was that the system, with a few corrections, is sufficient for the needs of the City and it was felt that for the present at least a heavy outlay for an elaborate and necessarily expensive alarm system would not be justifiable. The strongest argument on this point was presented by His Worship the Mayor when he said that in the whole history of the system no fireman had been known to fail to hear the alarm and respond to it. The firemen had always been promptly called when the alarm was given and they as promptly responded. Had there been any known failure in this respect the Underwriters would be fully justified in demanding a better alarm system but as the system had never been known to fail it was argued, and we think very properly, that under the present financial stringency on account of the war, no expenditure should be undertaken that is not absolutely necessary. The Council however expressed its determination to perfect the present system as far as is found necessary.

On the fifth, sixth and seventh recommendations no action was taken at the regular meeting but doubtless they will be taken up at the special meeting to be called to consider the whole situation. As to the need of a more systematic patrolling of the City there can be but one opinion, namely, that it is absolutely necessary. The fact that the recent fire was beyond immediate control when discovered and that even then it was discovered by private citizens is an unanswerable argument in favor of a proper patrol system and we feel sure the City Council will take this matter into serious consideration and make the necessary provision. The care of articles salvaged from the buildings threatened by fire is certainly a necessary precaution and it would be well to have a well organized system to attend to this. Nevertheless it should be mentioned right here to the credit of the City and of the citizens that so far as we can ascertain through diligent enquiry not a single article of any value taken out of the threatened buildings at the recent fire was known to be lost although such articles were piled along the adjoining sidewalks and lawns. This was no doubt due very largely to the watchfulness of neighbors. Still "what is everybody's business is nobody's business" and it would be well to have such articles officially guarded.

As to the electrical wiring, while, so far as we know, no fires have been traced directly to this source, yet there have been suspicions and the recommendation of the Fire Underwriters is well worth examining and we have no doubt the Council will give this also their careful consideration.

Perhaps the most important clause in the Underwriters' letter is the last in which they state that they will be "very pleased at any time to meet with the Council and go into details of such improvements as may be required."

The Underwriters, like the City Councilors, are property holders in the City;

their interests are the common interests of all the citizens; collaboration and co-operation on the part of the leading and governing organizations is absolutely necessary for the well being of the City. By frequent conferences and friendly discussion, not as rival institutions but as bodies working for a common aim and the common interest of all, the City Council and the Underwriters will be able to arrive at conclusions which will be of mutual benefit and of benefit to the City in whose welfare they are all alike interested. We commend this suggestion to both and trust they will meet at an early date in amicable discussion of the City's needs over which they both have the oversight.

ST. JOHN AMBULANCE HERE

The visit of Miss Hazel Todd, assistant general Secretary of the Canadian branch of the St. John Ambulance Association is of more than usual interest at the present time. It is Miss Todd's intention to reorganize the Provincial Council of the Association here, and to rekindle enthusiasm for the work of First Aid and nursing among our young men and women—especially the young women. Miss Todd has been requested by the Headquarters Staff at Ottawa to set the machinery in operation for the formation of St. John Ambulance centres throughout the Province where classes may be started for instruction in first aid to the injured and in home nursing. At the close of the session of such classes examinations are held and certificates given to the successful students. At present there is a great demand for efficient St. John V.A.D. nurses, and they are permitted to act as probationers in military convalescent homes and hospitals. But the objects of the Association are wider than that. It is the intention to train nurses for complementary or supplementary service to ordinary graduate nurses, and to provide every district with sufficient numbers of qualified young women capable of acting in an emergency where medical aid is necessary. In many of the provinces the St. John Ambulance Association is giving instruction in schools and colleges and the subjects have become part of the curriculum. Here there is abundant scope throughout the province for the services of competent nurses and first aids with the St. John qualification. Miss Todd intends addressing a public meeting on the subject and the Guardian bespeaks a large attendance of ladies and gentlemen interested—which in this instance includes everyone.

THE MILITARY SERVICE BILL

A correspondent of the Journal-Press asks how the military service bill, alias the conscription bill, is to come into force. As we understand the matter, the position and procedure are as follows: The military service bill is law now. By this law, all male unmarried British subjects in Canada between the ages of 20 and 34 are now soldiers—untrained, unattached, but still Canadian soldiers. As such, they must report to the proper authorities as soon as a proclamation is issued calling on them to do so. This proclamation is not yet issued; it will be issued as soon as arrangements are completed to consider claims for exemption. These arrangements consist of local tribunals. It is expected that the local tribunals will be ready in a couple of weeks.

If any man who under this law is liable for service fails to report when the coming proclamation calls, he will thereby place himself in the status of a deserter from the army, and be liable to two years in jail.

But any man concerned can apply for exemption from military service; and the discretionary powers of the local tribunals will be wide. They will have the power to exempt not merely because of "conscientious objection" to war, or medical unfitness, but because of opinion that a man can be more useful outside the army than in it, or should in fair play to all circumstances be allowed to continue at his own business.

"Supposing nobody in Quebec responds to the act?" our correspondent asks. "How can the act be enforced?"

We suppose it could be enforced by degrees, a certain number of deserters at a time being gathered in periodically. But there's a consideration which may have a very powerful effect in favor of obedience to the law. Any man liable to service who might not report would, as already said, constitute himself a deserter from the army. As such, he would be liable to arrest and imprisonment; he would be a criminal. The coming Dominion franchise act is not likely to allow criminals to vote. A general election is approaching, and we don't suppose many Quebec men want to lose their votes.

THE WAR NEEDS OF CANADA

THE NEED FOR A SYSTEM OF NATIONAL SERVICE

By Benjamin Apthorp Gould

Without a duly organized National Service it will be impossible for Canada to do her full part in the war. Such a service goes to the very root of marshalling the efforts of the people who cannot serve in the army itself, and by a proper direction of their abilities can make them effective in accomplishing our great purpose.

It is hardly worth while to consider at any length what has been done by the existing National Service organization, because its utility has been so generally recognized that no one of any account is seriously maintaining that it meets our needs in any appreciable extent. Before it was put into operation it was pointed out that two fundamental faults existed in it which could not fail to destroy its usefulness, and experience has only too clearly proved the correctness of this prophecy. I therefore merely repeat again that no system of national service can possibly be effective which does not provide for a compulsory registration and for decentralized operation through local agencies.

In regard to registration, no service can be national which enrolls only those who choose to register. If we are to accomplish anything by the use of our human resources, we must know what these resources are, as otherwise we shall be acting in the dark. A registration ought to include all who are capable of rendering service of any kind, whether they be men, women or children of the age of fifteen years and upward. No plan which disregards women can be effective, for they have in this war over and over again proved themselves just as patriotic and just as valuable as the men. The burden of war falls perhaps most heavily upon them, and

Another fundamental requisite to the success of a system of national service is that it shall operate through decentralized agencies. The Director of National Service attempted the impossible in seeking to obtain any comprehensive classification of man-power upon interrogatories sent out from Ottawa. Every lawyer knows that it is impossible to get by interrogatories information which can easily be elicited by cross-examination. Consequently, if a true knowledge of the availability of the man-power of Canada for our various needs is to be obtained, the people must be brought before an examining board, which can determine after proper questioning the possibilities of usefulness of the individuals examined.

It is evident therefore that while the system of registration ought to be co-ordinated and directed from Ottawa, the actual work must be done by numerous agencies in the different localities in the country. An organization entirely suitable for such work is now being created in the establishment of about a thousand non-partisan tribunals for carrying out the provisions of the Military Service Act. The activities of these tribunals will be over as soon as the men required under the act are obtained, but they can to great advantage be continued to carry out a comprehensive plan of national service. Every person over fifteen years of age can be required to register with these tribunals, and to be subject to personal questioning, and the judicial nature of the tribunals will make them especially suited to ascertain the particular field of greatest possible usefulness of the registrants.

From the results of these personal examinations the different human units can be classified according to their different abilities. Such a classification would not only serve as a basis for a comprehensive knowledge of what it is possible for Canada to accomplish through a thorough organization on a business system, but could also be utilized if at any time it should become necessary to impose conscription of service other than that of men for the army.

In connection with such tribunals it is possible to organize local committees to bring about far more effective voluntary service than has hitherto been accomplished. Such committees would know the needs of the country, and in turn could tell those able to render service exactly what they ought to do to help in the war. It would be possible to increase enormously the effectiveness of the effort which is already being made by having it properly directed, and also to obtain effort from those who are perfectly willing to give service, but who do not know what concrete thing they can do to help.

In connection with such a system an accurate census of material resources and of wealth can be made, and each local tribunal can become the nucleus around which all the patriotic endeavor of its district can be concentrated.

It will also be possible and advisable with the knowledge available from a really effective registration of the population to establish labor bureaus and labor exchanges which will go far toward preventing unemployment, and toward directing workers to the positions in which they can be

most useful. Until some such plan is adopted, we shall remain at sixes and sevens, each of us carrying on the war to a certain extent as a private war, to which we may devote as much or as little energy as we may see fit, and for which we may choose unguided by any direction from above the channels through which we attempt to make our efforts of value to our country. National service alone can put the square pegs in the square holes, and make every peg useful and no peg useless and no peg wasted.

of view of craftsmanship have stories behind them which attach to them an importance which perfection in workmanship could never make so interesting. These pieces are made by men suffering from shell shock or nerve-center injuries which have affected their powers of concentration. The work has been the means of restoring their normal mental keenness through persevering effort to focus thought on the matter in hand. Thus in addition to completing the piece they have been gradually improving their condition and will ultimately entirely overcome their difficulty. The vocational classes in connection with the Military Hospital work have been established, of course, with the view of putting every returned man incapacitated for his former occupation in possession of a trade at which he can earn a good living, but the work has its therapeutic value as well, and very often remarkable successes have been worked.

SHELL SHOCK VICTIMS CURED IN WORKSHOP

VICTORIA, B.C., Sept. 10.—An exhibition of the work done by the convalescent soldiers in Esquimalt Military Hospital in their vocational training classes is drawing great crowds to the windows of The Colonist where it is on display, but the point of particular interest, which only those who are familiar with the problems of the Military Hospitals Commission appreciate, has been missed in admiration for the craftsmanship of the men. Many of these men, who have never had a tool in their hands, have executed remarkable pieces of work under the direction of Sergt. Major Dawson, the instructor in the wood-working branch of the vocational training department, but some of the less attractive pieces from the point

of Long Standing Asthma.—Many have suffered so long from asthma and have tried so many so-called remedies they think there is no real help for them. They should read the letters received by the manufacturers of Dr. J. D. Kellogg's Asthma Remedy from hundreds of cases once as desperate as their own. Even in long neglected cases this famous preparation brings prompt help.

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Visit Halifax Sept. 12th-20th Provincial Exhibition Dates

Never in the history of the Province was a visit to the Ancient Capital more interesting than at present, with the thousands of soldiers, His Majesty's Warships and the scores of Neutral Ships lying at anchor in Bedford Basin.

All the leading features that have characterized the Annual Fair, in the past, will be in evidence, together with many new ones.

Particulars announced later. Reserve these dates. September 12th to 20th.

M. McF. HALL MANAGER AND SECRETARY, P. O. Box 339 3004-8-8Mewdsatt. Halifax.

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