

BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

TORONTO'S CITIZENS CAN CONTROL TORONTO'S AFFAIRS ONLY THROUGH FREQUENT, PROMPT, ACCURATE AND PERTINENT INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO TORONTO'S BUSINESS.

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TORONTO
CANADA

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"RELIEF" Story No. 3

Total Number of Individuals on Voucher and House of Industry and Single Men in Hostels.

(Peak Week in each month)

1939		1936	
Nov.	50,943	Nov.	69,915
Oct.	53,121	Oct.	66,178
Sept.	56,036	Sept.	67,669
Aug.	57,696	Aug.	68,767
Decrease 11.7%		Increase 16.7%	
1938		1935	
Nov.	61,353	Nov.	85,405*
Oct.	58,603	Oct.	79,465*
Sept.	56,708	Sept.	77,067*
Aug.	57,496	Aug.	79,184*
Increase 6.7%		Increase 7.8%	
1937		1934	
Nov.	54,819	Nov.	98,392*
Oct.	50,531	Oct.	93,212*
Sept.	48,928	Sept.	92,478*
Aug.	49,833	Aug.	92,213*
Increase 10.0%		Increase 6.7%	

The figures for 1939 show an increase in December of 2,866 over November, 1939, the seasonal influence overcoming the tendency toward increased employment; but the figures for December, 1939, are less than those for December, 1938, by 12,710, or 19%.

These figures tell their own story:

- I. The number on relief in November is the lowest since 1933.
- II. In every year previous to 1939, the number on relief increased from August to November. What happened to bring about this reversal?

* Excluding single men in Hostels.

A CIVIC PROGRAMME

To what extent the reversal of the tendency for unemployment to increase in the August-November period was due to general improvement of business conditions and how much to the stimulus of war or anticipation of such stimulation, it is impossible to say; but it is quite unlikely that any general tendency to improvement, unaided, could have brought about such a definite reversal of form. In at least one large industrial city unemployment continued to decrease even in December.

However, an apparent solution of unemployment and unemployment relief by the onset of war is not a real solution. Just as the coming of war tends to absorb men into industry, so the cessation of war will throw out of employment not only those it temporarily absorbed, but through the serious dislocations which accompany a change from a war to a peace economy, many thousands more. In addition soldiers returning from the war will require employment in peace time industries. If, however, we use our heads and not our wishbones, we may (1) guide the change from a peace economy to a war economy so as not unnecessarily to accentuate the unbalance of war and peace industry, and (2) cushion the shock of the transfer of a war economy to a peace economy by building up in war years a fund of thoroughly planned necessary public works to be entered upon at once on the completion of the war and to be financed out of a reservoir of credit built up by a reduction of provincial and municipal capital debts during war years. Any sacrifice of convenience or ease on the part of the civilian population will be as nothing to that of their defenders. Any failure to make the necessary sacrifices and the required investment of time and labor in planning, will be a dereliction of duty.

A civic programme for 1940—

1. The immediate appointment of a City Planning and Housing Commission clothed with advisory powers and provided with all the facilities necessary to study and report on
 - (a) Traffic arteries from the city-wide standpoint and with careful attention to street railway, motor and pedestrian traffic.
 - (b) Zoning.
 - (c) Housing.

A CIVIC PROGRAMME

2. The carrying to its logical conclusion of the study of the Board of Control during 1938 and 1939, which resulted in worth-while economies, by securing a thorough study and report on
 - (a) Civic departmentalization.
 - (b) The employment, promotion and retirement of civic employees.
 - (c) Civic current and capital budgetting.

Without the first, the electors of Toronto may be faced at the next civic election, whenever that may be, by traffic artery proposals concerning which they may know little or nothing, which may be only partial in effect, expensive in relation to the amount of traffic relief effected, and without any assurance that they are the most effective which might be presented to the electors for decision.

Without the second, the citizens and taxpayers of Toronto cannot assure themselves that they are not incurring unnecessary current costs in producing current services, and therefore diverting money, men and materials from the war effort. In fact, they may be fairly certain that they are.

QUERIES.

1. Of the, say, fourteen thousand heads of families on unemployment relief
 - (a) How many are now unemployed because they were never employable?
 - (b) How many are unemployable now because they have been disintegrating from 3 to 5 years?
 - (c) If we do not take action now, how many will be out of work when the war is over?
 - (d) If we are unprepared to meet after-the-war conditions, what will be the effect on our economic system?

We are engaged in a war which may become a "total" war. All our resources should be used so as to ensure victory with as little economic disturbance as possible after the war. Avoidable public expenditure unnecessarily accentuates the "boom" in employment in war time and diminishes the possibility of grappling effectively with after-the-war conditions of dislocation.