

## BABY FARMING

### A SCATHING CONDEMNATION.

At yesterday's meeting of the Wellington Hospital and Charitable Aid Board (says the *Dominion* in its issue of January 24) Mr. F. T. Moore moved—"That the board takes into immediate consideration the imperative need for the establishment of a permanent home for all foundling and indigent children in lieu of the existing evil system of farming out such children in congested, unclean, and unsuitable private homes."

Mr. Moore, in moving the above motion, said that everyone knew the value of home association and environment on children, and he wished to say something about the children who were adopted by the State, and for whom the board found the money. Children who were boarded out on the State system, who were quite innocent, were regarded as outcasts, and were treated as such; whereas they deserved to be treated as well as the State could afford, and not placed in the meanest and poorest homes of the people. They should not be given over to the care of people with pig farms and left only to the society of pigs and fowls. There were children who were kept in dirty back yards, and not allowed to associate with children from other homes.

The chairman: Have you any proof?

Mr. Moore said the proof could be obtained if a commission of inquiry were set up. Some people had been known to boast of the pure gain these children were to them, as the food they ate was nothing more than would have to be provided in any case, and they helped to feed the pigs and poultry. His information had come from members of town boards and county councils, who had worked during the recent epidemic under the wide powers given them. Some of the State children were in homes that were found to be in a disgraceful state, where pigs and poultry had the run of the house. It was the duty of every member of the board to inquire into the conditions under which these children were being cared for. The board should set up a home similar to others he mentioned, which were heaven to the inmates compared to the lot of those whose condition he referred to. Such a home should not be a barracks, but an attractive place where the children should be cared for in a manner worthy of the State. The evil was such that there was actually competition for the children, and the speaker quoted cases which had been discovered by members of a town board. To allow them to remain in such homes was wrong. They were regarded as little beasts and treated like little animals. They were utterly neglected and left entirely to themselves. There was no continuous supervision, no system. The board should bestir itself to found an institution in which to house and rear such children in a manner that would be a credit to the City of Wellington. "There could be no better achievement," concluded Mr. Moore, addressing the chairman, "to crown your years of service than to establish such a home and call it the Baldwin Home." (Laughter.)

Mr. H. van Staveren seconded the motion *pro forma*. He said that a lot of what Mr. Moore had said was right. It was the board's duty to start a home of the kind. They already had the nucleus of a fund for the object. The State had a right to care for these children, and they all knew how they exercised it, and they should be no party to anything of the kind.

Mr. A. J. McCurdy asked if the board had the power to establish such a home.

The chairman stated that they had the power. All children committed were boarded out by the State, but he did not think they need commit them if they had a farm or home of their own. All children who were sent to the orphanages were committed, but that was not the place to make complaints. Mr. Moore should go to the Education Department. If his facts were well grounded he should bring them before the Education Department or the Minister of Education.

Mr. Petherick said that some good might arise out of the motion. He suggested that the board should get some data on the question from the Superintendent of Charitable Aid, who had informed him that between 70 and 80 per cent. of the cases were infants under 12 months old. Some definite data would help them to arrive at a conclusion.

Mr. D. Campbell favored Mr. Moore's motion. They knew what was going on all along. They had asked the permission of the Education Department to grant two ladies the right to inquire into the conditions under which these children were cared for. The reply was: "What do you want?" After being told the reason the Department had said: "If you want to take care of the children get a home of your own. All you have got to do is to foot the bill." Two cases had been sheeted home, but they had beaten them over a third case. If Mr. Moore would give the names of the parties to the Charitable Aid Committee they would see into the cases. Pending fuller information, he suggested postponing the matter until next meeting.

Mrs. Aitken said that those who footed the bill should have some say as to where and how the children were kept, but they had no power, no access to them. Lots of the children were kept as little slaves in homes in order to make ladies and gentlemen of their keepers. The homes should be cottage homes, not barracks, with something like home life and training. When they had seen the Minister he had quoted the lines laid down in the Act, but they knew that those lines were not kept to. Let them do what they could for these little unfortunates.

Finally, on the suggestion of the Rev. Dr. Elliott, it was decided to postpone the discussion in order to obtain data from the Superintendent of Charitable Aid, who is to be asked to attend the next meeting.

### A WORLD'S CONFITEOR.

Long since, O Christ, ought I have known Thee;  
But in my peaceful, careless days,  
No thought of Thee, upon the Tree.  
My soul was stranger to Thy praise,  
A worshipper of Baal, on bended knee.

I rashly dared to say, "There is no God."  
But in my secret soul I knew  
That someone held and swayed the rod  
Of Justice; wreaking vengeance, too,  
On sons of ingrate race and senseless clod.

Grim War, black as hate, from out behind  
The curtain stalks; his shadow well defined;  
Now out he leaps with sword blood-reeking.  
He dashes here—there slashes shrieking:  
Now gnash the teeth of bitter foes enraged,  
As beasts forgetting Nature's law, engaged  
Themselves in death.

Now hear the wail of widows:  
The orphans' cry for bread, O God, but shadows  
Of yesterday. Now swells the sob of sorrow  
O'er epidemic's waste each morrow.  
O God, we pray Thy mercy, 'strain Thy flood  
Of anger just. Remember Christ's dear blood.

And now, with heart oppressed before Thy throne  
I come, Thy mercy to implore:  
Forgive the malice done. Unknown,  
A beggar, knocking at Thy door  
I seek admittance, lest to death I moan.

Most loving Lord, to save Thou knowest best,  
To wash my wounds, to heal my fault.  
May I not wither in the test  
That almost tempts my soul to halt,  
But purified may find a place of rest.

—LOUIS GALES in the *Missionary*.

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