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The Salvation Army and Its Work

BY GENERAL EDWARD J. HIGGINS, C.B.E.,
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VICE-PRESIDENT G. M. SMITH:—Gentlemen, I believe that the Salvation Army is the greatest single organization for the spreading of good in the world. From a humble beginning in the slums of London some sixty-four years ago it has now grown to gigantic proportions. If Caesar, Alexander, Napoleon, or other famous generals of history had had such a force at their command no doubt the world today would be a far different place from that in which we are living. Fortunately the Salvation Army spends its life building and benefitting rather than destroying mankind. Our guest of honor today is the third commander of the Salvation Army since it was founded by the late General Booth and I am sure that his promotion from the ranks to his present high command has been well and truly earned. We are delighted to welcome the General and Mrs. Higgins back to Toronto. While they have never been residents of this city they are in a sense of our own because General Higgins has two sons living in Toronto. I have great pleasure in calling upon General Higgins to address us.

GENERAL HIGGINS:—Mr. President and gentlemen of the Canadian Club, I recognize the honor which you have conferred upon me by inviting me to address you here today and I want to do the very best I can with the opportunity that is mine and to give you some slight idea of what the Salvation Army which I represent is trying to do in the interests of the world. I know I am not far wrong in assuming that your presence is due to the fact that you have learned to appreciate the efforts which the army is making towards bettering the conditions of the great un-

fortunate classes of the community, and because you appreciate that and realize that the army is, to some extent at least, succeeding in its efforts. I believe it is that fact that has encouraged you to do me honor as its leader here today.

The army, I suggest, is what it is because it has recognized from the very beginning of its career the great principle of service, not only service by the 25,000 officers whose duty it is day and night to give service wherever they can, but that principle has been accepted and has been spread to the rank and file of the salvation army, so that wherever you see a salvationist in uniform, I hope at any rate, you may look upon that man or woman as one who is prepared to do what they can to render service in whatever form or shape it is required. I am not going to say a single word against the 25,000 men and women who are the officers in the army. I don't think there is a finer group of men and women in the world and therefore no words of mine must be taken as an indication of depreciation—far, far from it. But I do not think that the army would have reached the position it has if the soldiers had not with equal zest entered into that spirit of sacrifice which is the governing spirit of the work of the Salvation Army. You know when our Lord himself was asked as to what man's duty was he informed the inquirer that he was to love the Lord his God with all his heart and with all his soul, and with all his might and with all his strength, and his neighbor as himself. And then when an inquiry was made as to who might be termed the neighbor you remember it drew from our Saviour that wonderful story of the good Samaritan, which shows that those who should be served and helped are those who are in the midst of misfortune and not looked after as some others are. That is the principle the army has been working on.

As an illustration may I give you a story which I heard my wife tell and which I have stolen from her. It is the story of a young girl, a servant maid in the south east part of England, who in Salvation Army language, had become converted and the following day the principle that I have endeavored to speak of took possession of her and she wondered what she could do. That night she picked up an evening paper and read of a woman who had been convicted

of drunkenness for the thirty-fifth time and the magistrate had sentenced her to one month's imprisonment. The girl said, here is my chance for service. She went off to the Magistrate's court to inquire as to whether she might see the woman, but found she had already been sent to the county jail. She wrote a letter to her, expressed sympathy and a desire to help but received no reply. When her term was expiring the girl still determined to do what she could and she discovered where the woman lived, went to her home and found what you might expect—nothing but filth and everything in disorder and a husband who evidently was nearly as bad as she was and altogether it was a most forlorn, a most wretched place. But the girl set to work to make it the best she could. She scrubbed the floors and cleaned everything and decorated the place a little so it was presentable, and determined when the woman came home there should be something attractive. Then she went to meet the woman. She was not received very kindly. The woman did not appear to care very much for the attention which the Salvation Army lass had rendered. But she brought her home to the house, and when the woman looked at the great change in the home she inquired what had happened, and the husband said this girl had been cleaning up. And that bit of kindness accomplished what everything else had failed to do. Within a short time that woman became so interested in the army that she brought her husband and both of them got converted and of course gave up drink and became members of our organization. And then the police were so interested that they determined that they would show their appreciation of the changed lives of these people by making a contribution of some sort to the woman and her husband. Because their meetings with this couple had not been happy and they had received many marks from the woman. So they clubbed together, got a sum of money, asked the couple once more to the police court, and in the presence of the mayor and magistrate presented them each with a full suit of salvation army uniforms. They placed them in a room adjacent to change their clothes and brought them out in their new regalia. I only give it to you as an illustration. That girl was not paid for it. She had not received a single cent. It was not her

duty. It was because of the urge of her own heart, the acceptance of the great principle of service to mankind that produced in her such an immediate desire to do what she could to help those that were less fortunate than herself. That spirit has made the army what it is today. If we had depended only on the services of the full time people we could never have grown to the extent we have, but you must remember the services of the devoted men and women in the army and the men who play our instruments, and who, too many people fancy, are all paid for it, but who I am happy to say, render a service of life, for of the forty thousand bandsmen not one receives a cent for his services.

I thought I might give you some illustrations of what the army is trying to do for the unfortunate, and show you something of the sort of work they do and those they are working amongst; and if I tell you that the army is trying to do what it can for the criminal population, there are many in this room that will recognize something of the difficulty of that task. There is no class of people, perhaps, more difficult to handle and care for than the criminals, not only because of their suffering but of the difficulty that comes when any effort is made to try and bring them back again into society and to establish them once more on lines that will be helpful to their rehabilitation. The army is finding that difficult. I am not complaining. I can understand there are employers of labor in this room who have men come to you to ask employment. When a man tells you he was in one of the jails, I can quite understand the hesitancy you would feel and the shrug of the shoulders and perhaps the ultimate refusal. But what is to become of the man? That is one of the problems the army is trying to solve. And so we help them. Officers meet them in the jails, especially towards the end of their sentence, and endeavor to find the man a chance. We try to construct a bridge between the jail and his entering once more into the life of a citizen, and we try to get him some reference and some employer of labor to give him another start. I remember General William Booth telling me once of a great employer of labor he knew who wanted men and he saw them personally and asked for references. And they produced them except one man and he was an Irishman. And the employer

told him he wanted to know what he could do and what he was worth, and what was his character and how far could he be trusted and a lot of things, and the Irishman said, "Sure, you will have them." And he turned up next morning and produced what the man had asked for—"This is to certify that Michael Maloney is an honest man and can be trusted, is a good workman and deserves good money, and will please any employer who is willing to take him on," signed, "Michael Maloney." So the employer said, "Did you sign it?" "Yes." "But I want to know somebody who knows something of you." "Well, who knows better what Michael Maloney is than Michael Maloney?"

I don't suppose it would work everywhere but I was glad this particular employer of labor accepted the man at his own value and I am happy that the man did not let him down.

But when I speak of the criminal class I am not thinking of them only in Canada and the British Empire and more civilized nations; but the work of the army for the criminals is being attempted with some measure of success in less favored lands. For instance in India, I do not know how far conditions are known by any listening to me today, but at any rate some of you may be acquainted with the fact that the criminals there are largely in tribes, known as criminal tribes. They move about, men women, children, families, devastating, stealing, robbing, committing crimes, murdering people, and are generally looked upon as amongst the worst and most cruel and heartless people in the land. They are criminals and the sad feature of it is, it is almost impossible for them to get away from it, inasmuch as when a child is born a criminal, of criminal parents, that child instantly is registered as a criminal. So it would appear as if there were no opportunity for anyone to get away from the sad conditions. That has been a problem of governments. And then an enterprising government of one of the northern provinces undertook to see whether something could not be done by the Salvation Army and asked if we would be willing to try and do something to reform these people. We said we would, if the government would provide us with the necessary institutions and land and pay the costs. They agreed and we started, by receiving from

their hands one hundred families and they were brought by one hundred policemen. When they arrived the head of the police came and said, "Where are our quarters?" The Army head said, "There are no quarters for police." "But," they said, "you don't know what you are talking about. They will cut your throats. You will be glad of the police that the government has sent." But he said no, he could not undertake any such work unless left to himself, and eventually the police left these hundred families with this man and his wife to deal with and try to handle; and when I tell you the army since then has handled tens of thousands, and today we have twenty-five of those settlements in which there are ten thousand of them, and never once has there been a hand lifted against an officer of the Salvation Army by any of them, it will, I think, suggest to you that the army's method of trying to reclaim these people certainly has not aroused in them the ire which the government thought.

No, the army is not cut out for methods of force. We must leave these methods to other people. Our methods are methods of love. We try of course to change their hearts. We certainly endeavor to train them in some way to earn their livelihood. We have to educate their children. We have classes in which these poor youngsters are cared for. In fact one of the last men I saw in England was an officer from India, and when I asked him what was his last job he said, "In charge of one of the schools," and he had ninety-one boys and the parents of every one of these ninety-one were criminals. He was trying to train them in the right way and produce in that school men who will fill positions in society.

And our efforts are being put forth in other parts of the world. On the West Coast of Africa, the governments of Nigeria and the Gold Coast colony have asked the Salvation Army to become interested in that colony and they have acted just as generously as the Indian Governments and have provided us with the necessary accommodation and also found what money is necessary to carry the work on, and there are boys committed to us and we will take them and train them to earn their own livelihood in some work, carpentry or agriculture, and send them out into the world as citizens.

Perhaps some of you may have heard that before the end of this year we shall have sent Salvation Army officers to Devil's Island, the criminal colony of France, where she sends her criminals across the sea and puts them to serve their term in that awful island. We had heard something of the conditions, some leakage of conditions got to us, and we asked the French Government whether they would permit us to send an officer to investigate conditions. The difficulty, as far as I am able to understand, is that even when the term has expired for which they are sent, the men are not allowed to leave, they have to remain for a further term equal to their term of imprisonment, although not considered to be shut up in jail. Better far that they were kept in jail than sent out in the conditions prevailing on the island. And none of them are ever allowed to return unless they can find money to go back to France. I suppose the thought was that they should never return again, but that they should live in the conditions which prevail in Devil's Island. Well, the report was very depressing. I am not going to quote from it. That wouldn't be fair. It was submitted to the French Government and certainly opened their eyes. Fancy a lot of men coming out of jail, living in conditions in which no women were allowed, and you can easily imagine the depths to which they have got. We are sending officers to try and do work amongst those who have done their sentences and are free men and we want to try to encourage them to hopefulness instead of going into the utmost despair for these men, when they have served their sentence, see nothing in front but the darkest and most wretched conditions in which men can live. I am sure you will be interested if we can finally send officers there. We have men who would be glad to go and give their lives for these people.

The army has tried to do what it can for the homeless. There was a period some years ago when the police of London took a census of those sleeping out on the bridges of the Thames and along the embankment within a prescribed area. They took a census of one night and it was discovered that there were just upon three thousand of them trying to fight the chill of a winter's night on the Thames bridges or beneath the embankment. Well, those conditions revealed

that there was a situation, and the army with others tried to do their best to remedy these conditions, and started to provide shelters, of course not anything very great, because the people could not have afforded to have paid for anything very much, but shelter from the cold, shelter certainly from the weather. I won't follow it except to say that last winter the police again took a census of those homeless people in the same area and they found less than thirty as compared with the three thousand there had been.

I don't want you to think the army promiscuously gives away everything. We think that would be bad. We want to help to create a sense of independence, of personal responsibility, and therefore our efforts generally are to put pride in them, to give them some real work, so they can go away and say, "I earned all the army gave me." No charity. That is one of the great principles. I cannot say everybody loves it. They don't love work. But that is not confined to the poorer people or those less-favored. There are others I am sure.

One man came for shelter and we fed him next morning and we asked him to work. But he hadn't been at it ten minutes until he asked to see a doctor. He says, "I eat well, I sleep well, but when it comes to a little bit of work I get all of a tremble."

Then the army is doing what it can for inebriates. The army has established institutions to which they are either sent by magistrates or to which they can voluntarily go or their friends send them. We have two islands off the coast of New Zealand, one for men and one for women, an island in the Baltic where inebriates from Sweden are sent by the authorities or come of their own desire, and in large towns we have places where the need exists. Now that class of people is difficult to handle. You know how difficult it is to get over that terrible habit when once it has become the master of a man. But the army has met with a very fair share of success in their efforts. Some people of course do not like doing this. We don't imprison them. If they are refractory we ask that they shall be removed. I heard of a woman in Highgate who had been arrested in London intoxicated and she had been constantly so. The officer of the army was at the police station when the police brought

her in and said, "Let her come to my house." And they took her there. The woman of course was oblivious of all. She was in such a hopeless condition of intoxication. But she was put to bed and next morning she couldn't understand where she was and called, "Where am I?" "Oh, you are in a Salvation Army home." "What!" she said. "Where are my clothes? Let me have them quickly or else I shall lose my reputation."

Outcasts. You understand what I have in mind, lepers. We know the wretched condition. Of course we don't come across it in this land. But in eastern lands they are a problem. In the island of Java and the East India group it is said there are 70,000 of them that are not segregated, and in that Island the army has four institutions in which we care for two thousand five hundred of these poor lepers, and we hope next year to establish one to care for five hundred more. The other day the Dowager Queen of Holland sent us a contribution of 10,000 guilders to assist us. And the government helps us in a very generous manner. It is not that we have a hope of curing them, although I believe there is a cure, but I think it must be taken hold of in their early stages. We get those who have tried to hide their disease and have wandered about and when they have become almost helpless they are willing to be brought in. We haven't any hope. We look after them, wash their wounds, put bandages on and try to make the lives of these wretched people more happy than they would be under ordinary circumstances, and the great plan is to establish in each of these communities life as it would be on the outside. So we have debating societies, bands, musical societies, all the activities which go on in outside life, boy scouts and girl guides, and so on, and we are trying to do what we can to help the lepers of that island land.

Then in regard to the beggar people. Some of you have travelled in the east. You know of course the beggars of Colombo, Bombay, and of eastern cities. Well, we have institutions to try and create a love of work in them and send them out to an honest livelihood. If I were to say that the army tries to care for the broken hearted and broken spirited perhaps that is the way to convey it to you, and those who have lost the power of resistance and have

simply drifted down, down, down into a hopeless abyss in this life, and as far as that goes, in the life to come, going on feeling that everything is against them. They possess no power within themselves to help themselves.

Last night after Massey Hall a young man came to me in the room behind and announced his name. I know his father. He holds a very high position and is a man greatly respected all over the British Isles. I knew his story. I was in the home a few months ago when the poor mother was broken hearted. And I said, "What are the conditions now?" And he said, "The same." He said, "I am unable to resist it." There he is, drifting, in your own city. There are hundreds of thousands in this world like him and the army tries to do its best for those who are broken. I do not wish to say anything that would appear to be bragging but it would be idle for me to suggest that we have no success, because the army has restored to lives of decency and virtue and honesty tens of thousands of such broken men and women.

We get some amusing incidents. We got a husband in England in this condition and started him to work. And he said he would like to communicate with his wife and we sent a telegram. "We have found your husband." And there came back a telegram, "You are welcome to him." I can quite understand some women like that, just glad that somebody else should have the opportunity of handling the man they had failed in handling.

I should like to speak one or two words upon one of the phases of army work in which Canada particularly is interested. I refer to the question of immigration, transplanting people to the various colonies. The army has been for nearly thirty years doing what it can for the transfer of people from the old land to other parts of the English speaking world and we claim we have still the best equipped and most complete organization in existence which can carry on that work. Governments have done us the great compliment of copying our arrangements, especially in reference to conducting parties and the training and transportation of boys. We were pioneers. We discover the openings here and select the boys from among the working and middle class families in Great Britain, boys seeking opportunities.

Other societies have joined us in this excellent work. I find in Canada east and west a widespread demand for household workers. Canadian women recognize there is a limit to the number of experienced women in the home land who want to come overseas and many Canadian women say they would prefer an inexperienced girl if she is of good health and character. They can then train them. There is an unlimited supply in the British Isles and we think that with our experience and in view of the undertakings we are prepared to give we might be trusted to carry on the work, always of course, subject to the approval of the Canadian immigration director in London, in regard to health and character. As far as the boys are concerned, the result of the war is beginning to affect the number of boys leaving school for employment. Government statistics show from thirty to thirty-six thousand. There will be a shrinkage in that number. Since the government opened its campaign in 1922 we have transferred over five thousand of them to British Dominions, three thousand of that number have been sent to Canada. Great Britain is suffering at the present time because of the impossibility of absorbing the number of men and boys left in industrial areas, and it is said 200,000 of these will never be absorbed in industries to which they have been accustomed and this surplus consists of many men with families, excellent human material, so says the report of the experts. Emigration is advocated as one of the ways in which these people can be absorbed and we are hoping many of them can be thus dealt with.

I want to make it clear, however, that the policy of the Salvation Army has been, from the beginning, that we will not transfer people from one land to the other unless these people are wanted by the country to which it is proposed they be sent. At the present time I understand there is a feeling that Canada cannot absorb many more people, although in this I gather there are two schools of thought. Certainly we shall not be a party to bringing in people to Canada, however suitable unless there are openings to which they can be sent and unless Canada is willing to give them a hearty welcome. We are doing a little with the distressed areas. In London when I left, ten families with forty children were being got ready for Australia. Our scheme

provides they shall be met by Salvation Army officers and taken to the families who nominated them. Then after a month's trial if the farmer and the new arrival hit it off they go on, and if not we undertake to move the family to another situation and in any case we undertake to stand by the new arrival for two years, which is just twice as long as the government requirements call for. Whether it is possible for Canada to absorb some of these people I cannot say. We certainly should send them after careful selection and after training, and then the army is responsible for them for the first two years of their stay or until they are assimilated in the new conditions. We do not want in any sense to be a party to relieving conditions in one land and creating those same conditions in the other land. The Army simply wants to send men to places where there is need for them. That is all our interest in emigration, and we hope to be able to do something to help in Canada to develop some of those areas which await development and do our best to make this land one of the most glorious and successful and happy of all lands in the world.