

SSM 21

PRESTON'S POOR CHILDREN.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL ON BEHALF OF SHEPHERD-ST. MISSION.

EXTENSION OF WORK CALLS FOR 16 1/2 INCREASED FUNDS 1929

Each child in the Shepherd-street Mission Home costs 10s. per week to maintain. Considering the present price of commodities and the fact that each child has to be clothed, kept warm, provided with accommodation and necessary attention as well as fed, this cost, it must be agreed, is extremely moderate. During the past two years Mr. and Mrs. Chadwick's "family" has increased from 33 to 53, which means, of course, an addition to the expenditure of £500 per year. To accommodate the extra children it has been necessary to convert the storeroom into a dormitory, and alterations have had to be made at a cost of £50. No additional subscriptions have been received to meet the heavy draw on the mission's resources, and it is not surprising to find from the balance sheet that last year's deficit of £157 has grown to £469.

These few facts and figures sum up the position of the Shepherd-street Mission, on behalf of which "The Lancashire Daily Post" is making its customary Christmas appeal. The position is obviously serious and is naturally causing the management grave anxiety, but they realise that they must carry on and trust to the public of Preston and district to support them even more generously than they have done in the past.

Unless they do so this most beneficent work will remain circumscribed, and any possibility of expansion would be out of the question; which would be a pity in these days when child life is so much treasured, and such importance is attached to the value of careful training in healthful, home-like conditions.

AN EXCELLENT SYSTEM.

The healthy, happy appearance of the children is the best possible tribute to the excellence of the system and to the sympathetic oversight of the superintendent and matron, Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Chadwick. Everything is spotlessly clean and fresh—they have a strong belief in fresh air at Shepherd-street—and the spirit in the home is that of the family rather than of the institution. The children as they pass out are put into some trade or occupation that will enable them to become economically independent and useful citizens, and letters that are constantly being received from old members show how much they appreciate what the mission has done for them.

From the public point of view there are a couple of points that ought to be emphasised. One is that in these days of trade depression and depleted incomes this is the kind of activity that must be maintained with the fullest efficiency, because it is sheltering and caring for children who would otherwise suffer in health and character through neglect and lack of nourishment. It is obvious that the worse the conditions of employment become the more such a refuge and help is needed. These children of misfortune must not be denied their chance.

The second point, and one not so distantly related to the other as might at first appear, is that the work being carried on by Mr. W. A. Margerison and his committee, trustees, and officials prevents a considerable call on the public funds and by helping to keep down the rates indirectly helps industry. Therefore, on business as well as sympathetic grounds it will pay to keep the Shepherd-street Mission well supplied with funds.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL EFFORT.

But the best way to consider it is the way in which it appeals to the bulk of the present subscribers—as a means of happiness and hope to half a hundred children. During the year the Grammar School has kept in close touch with the home, and the enthusiasm of the boys, under Mr. Hodgson, should produce good results both direct and indirect. It is not only what the boys themselves can do, but what an influence their example may have upon others.

They have worked hard and shown considerable self-sacrifice during the year, and their reward will come on Christmas Day when they will have the satisfaction of seeing what pleasure their efforts have produced.

The Leyland Congregational Sunday School is again supplying a quantity of toys and a few more of these special efforts would be welcome. Large numbers of toys and other gifts will be required for the 1,500 poor children who, as usual, will be entertained to breakfast on Christmas morning. Funds for this purpose are also urgently appealed for. Contributors are assured of a solid investment and a good return on their money. The greatest care is taken that the guests at this merry feast are children who are in real need, and who, without it, would have no Christmas worth speaking of at all.

THE NEED URGENT.

Is Father Christmas coming to Shepherd-street? A great deal depends on the generosity of the local public during this week. There is more distress in the town than at any time since the war, and it is possible for those with a little to spare to bring much good cheer and brightness into scores of poor children's lives. "The Lancashire Daily Post" will be pleased to receive and acknowledge subscriptions.

SHEPHERD STREET MISSION.

RECORD NUMBER OF BREAKFASTS 1929 DISTRIBUTED.

1929

GRAMMAR SCHOOL BOYS PROVIDE DINNER AT THE HOME.

Shepherd-street Mission and its workers brought the genial spirit of Christmas into hundreds of homes on Wednesday. Long before dawn crowds of youngsters were assembling in front of the doors of the Mission—the first arrivals took up their positions before seven o'clock, and at eight o'clock when the Mayor arrived to open the doors, according to custom, there was a tremendous crowd of excited children to witness the ceremony.

Inside the building were the chairman of the Management Committee (Mr. W. A. Margerison), Mr. F. E. Chadwick and Mrs. Chadwick (the superintendent and matron), Mrs. Marsden, J.P., Mr. A. Spencer, and a small army of workers associated with the mission who the night before had expended many hours of labour making preparations for the day. Their work materialised into a huge stack of parcels, each of which contained nuts, apples, oranges, buns, and a meat pie.

Marshalled by kindly police officers, the waiting queue was guided to this pile of good things, and as Father Christmas (Mr. John Kenyon) handed out the parcels to what threatened to be a never-ending procession, that which had been a little mountain was razed to the floor level. Last year there had not been quite enough to go round. Mr. Chadwick was determined there should be no repetition of such a tragedy of disappointment, and on Wednesday the workers had the pleasure of being able to meet the demands of everybody—even those toddlers without tickets who had turned up in the hope that Father Christmas would save something for them.

OVER 1,300 PARCELS.

In all between 1,300 and 1,400 parcels of Christmas fare were distributed—a record.

The food was not the only thing, for as each child got its parcel it was directed to another part of the room, where it received a toy appropriate to its age, and there was something too for the little ones who had been prevented by illness and other reasons from attending. It was all very wonderful. It was all very wonderful, this kindly charity, though it had its sad aspect, for it revealed how much poverty exists in the town.

HOW THE RESIDENT CHILDREN FARED.

When the outsiders had been catered for, attentions were concentrated upon the resident children, now numbering 51, who had the time of their young lives. Afternoon dinner was served with the ceremony befitting such an auspicious event. There was roast pork and fine fat goose garnished with brussels sprouts and well-browned potatoes, followed by Christmas pudding. The dinner was provided by the headmaster (Mr. N. Hodgson) and the boys of the Preston Grammar School.

In the evening an adjournment was made to the Mission Room, where tea was served, the children of the Home having their number supplemented by half a score of "old" boys and girls, all of whom had passed through the Home before entering various employments in which they are doing well. The feature of the tea was the Christmas tree, toy-laden and picked out with a hundred candles, which made a pretty scene when the other lights were extinguished. The contents of the tree were further gifts from the masters and boys of the Preston Grammar School. Mr. Cyril Wilson, of Fulwood, was the "Father Christmas," who had the pleasure of handing the presents to the children, who later sang Christmas carols, ate fruits and sweets, and thoroughly enjoyed the games arranged for them.

The mission workers and the superintendent and matron must have been exceedingly tired after it all, but they had the satisfaction of knowing that their exhausting labours had given a real happy Christmas to many. By the way, the oranges, both for the breakfast and the tea-party, had been provided by Councillor M. Wade and Dr. and Mrs. Taylor.