

CITY OF EDMONTON

SPECIAL RELIEF DEPARTMENT

128 98TH STREET



*Allen / 2201*  
*1088*

October 18, 1933.

Commissioner D. Mitchell,  
Civic Block,  
CITY.

Dear Sir:

Re: Shack Dwellers in the Vicinity  
of the Grierson Street Dump:

Answering your letter of October the 4th, in reference to the above, I have had the list submitted to Dr. Orr by Mr. W.R. Graham examined by the Department and find that none of these cases are on married relief. I then took the matter up with Mr. Powell, in charge of the work of the Unemployment Relief Commission handling single men, and discussed the subject fully with him with the idea of effecting a solution by putting these men where they could be properly taken care of. He writes me as follows:--

" In accordance with your request of even date I am submitting herewith a report on the men reported upon by Health Inspector Graham as living on the dump, with a few comments upon such men as I know, or have some record of. Names omitted were not found on the Single Men's Relief records.

"C [redacted], W. Relief No. C93-1932.  
" Aged slightly over 50. Has wife in Poland. In Canada since 1913. On relief from 2-11-32 to 12-11-32, and from 1-3-33 to 20-7-33, at which time he was passed "Fit" for Camp, following which he stopped reporting for relief. He had been getting "Meals Only" at the Old Immigration Hall. According to our records he has no relations in Canada.

"S [redacted], J. Relief No. S372-1932.  
" Aged 33. Born in Edmonton. Has brother and sister at Andrew. On relief, 1931, -2, 3. Sent out under Farm Placement Scheme, 10-3-33, to work for A. Routhier, at St. Paul, and has not been on relief since.

"M [REDACTED], E [REDACTED]. Relief No. M106-1932.  
" Listed as M [REDACTED]  
"(M [REDACTED]). Aged 44. Polish. Has brother  
"in Poland. In Canada since 1916, arriving  
"via Niagara Falls. To Edmonton July, 1929,  
"from Saskatoon. Has worked for Stinson's  
"Bakery. Sent out under Farm Placement Scheme  
"on 1-3-33 to Joe Sobkow, St. Michael who  
"later reported that this man would not stay  
"with him, even though he was either paying  
"him, or offered to pay him (I am not sure  
"which) an additional \$5.00 per month.

"H [REDACTED], A. Relief No. H113-1932.  
" 30 years. Born in  
"Manitoba. Has 2 brothers living in Roycroft,  
"Alberta, one of whom owns a farm there. Claim  
"to be suffering from Hernia. On Relief 18-11-31  
"to 7-2-32, and from 2-11-32 to 21-3-33. For  
"awhile was getting "Meals Only" at Old Immigration  
"Hall. This man simply stopped coming for relief.

"N [REDACTED], B. Relief No. N16-1932.  
" Listed as M [REDACTED]. Aged  
"68. English. Has wife and boy, about 39, in  
"England. Arrived Canada, 1907. Has received  
"over \$300.00 in relief during years 1930-1-2-3.  
"Sent to Jasper Camp on 28-32, Number 425, and  
"left on 18-8-32. Camp Report "No good as a  
"worker". Taken back on relief 29-10-32 and sent  
"to Winterburn Camp on 24-7-33. No report of his  
"leaving there is on file at this office.

"S [REDACTED], F. Relief No. S93-1932.  
" Listed as S [REDACTED]. Aged  
"53. Pole. Canada since 1913. On relief 1930,  
"1931-2-3. Refused farm work at 50 cents per day  
"during 1932. In August, 1932, he was given  
"temporary relief following an operation for  
"Thyroid. Was sent to Braxeau Camp 8-2-33 and  
"quit there 15-3-33, claiming sickness. Received  
"temporary relief. In Hospital 21-28-3-33, and  
"then back on relief. Selected for Camp, and  
"passed "Fit", but failed to report at the  
"station on 24-7-33, when the party left. I  
"regard this man as a Malingerer, and am of the  
"opinion that the Outdoor Clinic will confirm this.

"W [REDACTED], A. Relief No. "163-1932.  
" Aged 41. Austrian. Arrived  
"in Canada 1911. Relief 29-11-32 to 5-2-33 when  
"he was sent to Jasper Camp. Quit Camp 1-5-33.  
"Listed as Wocek.

"T [REDACTED], J. Relief No. T60-1932.  
" Aged 52. Born in  
"North Dakota, of Norwegian nationality. Sister  
"lives in N.D. Arrived Canada 1902. On Relief  
"1931-2-3. Is Syphylitic, and was given 3  
"months rest from treatment last June. Selected  
"for Camp, and failed to report at Employment  
"Office on 4-7-33. Was in Hospital latter part  
"of March, 1933.

"I [REDACTED], A. Relief No. 16-1932.  
" Aged 30. Czecho-Slovak.  
"Brothers and sisters in U.S.A. Arrived Canada  
"in 1928. On Relief 1931-2-3. To Jasper Camp  
"6-12-32. Quit 18-4-33. Re-instated temporarily  
"and sent to Saunders Camp 1-5-33. No report in  
"this office of his having left there.

"F [REDACTED], J. Relief No. F102-1932.  
" 39. Welsh. Registered  
"with us a Single Ex-Serviceman, and we later found  
"that he was married and had a homestead, both  
"of which he failed to report in his application.  
"He has a father, 6 brothers and 2 sisters in  
"Coleman and worked around Drumheller for 7 years.  
"Was on relief from 17-11-32 to 3-2-33.

"L [REDACTED], F. Relief No. L60-1932.  
" Aged 56. Ukrainian. Wife  
"and family in the Ukraine. On relief 1931-2-3.  
"Sent to Jasper 2-8-32. Quit 22-8-32. On relief  
"1-11-32 to 10-7-32 when failed to report at  
"station for Camp.

"B [REDACTED], H. Relief No. B138-1932.  
" Aged. Born U.S.A. of  
"Norwegian nationality. Arrived Canada, 1910.  
"On relief from 1-10-32 to 24-2-33 when went out  
"under farm placement scheme. Returned and was  
"on relief 27-4-33 to 26-6-33 when he asked for,  
"and obtained, a \$5.00 grocery order in order to  
"go Gold Washing. We have no record of physical  
"unfitness in this case.

"J [REDACTED], N [REDACTED]. Relief No. J48-1932.  
" Aged 52. Swede. Sister  
"in Nelson, B.C. On relief 1931-2-3. Last dates  
"2-11-32 to 20-7-33 when passed "Fit" for Camp  
"and he stopped reporting for relief.

"A [REDACTED], P. Relief No. A52-1932.  
" Aged 29. Swedish. Father  
"in Sweden. On relief 1931-2-3. Last dates

"A [REDACTED], P. (Continued)

"3-11-32 to 24-4-33 when he secured a \$5.00  
"order to go Gold Washing.

"J [REDACTED], H [REDACTED].

Relief No. J18-1932.

"Aged 29. Swedish.  
"Relief 1-12-31 to 15-1-32, and from 29-10-32  
"to 9-11-32. He was on again on 14-11-32 to  
"25-1-33 when he was sent to Saunders Camp,  
"and we have no record of his having left there.  
"This man is more or less a transient, and has not  
"lived in the City 8 years as stated.

"P [REDACTED], G.

Relief No. P127-1932.

"Aged 29. Swede. Canada  
"since 1923. Relief since 1932. On relief  
"3-11-32 to 6-3-33 when he was sent to a farm  
"at Glen-nevis. The Employment Service later  
"received a letter from the farmer saying this  
"man claimed he was much better off on relief  
"than working, etc., but after Mr. Patterson  
"and myself saw P [REDACTED] we gave him another chance  
"and he was on relief again from 5-4-33 to  
"13-5-33 when he got a \$5.00 order to go Gold  
"Washing. No relief since.

"O [REDACTED], L.

Relief No. O50-1932.

"Aged 41. Dane. Canada  
"since 1926. Edmonton Relief 1931-2. On  
"relief again 3-11-32 to 23-1-33 when he was  
"cut off for refusing farm work.

"M [REDACTED], J.

Relief No. M30-1932.

"Aged about 60. Irish.  
"Has had over \$300.00 in relief. Refused Camp  
"29-7-32. On relief again 28-10-32 to 5-8-33  
"when he again refused Camp, by failing to report  
"for medical examination.

"K [REDACTED], J.

Relief No. K2-1933.

"This man has an artificial  
"leg and is on relief at the present time. He  
"is getting "Meals only" at the Old Immigration  
"Hall. He has been on relief continuously for  
"over 2 years, and probably longer, and is one  
"of the cases we have that I think should be  
"transferred over to 603 Civic Block.

"F [REDACTED], M.

Relief No. F22-1932.

"Aged 41. Czecho-Slovak,  
"where his wife and family are. On relief February  
"1931 to August 1932, and from 28-10-32 to 17-7-33  
"when he failed to report for Exshaw Camp.

"C [REDACTED], A. Relief No. C164-1932.  
" Aged 42. Ukrainian. Wife  
"and 2 children in Poland. This man was on  
"and off relief frequently, has refused camp  
"and then gone to a camp, applied for deportation  
"and then been out of town with the Dept. of  
"Immigration when sailings were arranged, and  
"at the present time I understand from that  
"Dept. that he was in their Office on the 10th,  
"October asking again for deportation and  
"they have again written to Winnipeg with a view  
"to making the necessary arrangements.

" There are one or two others who I cannot  
"fully identify, who were stated by Mr. Graham  
"to have been on relief, these are

S [REDACTED], G [REDACTED].  
B [REDACTED], G [REDACTED].  
H [REDACTED], S [REDACTED].  
H [REDACTED], J [REDACTED].

"but enough of these men have been identified to  
"give me a very good idea of the situation as it  
"exists.

" There are only about half a dozen of the  
"21 men who have been relief charges who are in  
"good standing at the present time, most of them  
"being "Cut Off" for refusing Camp or Farm Work.  
"The men who accepted a grub stake and have been  
"self-sustaining since then are eligible for  
"shipment to a camp when we have a camp order, and  
"one man, K [REDACTED], is actually in receipt of relief  
"at the present time, though I think he should be  
"receiving it through Drayton's office. Some men,  
"you will notice have a record of more than one  
"refusal of either farm or camp work, and it seems  
"only natural to expect that they would again  
"refuse camp, or quit a few days after being sent  
"there, as has already happened in some of the  
"other cases.

" However, I am willing to assist the City  
"in any way possible, and so am submitting the  
"following proposition subject to the approval of the  
"Unemployment Relief Commission, who will receive a  
"copy of this letter to-morrow. As you will  
"readily understand I cannot bind myself to do  
"anything which may not meet their approval, though  
"I am of the opinion that it will be regarded as  
"satisfactory

" On a date to be arranged all  
"of the men whom the City desire to be moved  
"could be instructed to report to me for  
"registration.

" Following the registration  
"they will be medically examined and if passed  
"as "Fit" will be sent to the Government  
"Employment Office, and from thence to a Camp.

" They could be clearly given to  
"understand that failure to comply with these  
"requirements would mean no further relief from  
"the Commission, or any further consideration  
"from the City.

" Further, it should be made clear to  
"them that they must stay at least 3 months in  
"such camp as they may be sent to, and at the  
"present time, as my instructions are that Fit men  
"are to be cared for only in Camps there would be  
"no guarantee that they would again receive relief  
"if they quit at the end of that period.

" Regarding those men who might be  
"passed as "Unfit", there would only be a few  
"of these, and I am suggesting that these might  
"properly be a charge on the City, as at the  
"present time the men are self-supporting and will  
"be deprived of a means of livelihood, even though  
"it is a precarious one, by the City's actions. I  
"think this should apply to K [REDACTED] as well as the  
"others, and as there would only be a few, no  
"doubt the City could house them all in one of  
"their own houses.

" Before a date could be arranged, if  
"the foregoing proves to be acceptable, I would  
"like to have a few days notice in order that I  
"can get in touch with Mr. Patterson, of the  
"Government Employment Service, so as to have a  
"Camp Order ready for the men when they report,  
"and also, a few days time should be allowed so  
"that all the men could be notified and have no  
"excuse to the effect that they were not told or  
"did not know soon enough, and it would give the  
"City Health Department time to so notify them. "

I thought from the foregoing that a settlement of the difficulty was established, but yesterday I received the following note from Mr. Powell, which leaves the matter still unsolved.

"I have been notified by Mr. Mackenzie  
"that he does not approve of my suggestion  
"to you re Grierson Dump, and he is not  
"willing that they be afforded an  
"opportunity to go to Camp. "

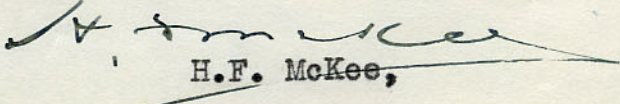
I have not been talking to Mr. Mackenzie about this subject, but no doubt he takes the view that these men having refused their opportunity, are not now his responsibility.

If I am informed correctly, this particular situation does not cover the entire difficulty, as it appears that other men are digging in along the river bank within the boundaries of the City, and setting up a menace to good living conditions.

Every man has a right to try to solve his own problem, and we find it difficult in the married cases to direct a man where and how he shall live. It is much easier for a single man to evade regulations and become a nuisance but if the conditions allowed to continue the system of relief suffers. The problem, however, is Mr. Mackenzies, and not ours, because if we allow a man to create domicile through residence in a hole in the ground or a tin shack, it is hard to say what the end of such a condition might be. It strikes me that a man having such a place of abode could not be said to have a home, but that he would still come under the qualification of a "single homeless man". If this reasoning is correct then the Government should provide accommodation in the regular manner through meal and bed tickets, or else see that they do go to camp so that they will be living under safe and proper conditions.

We have no machinery now to take care of single men. I think we should strenuously oppose starting such a practice because it opens the way to questionable cases and would lead to our building up a system parallel to that which the Government has established, and which is supposed to take care of the entire problem.

Yours faithfully,

  
H.F. McKee,

Manager.