

THE CANADIAN BAR REVIEW

THE CANADIAN BAR REVIEW is the organ of the Canadian Bar Association, and it is felt that its pages should be open to free and fair discussion of all matters of interest to the legal profession in Canada. The Editorial Board, however, wishes it to be understood that opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the individual writers only, and that the REVIEW does not assume any responsibility for them.

✂ Articles and notes of cases must be typed before being sent to the Editor, Cecil A. Wright, Osgoode Hall Law School, Osgoode Hall, Toronto 2, Ontario.

THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF TORONTO

Members of the legal profession throughout Canada will no doubt be interested to hear that an experiment is being carried on in Toronto in the form of a Legal Aid Bureau.

It has long been felt that there are deserving cases on relief who need legal advice but cannot afford to pay for it. The profession in Toronto, as in other parts of Canada, has been most generous in giving its assistance to these unfortunate people. But one of the great difficulties of such cases, if they are handled by members of the profession generally, is that no information can be obtained with regard to deserving cases which cannot be taken to the courts for lack of money necessary for disbursements.

The representatives of the Junior Bar Committee of the Canadian Bar Association, with the full support and encouragement of the Benchers of the Law Society of Upper Canada have enlisted the aid of nearly 100 of the younger members of the profession in Toronto to render legal aid.

They have, of course, realized the danger that in rendering free aid, applications for advice and assistance would probably be made by some people who could well afford to pay fees to members of the profession. Accordingly, the assistance of the Bureau has been confined to persons recommended by the Welfare Department of the City of Toronto, and careful regulations have been drawn up, so that no criticism can be levelled at the members of the Legal Aid Bureau for taking fees from the applicants for their own benefit, or in any way depriving the profession of remunerative work which they might otherwise

expect to get. All fees that are collected go into a fund to provide disbursements in cases approved by a Committee.

The method of operation is that three members of the Bureau attend in the evening, once a week, at the Welfare Offices and interview applicants for legal advice, and the same three are available for emergency cases throughout the week. In this way the profession generally is relieved of the natural difficulties of attending such cases during the hours of their ordinary practice, and at the same time a service is being rendered to a needy section of the community.

The Bureau has been in operation for several months and many cases of interest and of importance to the individuals concerned have been dealt with. The whole matter is experimental but so far results seem to have justified the effort made.

The Junior Bar are extremely grateful to the Benchers of the Law Society for their valuable advice and assistance.

Further information for any group undertaking similar work in other cities, as to the practical working out of the scheme, can be obtained from the Chairman of the Junior Bar Committee of the Canadian Bar Association.
