

# Editorial

## LEGAL AID

Equal justice for rich and poor alike is the cornerstone of democracy. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the indifference of the Bar Association in establishing Legal Aid.

Here in Saint John we have had some considerable activity recently. About a year ago B. R. Guss presented a paper on Legal Aid before the Saint John Law Society at its annual meeting. He went so far as to indicate a form of organization and even suggested a Constitution.

Later at Banff at the annual meeting of the Canadian Bar Association, Mr. Guss also presented a Brief advancing the setting up of Legal Aid across Canada by the organized Bar as a collective act.

It is to be noted that since then references have been made by various speakers before Law Societies on the importance of setting up legal aid for the poor.

It seems to us that no proof is needed that it is the duty of the organized Bar to act collectively. The need to give the poor person Legal Aid is there. The will to give legal advice and legal representation in Court on a voluntary and free basis is also there.

What is needed is a consciousness that the giving of Legal Aid must be a collective act of the organized Bar.

The medical profession gains a great deal of goodwill from the public because the doctors advertise in one way or another that free service is given to the poor person who needs it. There is no doubt that lawyers individually do a great deal of free work but the publicity is not there because the lawyer as an individual does not advertise.

Let us be frank about it: The Bar owes a duty not only to the public but to itself to provide this free service. What are we waiting for?

It is easy to say: "Why doesn't somebody do something?"

Recently a meeting was held of the younger members of the Saint John Law Society and a group was organized, with Mr. Erskine Carter as chairman and Mr. Robert Macauley as secretary. Considerable interest was shown and enthusiasm was engendered.

A report was brought in by this group and will be presented to the Saint John Law Society at its annual meeting. It is to be hoped that the Saint John Law Society will vote in favor of the establishment in Saint John of a Legal Aid Bureau.

It is also to be hoped that other cities throughout the Province will follow the example set by Saint John.

For the record: Mr. Guss has written to lawyers in Fredericton and in Moncton and has also been in touch with the welfare bodies in Saint John and we understand they are heartily in favor that something be done. In other words, it is now up to the Law Society.

### THE BUSINESS MANAGER WRITES—

It is rare that the Business Manager of a publication has an opportunity to express his thoughts in print, and I am thankful for the invitation I have received to do so.

Our publication, as you no doubt know, is distributed without charge to all the members of the Bench and Bar in the Province. This is done so that we may reach all the barristers and judges, without having to depend on their memories to begin and renew their subscriptions. This places the burden of the cost of publication on those people who insert business cards or advertisements in the issues as they are put out.

We wish to thank the Barristers Society of the Province for their support and financial aid. Also, we wish to express our appreciation to the Barristers of the Province and the others who place their insertion in "Oyez, Oyez." We have many difficulties to overcome in our attempt to carry on. Without this help it would be impossible.

I personally wish to thank the members of the Business Staff who have worked with me for the past two years. The assistance and co-operation they have given me has been most heartening.

DOUGLAS E. RICE.