

# THE BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY HOUSE ROLL CALL

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## Impossible To Estimate Value Of The Community House To Birmingham

Who could put a value on the many vital services rendered by the Community House? How much is a ton of coal worth to a family which has neither coal nor money on a cold winter night? Could you put a price on the comfort and well being afforded by warm clothing and stout shoes if you had none and no money to buy any? And suppose somebody put good food in your cupboard and supplied milk and other essentials when the family purse had failed?

No one would dare estimate the value of such service—the elevation and prevention of human discomfort and suffering—it's beyond price. Yet such is the service rendered daily by our Community House. It has been and still is a very good friend indeed to hundreds of our fellow citizens.

Many think of the House simply as the social and civic center of Birmingham. They know that meetings of various groups and organizations are held there—they have probably attended parties and dances given in its splendid ballroom and attractive lounges.

But the Community House is much more than a civic and social center. It is literally the central clearing house for the charitable activities of Birmingham. It prevents the duplication of welfare work. It coordinates the orders of the city welfare, the services of the city and public school nurses; it unites the gifts of the Good Fellow Fund, the Needlework Guild and the activities of many other groups and individuals into one well-directed channel of charity. It eliminates waste and prevents want. It makes every dollar you give to any and all charities go farther and do more good—and it makes sure that your gifts

will reach those people who are most in need.

Records are kept of assistance given to every family and these records are an accurate guide to organizations and groups and individuals who are interested in helping. Thus it is always possible to know exactly what has been done or is being done for any family. Duplication of effort and unnecessary expense are thus avoided.

### The Load Has More Than Doubled Since Last Year

Naturally, conditions have increased the needs of more of our fellow citizens this winter and, unfortunately the difficulty is not over yet. The welfare load in Birmingham increased from 12 to 54 in only three months and the number of "border line" cases (those with only one or maybe two days work a week and by no means sufficient to support a family) increased from 65 to 125 in the very short period from Thanksgiving to Christmas. Such families must be helped with food, clothes and fuel. Even if business conditions were to stage an unprecedented upturn, some time would certainly elapse before this load would be lightened and many

of our people will undoubtedly feel the effects of this recession for some time to come. The need is very real—and urgent.

The House works closely with the City, School and Visiting Nurses to meet the needs of the families in distress in the best way possible. And cases reported by the nurses are investigated by the House before help is asked of any of the clubs or other organizations which care for such needs.

### The House Provides Free Medical Care

Sometimes in case of sickness when medical care is necessary, the doctor is called and donates his services free while the House pays for the medicine or serum required. In one particular instance, the life of a little boy who was suffering from asthma, was not only made comfortable, but really saved by timely medical care arranged by the Community House.

The various funds at the disposal of the House are administered not only as emergency measures, such as fuel and food, but also with an eye to improving morale and making for better and happier living conditions in our city in the future.

As already stated, it is impossible to estimate the value of the work being done by our Community House, but the improvement of living standards which it is constantly striving to achieve will undoubtedly make for better citizens in the future.

### Other Important Activities of the Community House

But there are still other activities and services rendered by the House besides those with civic and social aspect—besides the relief of suffer-

ing and the well-regulated distribution of charities. The Thrift Shop and the Employment Department are extremely active, important and very helpful branches of Community House service.

The Thrift Shop is particularly well organized and managed and although all articles of dress, furniture, etc. are sold at such extremely low prices that persons with the most meagre income can be supplied, still the Thrift Shop earns a very substantial income. At the same time the operating expenses are practically nil so that almost all the money received can be turned over to the House for welfare work.

The Employment Department is well known to most citizens but it is doubtful indeed if many realize the scope of the work, the number of jobs filled, or the many types of work found for those unemployed.

And these are but a few of the more important services of our Community House. There is a multitude of others—the orange fund, the milk fund; all are administered efficiently yet understandingly, by the House.

### The Community House Deserves Your Best Support

Surely such a human and essential work in this community deserves your very best cooperation and liberal support. It is only because you give that the Community House is possible and your increased generosity this year will enable the House to care for its extra heavy load properly. Your support is essential to the continued well being and happiness of many of our fellow citizens and also to help make Birmingham a better and happier place in which to live.

To give to the Community House, your Community Chest, is more than a duty—it is a privilege.