Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

4/

Illinois Steel Company
SUBSIDIARY OF UNITED STATES STEEL CORPORATION
GARY WORKS
GARY, INDIANA

Sept. 28, 1932.

Miss Ida M. Tarbel,
120 East 19th. St.,
New York City,
New York.

Dear Miss Tarbel:

At the time of your visit to Mr. Gleason's office I promised to send you some detailed information about our garden layout, also pictures together with some details of our welfare work that might be of interest.

Although work on a smaller scale in different ways had been carried on to help the needy ever since the commencement of Gary, it took the depression of 1914 to give this work a real organized form. A Club was then formed under the leadership of General Superintendent Gleason, funds were collected and real work started, visiting homes and rendering material aid. Our many visits to the different homes soon convinced us that the need of medical aid was even greater than that of material aid, and the services of a trained nurse was secured followed closely by those of a physician. This was the beginning of our clinic work. It was primarily intended for the benefit of children, but it did not take long before all needy employees sought it for themselves and their families and as it grew, also great numbers of towns people. No deserving case was turned down. In a short period of time its activities had grown far beyond our original intentions.

We hoped that the prosperous times from 1925 on would show that our work was not needed, but instead of decreasing it kept on increasing. New quarters were needed, the old ones a rented storefront handicaped our activities. It took time to accumulate funds for a new structure, but in 1927 we jumped into it and erected our own building known as The W. P. Gleason Welfare Center. This now became the headquarters of all our welfare activities, medical, educational and social. Under the able leadership of Miss Pauline Heinz, Superintendent of the Welfare Center for the last eleven years, a woman who knows how to utilize every resource at her command to the best advantage, the place soon was seething with activities. Lectures were given to housewives on hygiene, cooking, preserving, dietics, house economy and on other subjects pertaining to a well directed household; to mothers on child welfare; to

younger children on behavior and manners; to young grown-ups on morals and ethics of youth. Pamphlets were printed on many useful subjects and issued to patients and clients. Classes in English were given to foreigners, parties were given for young folks, receptions and entertainments for the older ones and picnics with all kinds of frolics for the children where all Superintendents took part, to give the youngsters a real outing. The results have been more than satisfactory and it is safe to say that the good influence of the work has reached three thousand homes in our city.

The medical activities increased and have reached real proportions during the present depression when on semi-weekly clinic days the number seeking medical aid has gone up above the hundred mark. Our total number of clinic visits have long ago passed forty thousand: three hundred tonselectomies have been preformed, dental work has been given to over a hundred patients, dozens and dozens of eyes have been tested and provided with glasses, operations of all kinds have been provided for, and above all hundreds of children have been taken out of the infirm class and placed in the healthy one by constant and perseverant watching on the part of the clinic, for the children were always uppermost in Mr. Gleason's mind.

In these days of depression, more than at any other time of course, one of the great functions of the clinic has been the distribution of material aid. This has been done economically but through a well-balanced diet so that the best possible results have been obtained, with a minimum of money. Besides serving the immediate needs, this practice has been very helpful in teaching future economy. The very difficult times of today has naturally inspired to greater activities, and the resources at our command have been used to the full extent. 237 acres of land were ploughed up for gardens and farms. Out of this acreage 157 acres were taken for individual gardens, 40 acres were planted with potatoes and 40 with turnips and cabbage. This will net the needy around $50,000.00, for all the potatoes and turnips will of course ultimately also go to them. Seeds, spray material, transportation and police protection were furnished for all gardens. Besides the material benefit to the workers there was mental return of great value, the aid to self help, turning idle time into a profitable use, and above all it served as a powerful antidote to depression philosophy. The men take great interest in their garden work; men and women alike

Lake Michigan is at our door with lots of fish, this food supply was made available to the men by both encouraging them to fish, and by fishing for them. Nets were bought and every day we were able to provide many needy homes with fish direct from the water.

Woodland was secured from farmers for clearing, peat bogs were uncovered, fruit was secured from orchards, emergency work was provided. Shortly, everything has been done to aid the people and

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

to help maintain their good spirits during these trying times.

It is needless to say that our General Superintendent has been the moving spirit in all these undertakings, small in comparison with so many others that have been fathered by him, and for which he will have the gratitude of our City and County as long as Gary stands. But I dare say, that the satisfaction of doing something for the needy has been as great to him as that which he had in erecting lasting civic monuments.

Yours very truly,

H. O. Egeberg

Supt. Labor Bureau.

HOE/w

P. S.

Photographs have been mailed under seperate cover.

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library