

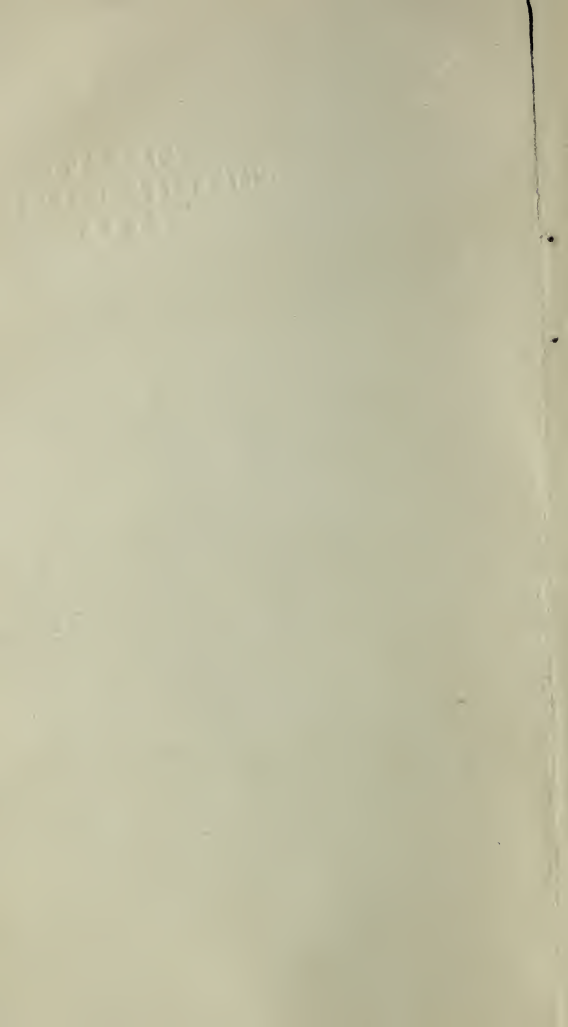
PASSING ON

AS A METHOD OF CHARITABLE RELIEF

WITH A DESCRIPTION
OF THE TELEGRAPHIC
CODE AND TRANSPOR-
TATION AGREEMENT



THE RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION
ROOM 613, 105 E. 22D STREET
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DEPARTMENT

Blackburn

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AGREEMENT

“I (we) hereby agree to abide by the Rules published for the Committee on Charitable Transportation of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, for the purpose of eliminating existing evils and promoting efficiency in the granting of free transportation and charity rates.”

See pages 23-28 of this pamphlet.

PASSING ON

For sample pages of the Telegraphic Code see pages 31-34.

TRANSPORTATION is one of the forms of aid most frequently asked of churches, private charities and public officials; it is one of the forms most frequently granted. That agency in a railroad town which, out of a total relief expenditure of \$300 a year, paid \$240 for railroad tickets to near-by towns, asked pathetically, "What else could we do?" The officials of the near-by towns returned the compliment, of course, and each and all continued to issue transportation relief in response to the demand which they themselves were creating. "What else can we do?" Surely something better than this.

Let us consider briefly (1) the effects of this policy on the recipients, and (2) better ways of helping.

I. THE PROCESSION OF CHARITY-RATE TRAVELLERS

NOTE them as they pass. There are (a) old people with homes or without, often mentally weak and always restless; (b) defectives of every grade, including sometimes even those who are actually insane, and, more frequently, epileptic and feeble-minded; (c) those with physical defects, such as the blind, crippled, deaf-mute, etc. Then there are (d) sick of every degree, many, such as those with rheumatism and tuberculosis, seeking healthier climates. But able-bodied men form a large company, including, besides those in search of work, (e) sturdy tramps who professionally wander, and (f) shirking husbands and fathers who have left families to the care of charity in their home communities. Three other classes are (g) whole families, usually of a degraded type; (h) adventuresses who have always met with sudden and overwhelming misfortune; and last, but by no means least important, (i) runaway boys.

What is the effect upon these travellers of the passing on system of chari-

table aid? The late Mrs. Solenberger, after four years' experience in befriending homeless men in Chicago, made a careful study of a thousand cases. This study, now in press,* is overwhelmingly convincing, for it gives carefully authenticated facts about homelessness and transportation in instance after instance. We quote a few in this booklet (pages 8, 11, 13, 18). We have corresponded recently with other sources of information, with public and private agencies East and West and South, and quote from their letters also to give some idea of the characteristics of the main body of charity-rate travellers for which we are responsible.

(a) AGED

THE public relief department in Milwaukee reports an infirm woman sent to that city by the poor commissioner of a Wisconsin town in which she belonged. As she had never been in Milwaukee before and had no claim on that community, she was sent back. Later, another town

* One Thousand Homeless Men. A Study. By Alice Willard Solenberger, The Russell Sage Foundation, New York.

in the state sent her to Milwaukee. Again she was returned to her own town. Thus were four railroad fares paid out of the poor-rate to play battledore and shuttlecock with a forlorn old woman physically unfit to travel. The Chicago Department of Health tells of an old man sent to that city by a Poor Farm Superintendent with definite instructions not to tell whence he was sent.

"A man of eighty-six came to the office one day," writes Mrs. Solenberger, "asking transportation to Pittsburgh. He said that he had no relatives or friends in Pittsburgh, but thought he would be better off there than in Chicago. Upon investigation we found that this man had once been a self-respecting laborer, who had raised a family and owned a home of his own. The home had long since been lost and the children scattered, and when age began to interfere with his ready employment, he had begun the practice of going from one city to another in the hope of bettering his condition. He could not recall and we could not find out how many years he had been on the road, but his complete pauperization and the strength of the hold which the habit of wandering

had upon him, even at eighty-six, showed that he must have been travelling for a long period of years. He said that he had never stolen a ride in his life, but had travelled with his way paid by charity all over the United States and part of Mexico. He had letters on his person showing that he had been in New Orleans the previous winter; from there he had travelled county by county, or from one large city to another, to Cincinnati. The Mayor of Cincinnati had furnished him with a ticket to Chicago, and he asked us to send him to Pittsburgh. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of charitably intentioned individuals, of private charitable agencies and of public officials must have furnished the money to pay the fares of this restless old mendicant, solely upon his own claim that he would be better off elsewhere. We refused to send him to Pittsburgh and finally succeeded in locating two of his grown and married children in Iowa, but the old man enjoyed travelling and did not wish to be sent to them. He said that if we did not care to pay his way to Pittsburgh, he 'reckoned' he could get there somehow."

(b) MENTALLY DEFECTIVE

A FEEBLE-MINDED woman, young and good-looking, applied to the county officials of a western state, saying that she came from Kansas. The county promptly sent her to another county, which as promptly sent her back again. Weeping and in great distress, she was sent again and was again returned, this second time in the custody of the county clerk. Such contests are not unknown over the insane. One woman of unbalanced mind was passed from town to town years ago, crossing the continent with the aid of almost every kind of charity, public and private, religious and secular, only to disappear entirely, after her relatives in New Mexico had made many efforts to find her.

(c) PHYSICALLY DEFECTIVE

A BLIND man was recently put off the train," writes a southwestern correspondent. "Neither city nor county officials would take any responsibility in the matter, and for three or four days the old man sat in the depot. No one

knew what to do with the poor old fellow, until finally two hoboes came along and offered to take him away if they were given money for their fares and his. The money was given, he was entrusted to their care, and the three started for C——."

Mrs. Solenberger tells of a blind man with a crippled wife and seven children, the oldest feeble-minded, all passed on by a chain of counties extending across three states, from Pennsylvania to Illinois. She writes also of a young deaf-mute, with an arm missing, who asked for transportation to St. Paul. "He knew no one in that city and would have no means of support upon his arrival there. For this reason we refused to send him. Instantly he changed his request to one for a ticket to a city in central Illinois; then to one in Iowa, then to one 'anywhere out West,' writing in explanation, 'I've just come from the East.' He was impatient of questions, but in addition to a few other facts we finally learned that he had been in Chicago less than three hours; nevertheless he wrote on a piece of paper: 'I must go on; I cannot stay; I have nothing to do so I travel always. I do

not stay anywhere. I must go before night.' ”

(d) SICK

THERE are few darker pages in relief history than those which record the “passing on” of consumptives. Writing of the stream of these unfortunates from other states who go to Texas, and become public charges there, Mr. Francis H. McLean says: “They may become victims of a ghastly comedy, may be shipped from place to place by public officials at public expense; shipped wherever their despairing whims suggest, hastened to death; and the public treasury in the end the sufferer.”

(e) ABLE-BODIED

THIS includes all the strong tramps and beggars who habitually “want to go anywhere except where they now are.” It also includes many who are not beggars, but who, getting temporarily into a tight place, would rather be helped by charity than by their own people. “Why don’t I ask my brother-in-law [a railroad official] for transportation?”

said one of these to the secretary of a private charity. "Well, I'll tell you, madam; I'll never see you again and I shall see him often." As to the sturdy beggar, Mrs. Solenberger tells of one almost all of whose readily secured income was spent for whiskey. "He came from San Francisco to Chicago on charity tickets, and asked us to send him on to Philadelphia. We refused, and offered him well-paid work instead, but he declined it and a few weeks later came to the office and boasted that he had begged from ministers in the city enough to pay his full fare to Philadelphia. There was no reason for doubting his story, since two Episcopal ministers of whom he had asked aid had telephoned the office about the man, and one of the two had urged us to send him East because he could not find employment in Chicago, and would undoubtedly be better off in Philadelphia."

Of course, the substitute of ordering the able-bodied to leave town, or of suggesting to them that they beat their way on the railroad, is no remedy either. Vagrancy is too serious an evil to be thus coped with; but its problems concern not so much the charitable as the

police administration of our cities and towns. This subject is ably discussed in the chapter on Confirmed Wanderers or Tramps in Mrs. Solenberger's book.

(f) DESERTING

WHEN these fellows leave families destitute at home to enjoy the freedom of the road, it seems peculiarly uncharitable to pay their traveling expenses. One such man was being passed from place to place in the West on the claims of a forged letter from his wife, in which she told of the destruction of their home by fire. A letter to the eastern city where she lived brought out the fact of his repeated desertions. There had been no fire.

(g) WHOLE FAMILIES

EVEN more serious in its results is the careless charity given to wandering families in which there are small children. No decent standard of care for the children can be enforced, because the parents slip from under all supervision by moving on. One such family travelled for many months in the Southwest on the tale of

having been burned out, and of needing transportation to a relative in the next county. In state after state, this relative was always in the next county, and court officials and kind-hearted private citizens were always making up purses in response to this appealing story.

Sometimes help is granted, not because the story is believed but because it is not. A man, wife and four children appeared several years ago in Grand Rapids, after extensive wanderings covering a period of eight years. A charity there wrote for their record in some of the towns in which they had received aid, with a view to discovering their real home. An overseer of the poor in Pennsylvania replied:

MY DEAR MADAM,

Your favor of Mar. 1st at hand and will say in reply that the parties you refer to stopped off in our city for a short time and worked all the charitable institutions here. They are dead-beats of the worst type. Get rid of them as soon as possible would be our advice.

Very truly yours,

Officials in three other places gave the same advice. Churches and private charities had been equally to blame, however. A long list of them had

helped to make tramps of the unfortunate children in this family.

As a refreshing contrast, take this memorandum received from Buffalo: "Letter came from Cleveland stating that a family there was destitute, man absolutely unable to find work. There were three children and the woman was nearing confinement. Would her mother and sister in Buffalo care for her and the children, possibly, until the husband could find work? All the relatives were seen. Woman's mother, who was found to be in decent circumstances, agreed to take her daughter and grandchildren; the husband's relatives agreed to do their best to find work for him. Both groups of relatives gave reasonable assurance that the family would not become a public charge. Cleveland sent them straight through to Buffalo, with satisfactory results."

(h) ADVENTURESSES

WOMEN of more than doubtful honesty have no trouble in travelling extensively at charitable expense. A family was shipped to a western city from Pennsylvania, and,

becoming dependent almost immediately, were given tickets to return to the East. One overseer of the poor writes to us: "Our practice is to *see them off* on train or boat, and where it seems wise put them in charge of conductor, giving him the ticket." Unfortunately this precaution was not taken with the family of which we write. The man sold his ticket and stayed in town with the children, while the wife went to Philadelphia alone. Here she told a pitiful story of her husband's becoming sick and dying in a Philadelphia institution, and of being nearly crazed herself by anxiety for her children left alone and uncared-for in the West. Result: Newspaper abuse of the charities that did not immediately send her "without red tape" where she wanted to go, a collection for her benefit, and her return West to the city in which she did not belong.

Often, however, women of this type have no family, and need, for their protection from grave moral dangers, much more intelligent charitable care than they usually get.

(i) RUNAWAYS

A LARGE majority of the boys who apply for transportation have homes; nearly half of them, according to studies made of this group, have good homes. Obviously their homes should be communicated with and every effort made to check their wandering habit. Such lads are often only adventurous and a little wayward, though liable to become vagrants for life if helped carelessly.

Mrs. Solenberger tells the story of a twelve-year-old lad from a city in Iowa: "A blind beggar with a hand organ and a monkey came along the street one day and the boy followed after him. He followed until evening, when the beggar camped on the outskirts of the city to eat his supper. He shared it with the boy and then invited the more-than-willing lad to accompany him in his travels. This arrangement continued several months or until, somewhere in Indiana, the beggar got into a drunken row and was arrested. The boy told us that he gave the police his home address, but whether or not he did so the authorities shipped him back only as far

as Chicago. There he gravitated to the Newsboys' Home, which is in the same block as the Central District office of the Bureau of Charities, and one of the newsboys advised him to apply to us for transportation to his home. We wrote at once to the charity organization society of the Iowa city, asking them to see if the boy's story was true and to notify his parents of his whereabouts, and request them to send the amount required for his fare home. Three days elapsed before replies were received, and in that short interval the boy was picked up by the police and taken to the Juvenile Court. He had been advised by the boys at the Newsboys' Home to tell the matron there that he was an orphan; therefore he told the same story to the judge. After a cross-questioning which failed to shake the boy's story, he was pronounced a 'dependent child' and sent to the Farm School at Glenwood, Illinois, where after considerable difficulty he was traced by the Bureau's agent, who secured an order for his release from the Juvenile Court and sent the boy home."

These are only a few instances, se-

lected from many more, of the essential unkindness of the "passing on" method. There are 2,946 counties in the United States, and in more than half of the states of the Union the unit of administration is smaller than the county; consider, also, that there are about seventy thousand cities and towns having railroad stations. If, as we believe, in an overwhelming majority of these counties and towns, charitable transportation is granted by the methods that we have described, how great is the waste of manhood and womanhood! How great is the waste, too (though this is a secondary matter), of charitable funds!

II. WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

THIS question is often asked, on the assumption that a careful inquiry, including, as it must, the telegraphing or the writing to references, and then transportation straight through to destination for those who ought to have it, would be much more expensive than the usual hit-or-miss alternative. Even if it were, the manufacture of dependents is costly. As a matter of fact, however, ex-

perience usually shows a rapid decrease of expense under the more thorough method. One city, which had paid out \$1,500 a year through the Mayor's office in furnishing tickets to the next town for all transients applying early in the month, made a saving of \$700 in the first year after they adopted the policy of inquiry first and then help, if any, straight through to destination. But this was much more than a saving of money. It meant many dependent cases kindly and adequately cared for; it meant, also, the ability to make effective protest with a clear conscience when other communities tried to get rid of dependents by dumping them. In aggravated cases it was still possible to retaliate by returning those who had been passed on, but this sort of border warfare became less and less necessary.

TRANSPORTATION OFTEN HELPFUL

TRANSPORTATION is a good and a necessary form of help. Under a system of temporary care pending inquiry (with a work-test for the able-bodied, if necessary), and of thorough action based on the facts, many cities are now using

charitable transportation as an effective means of making permanent provision for some dependents, and of helping others up to independence. It is cruel to send a boy away from his home, but nothing could be kinder than to find out where his home really is, to persuade him to go there, and then send him. It is cruel to forward consumptives West and South where no care awaits them, but their transportation to sanatoriums and homes awaiting them is, of course, the only right way of helping. It is cruel to encourage a man in search of work to become a wanderer, but there could be no better use of money than to send him where work is positively, on good evidence, assured to him. Often it is wise to send his whole family with him, when this evidence is clear.

THE TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT AND CODE

IN order, therefore, to discourage the wrong and encourage the right use of charitable transportation, the National Conference of Charities and Correction started, in 1903, a movement to prepare an Agreement and secure its use by public and private charities. The

Agreement is printed on page 4, and sample pages from the Telegraphic Code on pages 31-34. The use of this Code is not obligatory upon signers, who may communicate by letter instead. It was drawn up to save time where delay was either expensive or dangerous.

In October, 1910, there were more than four hundred signers to the Rules which follow, and this number was secured without any active canvass. The attention of poor law officials is especially called to Rule 14.

TRANSPORTATION RULES

A. The word "transportation," as used in the following paragraphs, includes all transportation paid for or issued upon recommendation of charitable societies or public relief officials.

B. The word "he" means he, she, or they as the context in any case will suggest, and the word "applicant" includes the family group for whom transportation is desired.

C. "Charity," as used in these rules, includes any general charitable organization, public or private, upon which the applicant in question has no claim through membership, blood relationship, or through the society's definite promise to aid him.

D. In some of the following paragraphs "shall" is used, in others "should" or "may." The former word is mandatory,

and the phrases in which it is used are to be accepted as binding upon all signers of these Rules. Where "should" or "may" is used the paragraph is only a suggestion which signers may observe or not, at their discretion.

1. Before any charitable transportation shall be granted the organization or official having the matter under consideration must be satisfied, by adequate and reliable evidence—

First. That the applicant is unable to pay the regular fare.

Second. That the applicant's condition and prospects will be substantially improved by sending him to the place in question.

Third. That the applicant will have such resources for maintenance at the point of destination as will save him from becoming dependent on charity; or,

Fourth. That the applicant has a legal residence in the place to which he is to be sent, or is a proper charge upon the charity of that community.

2. An applicant's statements must in every case be substantiated by other definite, reliable evidence. When this is lacking the applicant should be taken care of, if necessary, until the needful testimony is secured.

3. In all cases an appropriate charitable organization or official, if such exists, at the point of destination should be promptly advised that the applicant's transportation to that place is under consideration, or has already been determined upon.

When a signer of these Rules is listed as being located at the proposed point of destination, it shall not be legitimate to send the

applicant thither unless notification is sent to the signer before the transportation is furnished or upon the day when it is provided.

In exceptional cases where the signer has reasons for desiring that no record be kept by the charitable agency at the point of destination, the matter may be explained to the latter, who shall then preserve no record unless the case is known through sources independent of the sender.

4. It is strongly recommended that a report be secured from an appropriate charitable organization or official in the city to which transportation is desired, before any applicant is sent thither. This is especially urged when a signer of these Rules is listed as being located at the point of destination.

All signers have definitely announced themselves as willing to coöperate with other signers by making reasonable efforts to secure needful information, and to determine whether transportation ought to be provided in any given case. Other charitable agencies, also, are usually glad to make any legitimate inquiries and reports which fall within the range of their customary activities.

5. All charitable transportation provided shall, in every instance, be *adequate*; that is, the initial or original sender shall provide for the applicant through to his ultimate destination. When charity rates are obtainable at intermediate points, and not obtainable at point of departure, the initial sender may enlist the services of some charitable agency at the intermediate point in obtaining such rates upon arrival of the applicant, all expenses to be borne by the initial sender.

6. If an applicant has been aided to reach a place intermediate to the point of his proper destination, without means having been provided for forwarding him to the latter, then no further transportation shall be granted without inquiry of the charitable organization or individual who sent the applicant thither. This correspondent shall be requested to remit the amount necessary either to forward the applicant to his destination or to return him to the starting point. If a satisfactory response is not promptly made, the applicant should be returned to the place where his charitable transportation originated. In no case shall he be "passed along" to another community which has no adequate responsibility for him.

7. If an applicant who has been provided with charitable transportation without the approval of an appropriate charitable agency at the point of destination, shall there become dependent on charity within nine months after his arrival, then the charitable organization or individual who sent him thither should be notified and requested to provide for the applicant's necessities or to remit the money necessary to return him to the place from which his transportation was provided.

8. If an applicant has been forwarded in violation of any of these rules, the charitable agency which provided him with transportation should be requested to bear the reasonable, necessary expense of providing for him temporarily, pending investigation and the proper disposal of the case.

9. The society or official through whom charitable transportation is procured shall in

each case preserve a full record of all the essential facts upon which the granting of transportation has been based.

A copy or summary of such record should be furnished promptly on request to any charitable organization or official interested in the case. When such request for a digest of the record comes from a signer of these rules, it shall be considered mandatory upon any other signer.

10. In case of persons asking charitable transportation on the ground of being able to secure employment in the place to which transportation is desired, definite, reliable assurances of employment must be obtained as part of the necessary evidence. A general report that conditions of employment are better, or that the applicant should be "better off" in the place specified, shall not be considered sufficient grounds for the granting of transportation.

11. Organizations and individuals who agree to these rules thereby pledge themselves to keep a copy of the Rules and the Telegraphic Code conveniently at hand, and to use all due diligence in making reasonable inquiries requested by other signers of the rules and in replying to communications regarding transportation cases.

12. Persons forwarded by charitable agencies or officials from places where any contagious or infectious disease is known to be epidemic, must be provided with proper health certificates.

13. When disagreement, as to facts or decisions, arises in regard to any transportation case, one or both the parties concerned may appeal to the Committee on Trans-

portation of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, sending the appeal through the Charity Organization Department of the Russell Sage Foundation, Room 613, 105 E. 22d St., New York.

14. Poor law officials may return any person who becomes a public charge to his place of *proven* legal residence without the consent of that community.

The Committee on Transportation of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, which acts as arbiters in any disputes arising between signers as to the enforcement of these Rules, consists of the National Director of the American Red Cross, Ernest P. Bicknell; the Secretary of the Indiana Board of State Charities, Amos W. Butler; and a member of the Massachusetts State Board of Charities, Jeffrey R. Brackett. The Secretary of the National Conference of Charities, Alexander Johnson, is Secretary of the Committee.

ALL ARE INVITED TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT

THERE is no charge whatever for this service. Every executive official of a public or private charity which grants transportation is urged to write to *The*

Russell Sage Foundation, Room 613, 105 East 22d Street, New York, for a blank form of Agreement. As soon as it is signed and returned, a copy of the Code and Agreement, neatly bound, will be forwarded, and the service of all the other signers will be freely granted in making inquiries for the new signer.

STATE ACTION

OFFICIALS, public and private, are urged to bring this much needed reform to the attention of all state conferences of charities, and of all meetings of county and township trustees or directors of the poor. Their united action is much needed in order to secure the best results from the use of these Rules and this Code.

Illinois resolved, in October, 1910, at its State Conference of Charities, to "oppose most strenuously the practice of passing on dependents from one city to another until full and satisfactory investigation has been made to determine whether there are responsible persons at their destinations willing and able to care for them."

Indiana's township trustees passed

the following resolution at their State meeting in December, 1910:

"Resolved, That the Indiana State Trustees' Association hereby expresses its appreciation of the value of the Telegraphic Code and Agreement of the National Conference of Charities and Correction regarding the transportation of non-residents and its approval thereof; that the members of this Association be urged to coöperate in carrying out its purposes."

SPECIMEN PAGES
OF THE TELEGRAPHIC
CODE FOLLOW.

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Is there any reason why we should not return to your city applicant named —	Abate
Is there any reason why we should not return to your city, at your expense, applicant named —	Abatis
An applicant named — has applied for transportation, claiming to have lost his money	Abave
An applicant named — has applied for transportation, claiming to have lost his money through dissipation	Abax

Answers

Yes	Abbacy
No	Abbey
Can not advise you	Abeam

II. DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT

To be used in either questions or answers

A. NAMES

The name is —	Abbot
The surname is —	Abduct
We give the names of the man and woman, man first, woman second, followed by surname, as follows —	Abet
The children's names, so far as known, are —	Abhor
The children's names, beginning with the oldest, are —	Abide

B. SIZE AND SOCIAL STATE OF FAMILY

The transportation desired is for a—

—man and wife with children numbering — Abject

VIII. EMPLOYMENT PROMISED

Questions

Please inform us whether the applicant—

- is promised employment by — **Cede**
- can secure employment, which will probably be permanent, with — **Ceil**
- can secure employment, which will probably be only temporary with — **Censor**
- could secure former position with — **Centre**
- was promised employment about last — (give month immediately after code word) by — **Ceres**

Would the employment which is said to be promised probably be permanent, or only temporary, if applicant prove satisfactory? Consult — **Chaff**





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