

THE FINANCIAL TIMES, MONTREAL, AUGUST 16, 1935

Candy King's Handsome Gift

Frank O'Connor Adds to Benefactions With Half Million For Charities

The gift of \$500,000 to be used for charitable purposes is the latest of a long series of benefactions by Frank P. O'Connor who laid the foundations for a fortune on a kitchen stove in Peterborough two and a half decades ago. From that small beginning have come two chains of Candy shops both headed and controlled by Mr. O'Connor, Laura Secord Candy Shops Ltd., in Canada and Fanny Farmer Candy Shops Inc., in the United States. Both of these chains have been successful from their inception, have made Frank P. O'Connor a wealthy man.

While the O'Connor success story is not entirely unique since other have made even larger fortunes within a shorter period of time, all too few men who have attained such success have Mr. O'Connor's conception as to how wealth should be used. The recent gift of \$500,000 made by Mr. O'Connor to His Grace the Most Reverend J. C. McGuigan, Archbishop of Toronto, for distribution among numerous Catholic and Protestant Charities and welfare organization is possibly the largest donation that he has made. It is particularly useful at such a time. But, Mr. O'Connor has long been noted for his charity that has been entirely unostentatious except when the large size of the donation made it extremely difficult to avoid publicity.

Born in Deseronto, Ont. In 1885 Mr. O'Connor first started in the Candy business in Peterborough and opened his first store in Toronto in 1913 with a capital of \$9,000. From that one store evolved a chain that now embraces the principal cities of Ontario and also operates in Montreal. The spotless white stores of Laura Secord Candy Shops have become synonymous with purity and high quality. Upon these two cornerstones has been built a business that the Canadian candy trade admits is in a position equaled by none. Laura Secord candy must be made of the finest obtainable ingredients, according to the time-tested formulae and must be offered for sale through the company's own stores while they are absolutely fresh. Successful merchandising has depended mainly on these primary requisites and a shrewd location of stores. Profits have followed and these profits have been shared first by employees. The scale of wages paid has always been comparatively high and has always been maintained.

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As the Canadian field became fully covered, Mr. O'Connor entered the United States in 1919 with the opening of four shops in Rochester, N.Y. From that small start there grew the present chain of Fanny Farmer Candy Shops Inc. which covers the north eastern United States and the middle west. As in the case of Laura Secord, Fanny Farmer Candy Shops Inc. has been successful from the start and has emerged unscathed from a period during which there has been a high mortality in the candy business in the United States.

Able managed, these two companies no longer require Mr. O'Connor's close attention. He has been able to devote himself and his fortune to other activities. While he sits as a director of the National Trust Co. his interests lie chiefly in his family, his farm near Toronto, the Liberal Party, and the Catholic Church. One of the most generous supporters of the Liberal Government in Ontario, he is a close associate of Mitchel F. Hepburn, premier of that province. He is one of the leading laymen of the Catholic Church in Canada and to all its activities has given of his time and fortune. He has always been active in the Knights of Columbus. In October, 1934, he was tendered a testimonial banquet that was attended by high dignitaries of church and state as well as business leaders.

His latest and greatest donation of money has been made at a time when the demands upon charitable institutions are unusually large and when the scale of gifts for the support of such institutions has been materially reduced from the level that prevailed a few years ago. Still a comparatively young man, Mr. O'Connor has given when the need was greatest, rather than withhold the gift until he himself would have no further use for the money. His generosity, therefore, is all the more laudable.

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