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PROCEEDINGS OF SPECIAL MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES
of
OREGON STATE DEFENSE COUNCIL
COMMITTEES ON RECREATION, CHILD CARE, AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Services

Room 422
Oregon Building
September 20, 1943

Quicker

Persons Attending: Mrs. Saidie Dunbar, Director, Child Care, Health and Welfare Program; Mr. Clyde Getz, Child Welfare Director, State Public Welfare Commission; Mr. James D. Olson, Administrative Assistant, Oregon State Defense Council; Mr. Roger Folgate, Field Recreation Representative, FSA; Miss Loa Howard, Administrator, State Public Welfare Commission; Mr. H. C. Seymour, Director, Youth Participation Program; Miss Elizabeth Goddard, Executive Secretary, Multnomah County Committee on Day Care for Children; Mr. Walter W. R. May, Director, Recreation Program; Mrs. E. W. St. Pierre, Director, Civilian War Services; Miss Dorothy Potter, Field Representative, Civilian War Services; Mr. Dewey J. Crowley, Chief Juvenile Delinquency Bureau, Vancouver, Washington, Police Department.

Mrs. E. W. St. Pierre, at whose instigation the meeting was called, presided and began by outlining the purpose of the meeting as an attempt to coordinate the activities of the above committees in meeting the increasing problem of juvenile delinquency. She felt that the winter months approaching meant the greater necessity for planned action, since recreation difficulties would grow with bad weather. Organized vice must be combatted, especially for the benefit of the youth of the state.

Mr. Crowley, who is in charge of the Juvenile Delinquency Bureau of the Vancouver Police Department, and had been invited to outline his Bureau's activities to the group, stated that the new housing districts in his area have definitely increased delinquency. Inadequate schools contribute to the situation, since full-time sessions are not possible and children are left unsupervised for greater lengths of time.

A summertime recreation program in the parks of Vancouver brought excellent results. Statistics of actual cases proved a very definite decrease in delinquency after this recreation program began and already indicate--three weeks after its closing--a beginning trend upward again.

Mr. Crowley also recognized the problem of winter months recreation for youth, and cited the difficulty of competing with professional facilities with inadequate funds, equipment, and buildings. Proper supervision is a main point, he said, in any youth recreation program. He feels that school principals should always be included in local committees combatting delinquency, since they are familiar with individual cases and the complete picture likewise.

Governor Langlie of Washington is greatly interested in the juvenile delinquency question in his state and after completion of a survey by F. B. I. men, who are checking effects of curfew laws in certain communities, he will publish a pamphlet of results and suggestions.

Mr. Folgate mentioned that Mr. Crowley's duties did not cover the handling of any sex cases, which are turned over to the Probation Department.

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Discussion between Mr. Crowley and Mr. Folgate revealed that assistance from Lanham Act funds had helped materially in Vancouver's recreation program, but the consensus of opinion of all present was that a community's own effort and financial contribution to supplement these funds is highly desirable.

Mrs. Dunbar expressed the thought that Mr. Charles Taft, a recent visitor and executive of the Office of Community War Services, was correct in feeling that juvenile delinquency should be met by efforts of no one committee, but by a united program such as this meeting contemplated.

Mr. Seymour agreed with this statement and gave as his belief that delinquency stops when recreation begins and that any program instituted should attempt to cover unorganized youth as well as the united groups touched under his state committee's program.

On the matter of present diversified age groups, brought up by Mrs. St. Pierre, Mr. Crowley was positive in his statement that the Kaiser Holland House dormitory houses a large number of under-age boys.

Mr. May submitted that our rapid increase in population had produced some serious recreation aspects that could only be combatted by wide publicity and wholehearted cooperation of parents. He suggested a concrete campaign to "break loose with the news of delinquency," perhaps thus arousing parenthood to its responsibility. If the city, county, and state--judges, mayors, and committees--could be aroused to the true situations, perhaps they would become aware of what could be done. An educational program--with an emphasis on the city and county courts--would be really worthwhile, in the opinion of Mr. May.

Mr. Folgate told of teen-age recreation centers, manned by young people, which are beginning to appear and operate successfully around the country. These should be kept on a membership basis, however, with small dues involved, as otherwise youngsters will tend to consider them askance.

The feeling that parents should be held responsible in delinquency cases was generally endorsed by those present. Discussion revolved around enforcement of curfew laws with this angle and their legal aspects.

Mr. May again expressed the opinion that if a community could be shocked into realizing, by good publicity, that the situation was not just alarmists' talk, parents' action would result. To this end, he wondered if some means of gathering statistics to prove facts was available.

Miss Goddard felt that in Multnomah County, as elsewhere no doubt, juvenile court authorities would be uncooperative in giving statistics. She expressed the opinion that personnel was inadequate and this was seconded generally, with the additional thought by Mr. May that more tax money should be supplied for better salaries for such personnel. Mrs. Dunbar likewise wished that antipathy to employment of non-residents could be broken down.

Mr. Getz felt that there was the possibility of too much publicity on delinquency making a "forbidden fruit" appeal to youngsters. He also felt recognition should be given to parents' difficulties, resulting from strange working hours and lack of consequent normal family life.

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Mr. Crowley told of his success in breaking up youthful "gangs" in Vancouver some years past, largely decreasing cases by making the public aware of their prevalence.

Mr. May was requested to offer a resolution on the desirability of joint action by the three state committees represented in adopting a program for publicity and education of parents. He agreed to formulate this and forward it by mail and unanimous approval of this measure was given by those present, without a formal vote, however.

Messrs. May, Getz, and Folgate expressed the desirability of including participating youth membership in any committees formed.

In discussion of giving the youngsters themselves a voice, Mr. Crowley cited the sometimes unhappy results of receiving their opinions and wishes for certain recreation facilities which a community is unable to supply due to war conditions and priorities. Housing centers, under federal assistance, are fortunate on this aspect.

Mr. Seymour's Youth Participation Committee has recently set up a sub-committee on teen-age problems, whose membership, it was suggested, might be expanded to take in representatives of other two state committees and thus act as a coordinating group. No definite action was taken on this thought, however, and the question of chairmanship and membership of such a group was left unsettled, although it was agreed coordinated activity should be attempted in the future.

The State Director of Civilian War Services stated that she would appoint a chairman for such a joint committee on which the Directors of the three state programs involved would serve and for which they could suggest additional members.

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