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INTRODUCTION

The Youth Services Division of the Edmonton Welfare Council was established in 1956 for the purpose of co-ordinating services for youth throughout the City. Although it has over the years been concerned with many problems relating to youth, it has shown a continuing concern for juvenile delinquency. In this connection, it has carried on studies on a variety of subjects, including early detection of delinquency traits, use of probation, auxiliary services available to the Juvenile Court, correctional institutions, and need for research.

The present Committee on Juvenile Corrections was set up by the Youth Services Division in September 1965. Its members consisted of fourteen persons representing a wide range of specialties relating to delinquency. The present brief is the outcome of fourteen months of study by this committee.

The brief is divided into the following areas of delinquency: prevention of delinquency, Juvenile Court and its attendant services, and correctional institutions for juveniles.

PREVENTION OF DELINQUENCY

Prevention in its broadest sense must include improvement of the social conditions which give rise to delinquency and increased services for potential delinquents.

Primary prevention involves the improvement of the social climate for children in the home and the community. This is the most important area of prevention, indeed, the most crucial factor in all aspects of the juvenile delinquency problem. Owing to the nature of the present Commission, however, the following recommendations are concerned with the area of secondary prevention.

Secondary prevention involves detection at an early age by home, school and police; the diagnosis and treatment by community resources, court services, and correctional institutions.

For the most part, social agencies concentrate on secondary prevention, but the need for primary prevention is becoming increasingly evident and will assume even greater importance as programmes develop under "The Preventive Social Services Act". Prevention of juvenile delinquency includes any effort to improve the functioning of the individual, the family or the community. It can be as specific as providing day-care facilities for working mothers or as broad as urban renewal or "war on poverty".

RECOMMENDATION 1 A school-readiness programme for culturally deprived children should be undertaken by the Department of Education or, in the case of Indian and Metis children, by the appropriate government department.

Because school drop-outs are unusually prone to delinquency, it is important to examine ways in which the school problems leading to truancy and dropping-out can be alleviated. One very important approach

is to increase the child's sense of self and of the outside world before he competes with other children. While most children acquire this sense from their home environment, the culturally-deprived child seldom does. If school difficulties and subsequent tendencies toward delinquency are to be prevented, these children must be helped before they enter school. A school-readiness programme is needed. This recommendation should not be confused with the efforts being made to establish a kindergarten programme for all children.

The Welfare Council suggests that attention be given to the work of the Readiness Centre being operated at Edmonton's Norwood United Church as well as the Head Start Programmes in the United States. The programme and results of the Readiness Centre's pilot project could be examined by the Department of Education with a view to expediting the establishment of school-readiness programmes in connection with city school boards, for culturally-deprived children throughout the Province.

The need for a school-readiness programme among the Indian and Metis population of Alberta is clearly apparent. While the objectives will be similar to those mentioned above, the "curriculum" will differ. It must be adapted to the problems and value structure existing in a particular environment.

RECOMMENDATION 2 The Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta should provide courses on child adjustment for all potential teachers. The Department of Education through the city school boards should provide in-service training programmes on child adjustment for all teachers.

Children who demonstrate pre-delinquent tendencies are not only problems in themselves but often exercise a detrimental influence on the rest of the class. Special training can increase the teacher's

ability to recognize (he needs to distinguish between reaction behaviour and behaviour reflecting fundamental anti-social drives), adeptness in handling (he needs to offer the pre-delinquent alternative channels of expression and "new" values to consider), use of referral (he needs to know where to refer a child and how to maximize the benefit of this outside contact).

While the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta offers many excellent courses, the area of child adjustment is given inadequate attention. The three courses listed in the University of Alberta catalogue which deal with this area are not being offered.

In-service training programmes will be valuable for the teachers who have taken courses in child adjustment as well as for the teachers who have not. The classroom situation in its reality presents problems which no university lecture can adequately describe. And the existence of a class which needs to be taught and to be helped creates a motivation to learn that no university course can.

The attention of the Department of Education and school boards is directed to the in-service training being done in Toronto and Ottawa.

RECOMMENDATION 3 The guidance and special education divisions of school systems should be expanded to provide more counselling and remedial services to children with problems in the elementary schools.

The child in elementary school may not yet be a delinquent, however, tendencies toward delinquency can be identified and treated. The prognosis for changing the behaviour and thinking patterns of an eight year-old is far more positive than the prognosis for an eighteen year-old, or even a fourteen year-old. Thus, the importance of special

personnel in the elementary schools must be stressed. While counselling personnel are most directly involved in the prevention and treatment of delinquency, the role of remedial teachers in prevention must not be overlooked. The alleviation of school frustrations has a positive effect on the lessening of personal frustrations.

RECOMMENDATION 4 An expansion of Provincial Guidance Clinics to allow adequate diagnosis and treatment of socially-maladjusted children should be undertaken by the Department of Health.

Treatment facilities for the socially-maladjusted are so limited that only the most acute cases receive help. And this help is crisis-oriented. If delinquency is to be prevented, these cases and many more must be diagnosed and treated at an early stage in their development.

The new facilities should be attached to the Provincial Guidance Clinic in order that administrative costs and duties as well as testing facilities not be duplicated. Communication with and referral to other specialists would be facilitated. The Welfare Council is concerned, however, that the facilities being recommended be specifically directed to the socially-maladjusted child.

RECOMMENDATION 5 The Minister of Youth should give priority to the establishment through existing agencies of a recreational programme directed to the needs of delinquency-prone youth.

The multitudinous recreational programmes provided for Alberta's youth are directed at the average girl and boy. While these programmes are of value, they have little or no influence on the delinquency-prone juvenile. Yet, if these young people are to develop alternative patterns in behaviour, they need imaginative programmes to help them and to guide them.

A suggested programme, unlike other recreational programmes, would have a detached worker who goes out into the community to find delinquency-prone youth and to determine what forms of activities are wanted and needed. Since the people involved, and not the activities, must be the focal point of the programme the competency of the worker is extremely important.

The Juvenile Court and/or probation officers could, when desirable, use such recreational activities as part of the probation programme.

While many projects in Canada and the United States can be found to offer insights into this type of programming, further research should be considered an integral part of the project.

JUVENILE COURT AND ITS ATTENDANT SERVICES

Juvenile delinquency is usually a manifestation of social maladjustment and/or emotional disturbance. In some instances, the act of delinquency is an isolated incident and, thus, of little significance diagnostically. In other cases, delinquent behaviour can be symptomatic of a serious pathology. Between these extremes are the juveniles who in response to unfulfilled needs have developed anti-social forms of behaviour. Services directed toward juvenile delinquents, including the programmes connected to Juvenile Court, should constitute themselves as services for socially-maladjusted children. They should be basically therapeutic in character.

RECOMMENDATION 6 More use should be made of psychological and psychiatric services in the preparation of pre-hearing assessments.

It is recognized that an accurate diagnosis is essential for Juvenile Court to arrive at the decision which will most benefit a child. Psychological and, in some cases, psychiatric services are integral parts of such a diagnosis. Yet, because psychological and psychiatric testing must be done by outside agencies, it is seldom included in the pre-sentence reports prepared in Alberta.

The Welfare Council recommends that the professional staff positions required for the above-mentioned services be created in municipal social service departments. Owing to the many services provided by the social service departments, contact may already have been established with the juvenile's family. Placement of psychiatric and psychological services under the same administration would encourage a sharing of information regarding an individual and would place the services within a positive atmosphere (as opposed to the negative atmosphere often attributed by juveniles to the Court).

For children living in rural areas, the same specialists could be used with the Province covering cost.

RECOMMENDATION 7 City and provincial probation departments should have highly competent staffs of sufficient number.

If therapeutic benefits are to be gained from the probation period, there must be an effective relationship between the juvenile delinquent and his probation officer. The most important factor in establishing this relationship is the competence of the probation officer. While professional training and personal ability to communicate are of paramount importance, competence is also affected by "working conditions". A high permanency among staff workers increases the morale and communication between staff, the effective use of municipal services, and the continuance of services for the delinquent. The size of a worker's case-load, in most instances, directly influences the quality of service.

For Alberta to secure and keep the services of effective probation officers, salaries must be raised. As the number of youths placed on probation increases, the number of case workers must also increase.

RECOMMENDATION 8 Group homes for four or five children living under the supervision of competent house parents should be established.

A detrimental home environment has been recognized as one of the most frequent contributing causes of delinquency. For a child to continue living in such a home during the probation period tends to negate the positive efforts being made by the probation staff. Foster homes for delinquency-prone youths are, however, very difficult to find. Group homes could provide the Court with a very important resource in the many cases where removal from the home is desirable. Group homes could also offer a valuable alternative for placement of juveniles committed to the "care and custody" of the Superintendent of the Juvenile Offenders Branch.

When establishing group homes, prime emphasis must be given to the choice of house parents. These adults, preferably a married couple, must be interested in and able to communicate with young people. A salary high enough to attract competent people will need to be offered. To increase their competence, house parents should participate in a course provided by appropriate governmental and private agencies. Close contact with the children's social workers and/or probation officers should also be considered mandatory.

The Department of Public Welfare has considerable experience in alternative home placement and is presently acquiring experience in the development and use of group homes. The Welfare Council feels,

therefore, that group homes established for juvenile delinquents should be directed by this department.

RECOMMENDATION 9 A statistical system should be instituted in the Juvenile Court.

Periodic review and evaluation are essential aspects of all programmes including those employed by the Juvenile Court. For these to be accurate, comprehensive statistics must be kept.

Among others the statistics should include: nature of offense, number of appearances in court, former dispositions, family background, neighborhood in which living, present living conditions, school attainment, outside activities, interests, and behaviour symptoms. Added to these would be present disposition and recurrence if any. The framework of the statistical accounting must be conducive to research.

These statistics would indicate to the Court the client, the problem, and the effectiveness of the programme. The value of an established statistical system to researchers and, thus, to the Court itself would be considerable.

CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR JUVENILES

Should it be necessary to remove a delinquent child from his home, a variety of resources must be available. The new environment must be designed to meet the juveniles' emotional needs, in order that he develop into a productive, happy, and socially-adjusted person in the community. Thus, no institution or special home should be regarded as merely custodial. It should have educational, recreational, vocational and other therapeutic facilities.

RECOMMENDATION 10 Responsibility for juveniles adjudged delinquents and all juvenile correctional institutions should be transferred to the Department of Public Welfare.

A delinquent child is one who suffers from social and/or psychiatric disorders. These disorders are spawned and nurtured by environmental neglect -- the immediate family or the wider public. The juvenile delinquent is to varying degrees a neglected child. As such he comes within the terms of reference of the Department of Public Welfare.

Services provided by the Attorney General's Department are of necessity directed toward adult offenders. Although it has long been recognized that a juvenile offender should not be placed in an institution for adults; Alberta continues to place the planning and programming of juvenile correctional services in a department concerned primarily with adults.

The Department of Public Welfare, in particular the Child Welfare Branch, is oriented to the needs of young people who are rejected by or are themselves rejecting society. This orientation within an administration would give considerable impetus to the implementation of the above-stated philosophy within juvenile correctional institutions.

A child committed to the care of the Department of Public Welfare could be placed in one of a variety of institutions rather than only in a correctional institution. Placement for severely mentally retarded delinquents and emotionally-disturbed delinquents should be determined by the particular needs of these children rather than by the delinquent act. Juveniles committed from rural areas of Alberta where probation services are inadequate, are often not in need of maximum security. The Department of Public Welfare could provide alternative placement for these young people.

In many cases the juvenile and/or his family have received some

service from the Department of Public Welfare prior to appearance in Court. If the responsibility for juveniles adjudged delinquent were transferred to the Department of Public Welfare, the sharing of information regarding the juvenile could be facilitated and the duplication of records and services could be eliminated. The juvenile would also benefit from the continuance of services -- from treatment, to pre-release, to after-care -- if all were conducted by the Department of Public Welfare.

The Welfare Council considers the use of municipal services very valuable in cases not requiring committal. Continued use of these services by the Court is consistent with the present recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 11 Juvenile delinquents diagnosed as emotionally-disturbed should be accepted at diagnostic and treatment centres operated by the Department of Public Welfare.

The confinement of a severely disturbed child with other children can be harmful to the group as well as to the disturbed individual. The problems become magnified in the case of juvenile delinquents. An emotionally-disturbed juvenile delinquent is first of all a disturbed child and then, often as a result, a delinquent. Thus, it is the emotionally-disturbed characteristic which should determine placement. The diagnostic and treatment centres being constructed in Edmonton and proposed in Calgary by the Department of Public Welfare would offer the indicated placement.

The transfer of responsibility for juvenile delinquents to the Department of Public Welfare (in accordance with Recommendation 10) would assure acceptance at these centres.

RECOMMENDATION 12 The staffs of the juvenile correctional institutions should include the personnel necessary for carrying out the above-stated philosophy.

The importance of social and psychiatric treatment in the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents is widely accepted. Such acceptance, however, is of little value if the institution does not orient itself to the use of social and psychiatric treatment and restricts the involvement of professionally-trained people in institutional programming. Both these situations are apparent in Alberta's juvenile correctional institutions. Both must be changed if the residents of these institutions are not to be repeaters.

The staff of a juvenile correctional institution can be considered in three divisions: administration, "team", and other personnel. The administrative staff should have training and experience with respect to treatment-oriented programmes based on team-work. The "team" staff should include (1) social worker(s), (2) psychologist(s), (3) medical advisor, (4) recreational director and (5) educational director. The training and experience required by the "team" is implied in the professional titles listed above. The prime consideration in hiring the other staff personnel should be the individual's ability to communicate with young people. These people should be involved in an extensive in-service training programme directed by the team. An extenuation of this programme could be achieved by having each member of the staff under the direction of a particular member of the "team". Salaries must be increased if the staff listed above is to be obtained.

A fourth dimension of an institution's staff should include outside specialists in a variety of areas. These specialists might be involved on a part-time or a consultative basis.

RECOMMENDATION 13 The formal and informal programmes presently operating at Alberta Institute for Girls and at Bowden should be reviewed.

For a curriculum --academics or home skills-- to be meaningful, it must correlate with the child's real world. For most of the youths in the correctional institutions wise economic habits and the ability to use second-hand appliances are far more relevant than the radius of a circle or the use of attachments on the most modern and expensive sewing machine. Many of the institutions' present programmes fail to take into account the social and economic conditions under which these girls and boys will be living when they are released.

There is an imperative need in the institutions for sex education and an extensive course on marriage and the family. The latter should be considered an essential part of any effective programme of prevention. Tendencies toward delinquency are not inherited but they are passed on through a family.

A pre-release programme should also be established. Outside agencies would be of considerable value in the development of this programme. Individuals and groups not associated with the institutions but having specialized knowledge regarding delinquency and corrections should be invited to participate in programme evaluation and planning.

RECOMMENDATION 14 The juvenile section at Bowden should be replaced.

The present facilities at Bowden are both quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate.

Before plans are drawn up for a new institution, the philosophy stated above should be considered in detail. The architectural design of the institution must be consistent with the detailed over-all programme.

Individuals having the qualifications required for an institutional "team", (social workers, psychologists, medical advisor, recreational director, educational director), as well as other people experienced in institutional planning, should be consulted.

RECOMMENDATION 15 After-care facilities, including a pre-release programme, should be reviewed, revamped, and expanded.

Rehabilitation is not complete until the child has re-entered his "home" environment and has developed the capability to handle the pressures and problems of this environment. The entire institutional programme should be directed to this end, but particular responsibility rests with the pre-release programme. Alberta's juvenile correctional institutions do not offer this essential programme.

Following release these delinquency-prone youth need considerable guidance. Alberta's juvenile delinquents receive very little help at this crucial time. Increased staff in the city and provincial probation services and increased communication between the workers and the institutions are necessary. In connection with Recommendation 10, both pre-release and after-care services should be provided in the future by the Department of Public Welfare and appropriate private agencies.

RECOMMENDATION 16 The Government should establish an active working relationship with citizen groups reviewing the problems of juvenile delinquency.

The problem of juvenile delinquency must be faced by the home, the community and the government. Although this brief concentrates on the role of the government, the home and the community must also make reappraisals of their roles. Such reappraisals and subsequent planning should stress the importance of a working relationship between all concerned individuals, private and public agencies, and governmental bodies.

As community agencies develop and extend their programmes for pre-delinquent and delinquent youth, they become concerned with the activities of the home and of the Government. This concern often expresses itself in the form of a careful appraisal of the Government's facilities with regard to Court services or juvenile correctional institutions. If the Government would work closely with the agencies studying the services provided for juvenile delinquents, much could be learned by the agency and by the Government. The Government could, in this manner, make use of the ideas and recommendations of citizens trained in areas pertaining to juvenile delinquency.

As planning agency, the Edmonton Welfare Council and its Youth Services Division would be pleased to offer their services to the community and the Government, should the need arise.