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INFORMATION CONCERNING THE YOUTH SERVICES DIVISION OF THE
EDMONTON COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY SERVICES.

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ORIGIN OF THE DIVISION: In 1955, partly because of the formation of a Mayor's advisory committee on Youth in Vancouver and partly because of a concern about delinquency in Edmonton, Mayor Hawrelak called a meeting of approximately 50 persons representing a variety of youth-serving organizations in Edmonton. As a result of the meeting a steering committee was appointed that was asked to look into the possibility of appointing a Mayor's Advisory Committee on Youth. The steering committee held a number of meetings and recommended: 1) that there was a definite need for coordination among the youth services in Edmonton; 2) that the support of both public and private organizations could perhaps best be obtained if the coordinating body was in the private agency field; 3) that the coordinating body be known as the Youth Services Division and that it be a division of the Edmonton Council of Community Services; 4) that at least in the beginning of the operation of the division, the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Council of Community Services share the cost of the Division. These recommendations were accepted at another meeting of representatives of youth-serving organizations.

FINANCING: The City of Edmonton pays up to 80% of the cost of the operation of the Division, but will not assume responsibility for more than \$8,000 per year. At the present time the City is paying \$8,000 per year.

HOW THE DIVISION IS ORGANIZED: The following quotation from the constitution of the Division gives a fairly accurate general description of the function and purpose of the Division:

"The Division is operative in the youth field as a consultative, educational, referral, coordinating, research, enabling and planning body. As such it is concerned with the progressive development of youth services and with the developing of an environment in Edmonton conducive to the best interests of young people. For purposes of the work of the Youth Services Division, a youth shall be considered to be any person up to 21 years of age."

It will readily be appreciated that the Division has set for itself a very broad frame of reference, covering as it does all matters pertaining to the welfare of young people. This was done however, with three thoughts in mind:

1. The usual procedure in Councils of dividing a child into categories each represented by a division (child welfare, recreation, etc.) was questioned. It was felt this denied the interrelatedness and interdependence of youth services and was contrary to the conception of the whole child.

2. It was considered to be in the interests of efficiency and coordination to have one staff person responsible for an entire area of concern, in this case the child. It was recognized that other Council staff members would be working with individual committees, but communication from services would initially be established through the Youth Services Division.

3. By having a separate executive committee concerned with young people it would be possible to develop a specialist body that could concern itself solely with questions pertaining to the welfare of children.

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WORK OF THE DIVISION: In view of the breadth of conception of the Division, it is interesting to note the varied questions that have occupied the Division's attention. During the recent past, the Division has:

- ... Convened regular meetings of the Delinquency Study Group, the Executive Workshop (recreation executives), and the staffs of child care institutions for the purpose of defining common problems and increasing communication and cooperation.
- ... Endorsed the recommendation that support be given to the establishment of a Boys' Club with a limited girls' work program in a depressed area of Edmonton. Preliminary steps toward the establishment of such a Boys' Club are presently being undertaken by Boys' Club officials.
- ... Undertaken in cooperation with the North East Edmonton Community Council a study of the needs of and services for the young people of North East Edmonton.
- ... Completed a study of the true nature and function of a Juvenile and Family Court. The Division is presently following up on the 18 recommendations that were made in the study.
- ... Organized and provided staff leadership for the Edmonton City-wide Teen Council which in the three years of its existence has sponsored annual Edmonton Youth Conferences, 3 television programs on youth, and two youth project days. In addition, the Teen Council has obtained youth representation on the Allied Arts Council and is presently exploring the possibility of being represented on the Alcoholism Foundation and a government committee on objectionable publications. The City-wide Teen Council is seen as the Youth section of the Youth Services Division.
- ... Completed a fact-finding study on the adequacy of protection services and as a result expressed its concern to the City Council concerning the mixing of neglected and delinquent children and the division of responsibility for temporary and permanent wards. One result has been that a children's emergency shelter is planned and that temporary wards have been made an administrative responsibility of the City Welfare Department.
- ... Recommended that a study be undertaken to determine the values, ideals, and ethical beliefs of Canadian young people. This resulted from the Division's concern about cultural influences on young people. A pilot study in this area is being combined with the North East Edmonton Study.

Presently, the Division is concerned about: the adequacy of services for the older adolescent; the conflict between the Federation of Community Leagues and the City Recreation Department; School Drop-outs; and plans for a new institution for boys to be known as the Oakhill Boys' Ranch.

IN CONCLUSION: Although the Youth Services Division has an identity of its own, it should be remembered that it is a division of the Edmonton Council of Community Services. As such, it has the same functions in the community as does the Edmonton Council of Community Services with the exception that the Youth Services Division concentrates its attention upon young people.

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