

1941

1941

Second Annual Report

Council of Social Agencies

Edmonton, Alberta

Canada

MEMORANDUM

TO : [Illegible]

FROM : [Illegible]

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

1. [Illegible]

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Very truly yours,

[Illegible Signature]

Sixty-eight social service organizations comprised the Edmonton Council of Social Agencies in 1941. They formed twenty-six committees and as a Council they were responsible for two hundred and fifty meetings.

The field of activities was almost unbounded. Members did everything from worrying over children's playthings to founding a Family Welfare Bureau, from counting Christmas hampers to inaugurating a Community Chest. They became academic and studied the technique of social case work. They became domestic and did things about food. Like Shelley the Council of 1941 found "life like a dome of many-coloured glass".

But this is an Annual Report and would not be legal tender without details. So in detail here are five purposes of Council activity in 1941:-

1. To Prevent Duplication of Effort.

(a) The Community Chest.

Duplication of effort in the financing of social services has wasted a startling amount of time, money, and good temper. Our Community Chest Committee of 1941 took the initial steps toward central financing of Edmonton's social services. They met on seven occasions and did plenty of spadework between the meetings. As a result Edmonton's Community Chest became a reality in the course of three general meetings called by this Council. A constitution was adopted in April. In October the Chest conducted its first and successful campaign on behalf of twenty-eight organizations. Thus the oldest child of the Council began its career and has, we fondly hope, a long and useful life before it.

(b) Policy Planning

Duplication of effort may be found where an organization is doing work that is being covered by other agencies. In consultation with the Council three member organizations did some clear and unselfish thinking about this type of duplication. These organizations were the Journal Sunshine Society, the Better Health Camp Council and the Catholic Welfare Bureau. The two former discontinued their work because changing times had reduced the needs in the fields they served while remaining needs were being met by other agencies. The Catholic Welfare Bureau amalgamated with the new Family Welfare Bureau. It is far from easy for any organization to lay aside its identity and give up a service that has been helpful to the needy and challenging to members. The leaders of these three organizations deserve the respect of Edmonton citizens for the generous service they gave for years and for their unselfish loyalty to the larger community good. In participating in such developments, it is the Council's responsibility to see in perspective all the social needs of our widespread community and to try to estimate where services should be expanded or where they might be curtailed. On fifteen occasions in 1941, Council representatives were called into consultation by member agencies anxious to discuss their present and future policies in the light of everchanging community needs.

(c) Exchange of Information

In the day-to-day work of giving relief and service to people in trouble, duplication of effort is temptingly easy. However the prevention is easy too. The Council maintains the Social Service Exchange where the names of people who have been helped by any agency are registered in a central file. All requests for aid or service are "cleared" so that confidential reports may be exchanged by agencies mutually concerned about any one family. This saves people from unnecessary

"investigation" and it saves staff members' time and agency funds. From the opening of the Exchange to the end of 1941, the names of 9,786 persons were "cleared" by thirty-two organizations. Of these names, 2,154 were "cleared" during 1941 with fifteen percent of them known to more than one organization.

The Council's stand on duplication of effort is thus clearly defined. All members have agreed to prevent duplication. To some, duplication means waste of money; to others time is money; to many, waste means reduced war effort. But all agree on one point: the people served by our agencies should have the most skilful service we can give. No man will long continue the struggle for self-respect if he is constantly tempted by overlapping alms, constantly distracted by contradictory advice, constantly humiliated by either harsh or sentimental ineptitude. The Council's position regarding duplication of effort follows essentially from a desire for a good quality of social work.

11. To Protect Family Life

(a) The Family Welfare Bureau.

The survey of Social Services in Edmonton in 1929 pointed to the need for a family welfare agency. Miss Holland's Report to the Interim Committee in 1939 urged the same need at some length. Therefore when this Council opened its office in 1940 the new Constitution created a branch of Council activity to be called the Family Welfare Bureau designed to carry a direct service to meet family problems. A year ago our Annual Report added its weight to the mounting appeals and admonitions of twelve years, stating that the whole question was "one that will require an answer during 1941".

Before the answer came the Council office was all but swamped with the growing demands for service to families. One hundred and twenty-three families were under the Bureau's care as compared with eighty-three in the preceding year. There were 477 interviews with these families as against 272 interviews in 1940.

While the office wrestled with applications for service the Board of the Bureau planned steadily for a form of organization that would do justice to the mounting volume of work. In their nine meetings in 1941 they drafted a blueprint of an autonomous family welfare society and proceeded to build.

At this point they were joined by the Catholic Welfare Bureau which had been serving this city through seven years of depression and war. The Family Welfare Bureau which was ready to open its doors at the end of the year was therefore an amalgamation of two services. It was born of the conviction that the family is still our most important institution and that the service given to family life should be strong and lasting. In form it demonstrated how two groups can unite in one common purpose even as families themselves can be drawn together by mutual responsibilities.

The new organization thus became the second offspring of the Council. Many Edmontonians have wished and worked for the Edmonton Community Chest and the Edmonton Family Welfare Bureau. ~~Wherever they are in these days of confusion and separation,~~ the Council hopes they will find satisfaction in the realization of two of their objectives. Certainly there never was a year in which sound community organization was more sorely needed than in 1942.

(b) The Family Welfare Division.

Although the Family Welfare Bureau has now set up its own establishment, the Family Welfare Division will continue as an important part of the permanent Council. The Division co-ordinates the work of seventeen organizations. These groups have

various functions. They may give public aid; they may do case work; they may provide a highly specialized service as does the Institute for the Blind, or they may have a general interest in family welfare as has the Local Council of Women and the Jewish Council of Women.

The Division met six times during the year and its four sub-committees held nine meetings.

A joint meeting with the Health Division heard Dr. George Hunter report on the Dietary Survey conducted in Edmonton in 1939 under the auspices of the Canadian Council on Nutrition. The scholarly topic gave no warning of the intense interest created in the two Divisions. One of many results was that this Division started a study group on nutrition. The group consisted of workers who visit the homes of people in need. They took the short course conducted by Mrs. Ross Vant in order to better advise the families under their care on the important subject of food.

Another group began a study of case recording which is to be continued.

After many discussions on the welfare of the dependents of enlisted men a special Committee prepared certain recommendations for forwarding to the Department of National Defence. Late in the year, dependents' allowances were re-adjusted while a system of supplementary grants was instituted more recently. Thus many of the Division's hopes in this area have been fulfilled.

For the second time the Christmas Committee took responsibility for the co-ordination of Christmas cheer to families on marginal incomes. Suggestions regarding Christmas giving and the contents of Christmas hampers again were issued to interested organizations. Seven hundred and fifty-four Edmonton families received gifts from our organizations.

111. To Preserve and Improve Health

The Health Division had a year of growing. It made rapid progress with its two original projects in nutrition and in prenatal care. It attacked the stubborn problem of housing. It broke new ground in the field of medical social work.

(a) Nutrition

The Nutrition Committee greatly extended its program of the previous year.

A chart called "Food for Health" was prepared by Dr. L. B. Pett then a member of the Committee, now Director of Nutrition Services for Canada. It was designed for everyday kitchen use so that Edmonton housewives might correct the deficiencies in family diets as revealed in the Dietary Survey of 1939. Ten thousand copies of the Chart were published by the Council and have been distributed widely in Edmonton. Enquiries regarding the Chart have come from East and West and only through diplomacy have we conserved our own supply.

In the Council office the Committee is collecting a reference library of recent publications on Nutrition and material for class demonstrations to be used by health agencies.

The Committee has worked in closest co-operation with the Local Council of Women which through its Public Health Committee took a vital part in spreading knowledge of nutrition. The Edmonton Home Economics Association also made a valuable contribution by providing class leadership. These three groups working together voluntarily organized and conducted forty nutrition classes during the year.

(b) Prenatal Care.

The Prenatal Class steadily increased its membership throughout the year. Fifty classes were held with an enrolment of thirty-six young women who were the patients of seventeen different doctors. There was a total attendance of 227. The growing interest and steady increase in numbers fully justify the opinion of the public health nurses that this service was greatly needed in Edmonton.

Responsibility for organization and health teaching was carried by the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Civic Board of Health until July when changes in the Board of Health schedule made it necessary for their nurse to withdraw. The V. O. N. subsequently carried on alone. The Y. W. C. A. continued to provide a clubroom while the Chastelaine Club acted as hostesses throughout the year.

(c) Housing.

It is generally believed that there is a housing shortage in Edmonton. Furthermore there are few who would dispute the fact that housing is related to public health. Hence the Housing Committee was formed. Wisely enough the Committee decided that responsible social action must be based upon precise data regarding the problem at hand. It requested the City Council to include in the Annual Census a short questionnaire prepared by the Committee. The answers would have revealed the amount of overcrowding in Edmonton. Unfortunately this request was not granted. However the Division decided that the Housing Committee should continue its efforts into another year.

(d) Medical Social Work

Medical social work comes to the fore quite naturally in this city with its unusually good hospital facilities. It is a valuable part of every hospital program since patients with social problems are found in every hospital. The medical social worker under the direction of the attending physician and in collaboration with other hospital personell gives individual attention to each patient who has some social problem connected with his illness and its treatment. Thus a patient may be worried over the care of her children at home or about expenses or the doctor may believe that social factors in a patient's life are discounting the treatment he is giving. Such personal problems are in the field of the medical social worker whose special training and experience are in that interesting borderland between health and social welfare. This is a pioneer field for Edmonton. The Division devoted two general meetings to the subject. In July Miss Elizabeth P. Grundy, Instructor in Medical Social Work at the Montreal School of Social Work, visited our hospitals and subsequently spoke to the Division. A standing committee on Medical Social Work will carry on in 1942.

IV. To Stand on Guard for Children.

In the Child Welfare Division twelve organizations have had an increasing sense of unity during 1941. Different types of service and different religious backgrounds have not raised barriers during the nine general meetings and twelve sub-committee meetings but rather enriched discussion.

The Advisory Committee on Delinquency met on seven occasions. Its eight members maintained informal personal contacts with fifteen boys and girls whom the Juvenile Court had placed on probation to the Chairman of this Division.

There were four meetings of the committee interested in the relationship of home and school. Committee work concentrated on the establishment of and program building for home-school associations. During the past year and a half active pre-

grams have been developed by the Garneau Home and School Association and the Glenmount Home and School Association. Several members of this committee have taken major responsibility in this new movement in Edmonton.

Of the twelve organizations participating in this Division eight maintain institutions. It is natural that these should form a group with common problems. They did so first in 1940 by successfully starting institution libraries. Last year they outlined a program for the study and development of play and recreation within the institutions. Representatives already speak of considering the health of children and also their intake and discharge policies.

Slowly, an aerial photograph of Edmonton's child welfare system is being developed from this association of all but one of the major children's organizations. We see a city which has indeed been generous in its public and voluntary gifts to deprived children. The child protection legislation as administered by well-known provincial and municipal personnel is kindly and flexible. There are no less than six institutions for children in Edmonton. On the other hand there is an absence of certain facilities that are outstanding in other Canadian cities. There is no voluntary Children's Aid Society. There is no training school or observation centre for pre-delinquent or delinquent boys. Incidentally at the training school for defective children the length of the waiting list testifies to the tremendous strain on a valuable service.

This picture should be studied as a whole and its separate features carefully and scientifically analysed. The matter is far too important to be settled by snap judgments. Fortunately we have a Canadian heritage of devotion to the welfare of children and amassed Canadian experience in service to children. On such foundations we should build well.

V. To Guide Youth

There were four general meetings and two sub-committee meetings of the Group Work Division in which certain areas of interest emerged.

The survey of group work activity suggested in the last Annual Report was tried as an experiment in one school. The Division would here record its gratitude to the Superintendent of Schools and to the principal and teachers of King Edward School for making possible this study. Five hundred and fifty-seven children answering a questionnaire on their group work activities indicated that 78% of them were participating in group work outside the schools. Children not already members of groups and who expressed a desire for participation were invited into membership by the organizations of their own choosing. The fact that this school area is well supplied with group work opportunities may be related to the almost negligible incidence of delinquency in the district. It is hoped that the survey method will be tried elsewhere in the city. Without a knowledge of the distribution of group work activities the Division will be unable to plan on a city-wide basis.

There was a growing desire to see the child as an individual in the group. How much emotional and social security can the group give to the child? How much recognition of his own special contribution to the group? How can the group supplement what his ~~home is giving him? How can group work complement the modern school with its~~ varied curriculum?

A mounting urgency centres around the whole question of group leadership. The impact of the war is nowhere heavier than on the youth organizations. Some of these organizations are directly serving the armed forces. Others are modifying their programs to care for the families of enlisted men. All of them feel a crushing weight of responsibility for distracted youth in wartime. Time, which for youth should be a road that stretching away infinite and golden, has become a road that

tomorrow may be blown to rubble. Through what self-discipline can a group leader remain sure-footed and clear sighted on this precarious path?

VI. To See the Community as a Whole

(a) The Executive Committee.

Every organization offers its members an interesting close-up of one particular service. A Council of Social Agencies provides a view of a city's entire field of service. Herein lay the task of the Executive Committee of our Council in its fourteen meetings including four meetings of special committees. Here the various Chairmen integrated the activities of their groups. Here there was opportunity to observe any points in community service to which reinforcements should be brought, or to note too great a concentration of effort in another place.

The Executive Committee at the very centre of the Council can never forget to appraise the quality of our community services. It must vigilantly protect good workmanship in health and social welfare and just as steadfastly encourage improvement where tasks are not yet so well done.

Above all, the Executive Committee cannot lose sight of the common goal of all social and health services. It must keep alive throughout the whole Council what Winston Churchill called an "unfailing faith that there is treasure, if you can only find it, in the heart of every man".

(b) The Publicity Committee

The Publicity Committee like the Nutrition Committee achieved recognition far beyond our city boundaries. Mr. Harold Weir's address to the Committee "Publicity in Selling Welfare" was published in "Canadian Welfare" and subsequently in pamphlet form was distributed widely across the Dominion by the Canadian Welfare Council. The Publicity Committee was set up in 1940 on request of a number of agencies. Its plan was to provide a knowledge of publicity mediums and techniques so that each agency might improve its own public relations. Fifteen agencies participated in the three general meetings which were arranged during four meetings of our publicity consultants.

(c) Knowledge is Power

It was Spring, but once a week certain earnest young ladies met to study "Social Case Work in Practice". They came from provincial, municipal and voluntary agencies in which they carried case work responsibilities. The liveliness of their discussion testified to their great interest in their work.

On the University campus of a Saturday morning throughout the winter certain other young ladies met to wrestle with social problems, their leadership provided by the Council. They were the senior students of the School of Nursing and are even now scattered over the Province with ideas on social work added to their knowledge of nursing.

Thirty-six public addresses on the work of the Council were given during the year.

The Social Service Directory was enlarged and re-issued to acquaint agencies with each others activities.

VII. To Help Achieve Victory.

The Battle of the Pacific--the Alaska Highway--these will be familiar topics in the streets of Edmonton in 1942. As a part of Edmonton's life the Council too will be

geared to war. Responsibilities for the co-ordination of local war services are already laid upon this organization. The Department of National Defence has requested certain facilities and services "for the duration" if possible. Nevertheless we enter our third year not measuring our war-time sacrifice in terms of extra work--which is the least we can give--but rather by counting our associates who are gone on national service.

Our first Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Cora T. Casselman M.P., left us for the House of Commons during the year. The Executive Committee still feels the loss of Matron Agnes S. MacLeod who is with the Canadian Army Overseas, and also of its first treasurer, Lieut. Joel K. Smith. Captain the Rev. Canon C. F. A. Clough has already left the city and Flight Lieut. the Rev. Father T. Ryan is at the local Manning Depot. From the Health Division Nursing Sister Anne Young and Nursing Sister M. Story have both gone with the Canadian Army. The Child Welfare Division has suffered severely too, losing its Chairman, Major H.E. Smith, its Vice-Chairman Captain A. L. Doucette and the valued contribution of Lieut. E. J. Kebblewhite. The original Board of the Family Welfare Bureau regretfully parted with Flight Lieut. the Rev. J. Gordon Brown during the year. About the same time the Nutrition Committee made a somewhat forced contribution of Dr. L. B. Pett as Director of the Nutrition Services of Canada which is doing such distinguished work in connection with war industries.

Our second Annual Report will go far afield to all these men and women at their war-time posts. To them we send it in the hope that they may keep in touch with our common tasks back home.

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Chairman, Family Welfare Division
Chairman, Health Division
Chairman, Hospital Division
Chairman, Family Welfare Division
Chairman, Group Work Division
Chairman, Child Welfare Division