

SUBMISSION TO THE ALBERTA ROYAL COMMISSION ON CHILD WELFARE

BY THE EDMONTON COUNCIL OF SOCIAL AGENCIES

November - 1947

. . . . .

The Edmonton Council of Social Agencies comprises more than sixty member organizations engaged in some phase of social welfare work. Its purpose is to promote cooperation, and joint action for social betterment. Its activities are primarily directed towards  
5 understanding the nature and extent of unmet social needs in this community, planning to try to have these needs satisfactorily met, to prevent duplication, and to improve the quality and distribution of services wherever possible. To achieve these objectives the closest possible cooperation between private and public welfare  
10 bodies must exist<sup>(1)</sup> and it has always been the desire of this Council that such a relationship be fostered and maintained.

Since it is the objective of all at this time that the best possible services be provided for the protection and general welfare of Alberta children, we wish to bring before the members of the  
15 Commission certain observations, suggestions, and recommendations, which if acted upon, we believe would contribute materially towards improving child welfare in the City and Province.

---

(1) For further details regarding the functions and operations of councils of social agencies, see statement I.O.D.E. Welfare Study Report - "Welfare in Alberta" - page 170.

THE COMMISSION

1. We recommend that the majority of the members of the Child Welfare Commission be persons other than civil servants; also that the functions of the Commission be largely advisory to the Minister, and through him, to the Department, in matters relating to policy and administration under the Child Welfare Act.

5           This Council registered a recommendation on the first point with the Minister - on March 14th 1947, but no action resulted - (See Appendix A - Mr. Field's letter - page 2, Par. 2, last two lines; also last paragraph).

2. We further recommend that any efforts which may have been made so far by the Child Welfare Commission be greatly intensified, towards establishing good and proper standards for observance by the Child Welfare Branch of the Department of Public Welfare, the municipal authorities and the voluntary child welfare agencies in Alberta.

15           It is believed that the Commission has not provided adequate assistance and leadership in this respect, and that instances of poor handling of child welfare needs by the municipalities must be held to be a responsibility of the Child Welfare Commission since, under the Child Welfare Act, all inspectors and child welfare workers appointed by cities, towns and municipalities are subject to the direction and supervision of the Commission. (See Sections 11 - (1) (a) and 12, (1) & (2). In some cases which will be cited, negotiations were carried on directly with municipal authorities only, but in view of the Act, the decisions reached and actions taken are held to have been the result of Commission policy or instruction.

3. We recommend that the policies of the Child Welfare Commission and of the Child Welfare Branch of the Department of Public Welfare and of the public welfare departments of the municipalities insofar as child welfare is concerned, be defined in writing, also regulations under which the policies are put into effect, and that these be available to interested citizens upon request.

30           For some years it has been extremely difficult for citizens' groups to ascertain what the Department's policies actually are. Synthesis of verbal statements, reports, and the manner in which individual cases have been handled from time to time by Department officials, have led to conclusions as to general practice, but it is recognized that these may or may not indicate official policy, also that exceptions to the apparent general practice may be expected.

CARE OF CHILDREN POTENTIALLY NEGLECTED (NON-WARDS)

3. We recommend that the Public Welfare Departments of the Province and the municipalities recognize as a matter of general policy, responsibility for having assistance provided for children in need, in order to try to prevent a state of legal neglect developing which warrants the taking of ward action, or a situation which forces parents to surrender their children to the Department in order to try to protect them from privation.

Canadian child welfare programmes elsewhere are based on the principle that a child has a right to be reared in his own home, and that everything possible must be done by the Child Welfare Departments and municipal authorities, or through semi-public Children's Aid Societies, to preserve, strengthen or restore his home for him. Temporary removal of the child from his family may be necessary due to some crisis, but guardianship is not removed wherever the parent is capable of, or can be helped to become capable of, discharging adequately the duties and responsibilities of parenthood. It is a fundamental principle that a child is never taken from the care of his parents on the grounds of poverty alone.

Aside from assistance rendered unmarried mothers wishing to take action against the putative father in order to obtain financial aid, the Alberta Department of Public Welfare as a general practice, seems to recognize no real responsibility for non-ward children, either in the provision of counselling or case work services to the parents, or in arranging for physical care of the child apart from its parents,<sup>(1)</sup> or for seeing that financial assistance is put into his home to prevent it breaking up. Unless the guardianship of the child is transferred to the Department, it appears that as a general rule, it has nothing to offer. It is believed that many municipalities may follow the lead of the Provincial Department in this respect.

(1) From time to time persons who make direct personal application for help in caring for children, are sent by the Department to certain institutions in Edmonton to make whatever private arrangements they can.

To illustrate cases where care for non-ward children was urgently needed and not forthcoming we refer to: The "J" Family (See Appendix B - Summary of Illustrative Cases - Case #1, page i).

5 This woman was refused the financial assistance needed to hold her family together, and was offered no alternative to permanent relinquishment of her five children for adoption. Had relief, even on a minimum basis, been provided over the crucial period of a few months, Family Allowances would then have been again in pay, and, taken together (relief and Family Allowances), the family might have managed fairly well. In three years' time eligibility for  
10 Mothers' Allowance might also have been established and the amount of municipal relief required to assure adequate maintenance, reduced.

. . . . .

The case of Mabel (Appendix B - Case #2, page ii, Par. 4) also illustrates the withholding of assistance involving any expenditure until a state of neglect occurs which makes ward action necessary. The Department did not  
15 wish to accept this child as a ward since it was considered to be unadoptable although under the circumstances, for the protection of the child, wardship seemed clearly indicated. On the other hand, the Department was not prepared either, to give the indigent mother any financial assistance at that time, to help her to look after the baby, since it was not a ward.

. . . . .

20 The B. Family (See Appendix B - case #3, page iii) - illustrates a situation where children were not being maintained by the parents and were in danger of becoming neglected. Neither Provincial nor Civic authorities when consulted, were disposed to enter into the situation at all, since the children were not wards, and both were willing to leave a private individual who was  
25 financially unable, and without legal responsibility, to carry on.

Under pressure, the only solution offered by the Civic<sup>(1)</sup> authorities was to foist the children off on an aged grandmother ~~was~~ who was neither able nor willing to look after them properly.

In general, therefore, any assistance which is given to parents or relatives in the care of children where guardianship is not surrendered, falls as a charge upon the limited resources of the children's institutions and other voluntarily supported social agencies. As a result the citizens of communities in which these agencies are located are unjustifiably called upon to meet expense in behalf of non-ward children who do not belong to their community and come from outside points in the Province.<sup>(2)</sup>

The only alternative to institutional placement available to parents or guardians is to board their children under private arrangement wherever they can. Frequently this will be commercialized boarding homes, which may not measure up to any minimum standards of operation. (Refer to Recommendation 21 - Pages 17-19, for further comments on standards for licensing of boarding homes for children).

4. We recommend that the Department of Public Welfare and municipal welfare authorities, as a matter of policy, regard the granting of relief as an instrument through which the maintenance and welfare of children may be assured, in their own homes; and that the amount of relief granted be in accordance with a reasonable, realistic budgetary schedule, which can be adjusted to meet the requirements of individual situations.

Despite the clear-cut responsibility placed by Alberta Provincial Statutes upon municipalities, towns and villages to provide for relief assistance to indigent<sup>(3)</sup> residents, the policy of the Edmonton Relief and

- 
- (1) "Subject to the direction and supervision of the Child Welfare Commission" Child Welfare Act - Section 12 - 1.
- (2) A study of approximately 500 children in Edmonton child care institutions, made in 1945, showed 70%-75% of all children in care as placed by parents, relatives, friends, individuals, etc. - i.e. non-wards. It is estimated that somewhat less than half of all children in care came from the City of Edmonton. In only 40% of the cases were full fees paid, and these were actually set at rates considerably below cost. (Appendix A, pgs. 13, 17, 18 of Council of Social Agencies' Study of Intake and Discharge Policies and Practices of Six Child Care Institutions in Edmonton)
- (3) An indigent person is defined in the statutes as "a person who is actually destitute of means from his own resources of obtaining food, clothing, shelter and medical attendance necessary for the immediate wants of himself and dependents."

Children's Aid Department in recent years seems to have been to refuse relief, at least on the first application, to indigents who might be considered capable of some type of employment, and to the dependents of such persons. The Superintendent of this Department claims that the funds supplied his Department for relief purposes have been restricted to meeting the needs of "cases of Edmonton residents who by reason of physical or mental infirmity are unable to work."<sup>(1)</sup> Our enquiries however, have failed to discover any such limitation placed upon the Department by City Council, and we consider that there is no legal or humane basis for maintaining the present position. We surmise that if such instructions were issued to the Department it was in the days when the Dominion and Provincial Governments were participating in the provision of unemployment relief, and the municipalities were held responsible for relief to unemployables. This situation of course, no longer obtains.

Thus, in practice, at present, deserted wives and young children - to mention but one category, despite immediacy and urgency of need, may be refused relief assistance in Edmonton on the grounds that the deserting man is employable and legally responsible for their maintenance. The J Family previously cited, illustrates what can, and in this case did, happen to the children under such circumstances.

The Municipality's reluctance to grant relief and its initial refusal to consider relief assistance to an unmarried mother in need, who had a child to care for (presumably on the grounds that the girl was not unemployable) is demonstrated in Mabel's case.

The B Family's experience - also already cited - shows relief and any other financial assistance withheld as "the parents were living" - and a disinclination to be concerned in any way in the children's welfare.

---

(1) See Appendix A - Letter from Mr. Drayton - April 22nd, 1946.

What the practice is in other Alberta communities, and in the Provincial Department of Public Welfare we do not know, but we believe it is a matter which should be studied in some detail in order to assure a means of maintaining needy children in homes where these are otherwise adequate.

- 5 5. We recommend that Mothers' Allowances be regarded as a means through which children, under given circumstances, may be brought up in health and decency by their mothers in their own homes, and, therefore, that every effort be made to see that the allowances granted are adequate to permit the  
10 mothers to carry out this responsibility without being obliged to take employment requiring them to be outside the home - particularly when the children are young - in order to supplement their incomes.

#### GUARDIANSHIP AND CARE OF WARDS.

- 15 6. We recommend that the present practice of permitting children to become wards of the Government through surrender to the Superintendent by indenture, agreement or otherwise, provided for under Section 10 (s) (iii) of the Child Welfare Act, be discontinued as subject to possible abuse, and that the Act be amended accordingly.

Representations on this matter were made to the Minister by this Council on March 14, 1947, when amendment of the Act was last under  
20 discussion by the Legislature, but no action resulted therefrom - (See Letter to Dr. Cross from Mr. Field, Appendix A - Page 2, par. 2 first two sentences).

- 25 7. We also recommend that the Act be amended so that no guardianship may be broken, no guardianship discharged, and no new guardianship may be created for a child except in a properly constituted court of record and subject to every assurance of legal safeguard.
- 30 8. We further recommend that the terms "Temporary"<sup>(1)</sup> and "Temporarily" used in the Act as applying to wardship (Section 10 - s - i) and to placement of Wards in homes and shelters (Section 10 - p & r) and Section 67 - 2) be limited by definition to an actual maximum length of time, in order to prevent the possibility of what were originally intended as interim or short-term arrangements drifting, through oversight or otherwise, into positions

(1) The experience of the Province of Ontario cited in the I.O.D.E. Study report, page 128, footnote #3, is considered noteworthy in this connection.

which become practically permanent. In the case of temporary wardship, if a satisfactory solution to the problem has not been reached by the expiration of the time limit set, the case should be reviewed by the judge before wardship is renewed.

5           The case of Bob in the Summary of Illustrative cases, Appendix B, Case #4 - page iii, is cited as one example of a temporary foster home placement tending to become permanent.

9. We recommend that where preservation of his home under the guardianship of his natural parent or parents proves impossible, and a child exists in a  
10 state of "neglect" as defined in the Child Welfare Act, or he has no effective guardianship, temporary or permanent wardship of that child should be sought without delay from the Court by the Superintendent of Child Welfare, without regard to the child's age or other factors which might adversely affect the possibilities of obtaining free placement for him.

15           Cases have come to the attention of this Council too frequently to be coincidental, where initiation of guardianship action was refused, or was undertaken by the Department belatedly and only with reluctance, when the children involved, by reason of age, or physical or mental defect were not likely to be readily placed in adoption or free foster  
20 homes. See Summary of Illustrative Cases, Appendix B:

(a) Case #2 - Page ii - Mabel - when initially the child was considered a poor risk for adoption, wardship was refused;

(b) Case #5 - Page iv - The D Family, where the minor children were backward mentally and ranged in age from 8 to 16 years.

25           When wardship was requested, action was delayed ten months.

(c) Case #6 - Page v - The E Family where wardship action by the Department was refused and never taken, although the children for three and a half years had no effective guardianship (mother in mental hospital and father overseas) -

30           The ages of the children when the Department was asked to make them wards, were 9, 11 and 12 years.

(d) Case #7 - Page vi - The C Family - where the children

5 (two of whom were aged 8 and 6 when the situation was first known and when wardship should probably have been taken by the Department) have never been made wards although on three occasions during the past five years the Department has removed them from the mother's care on the grounds that she was contributing to delinquency. (If the Department is now paying from Department funds for the maintenance of the two younger children in an institution or foster home, 10 although they are not Government wards, this would seem to illustrate an exception to the apparent general practice. During the war years their maintenance was provided by Dependents' Allowances.)

Seemingly unnecessarily prolonged delays in making investigations 15 and instituting ward action where this is found to be desirable, are occurring in connection with cases in some Edmonton institutions - the majority of the children under their care being in the age groups which are not popular for adoption or for free foster home placement.

Under the Child Welfare Act, Section 51 - (7) institutions are 20 required to report to the Commission, cases where children have been placed by parents under agreement to pay and where the parents have not visited their child or contributed to his support for a period of two months. One Edmonton institution reported to the Commission during the past year, six children in care under these circumstances, but so 25 far as is known no action has been taken by the Department, other than possibly warning the parents. If this has been done it has produced no results. (See as example Appendix B - Case 8, page vii, the White Children).

Moreover, figures published by the Department regarding the ages of children made wards on the grounds of neglect, and the ages of wards placed in free foster homes, also lend support to the conclusion that acceptability by foster parents for free care is an influencing factor in Departmental policy, no valid reason having been discovered to indicate that broken homes, family emergencies, and domestic crises actually occur with any less frequency in homes where children are between the ages of 4 and 9 years, than in those where the children are either younger or older.

Reduced to percentages, Departmental figures<sup>(1)</sup> show that during the past six years, wards three years old and under, have increased from 61% to 82% of the total; and the ten to seventeen year group have ranged from a high of 26% to a low of 12%, while the in-between group (4 - 9 years) has steadily declined from 20% to 6%.

AGES OF NEGLECTED CHILDREN MADE WARDS <sup>(2)</sup> SHOWN AS % OF THE TOTAL			
YEAR	0 - 3 Years	4 - 9 Years	10 - 17 Years
1940	61%	20%	19%
1941	75%	11%	14%
1942	64%	10%	26%
1943	75%	8%	17%
1944-45	74%	7%	19%
1945-46	82%	6%	12%

Further study of the figures published by the Department<sup>(3)</sup> shows that nearly 96% of all children made Wards in 1944-45 on the grounds of "Neglect", were placed in free foster homes, and slightly more than 90% in the year 1945-46. The Superintendent comments that these, "if the necessity arises, can be legally adopted into the homes they are placed in".<sup>(4)</sup>

- (1) Second Annual Report of the Department of Public Welfare of the Province of Alberta - Year 1945-46 - Page 39. This is the latest report on file.
- (2) Does not include "Delinquents" made Wards since the Report gives no breakdown on ages for this group. These have ranged in number from a high of 54 in 1943 to a low of 31 in 1942 and in 1944-45.
- (3) First and Second Annual Reports of the Department of Public Welfare of the Province of Alberta. 1944-45 page 25; 1945-46 page 37.
- (4) Annual Report of the Department 1944-45 page 25; 2nd par. - First Sentence.

Thus, less than 10% (and in 1945-46, only 4%) of all such children accepted into care, represented any significant continuing maintenance expense to the Department - and much of this, presumably, would be charged back to the municipalities. There is of course, always the possibility that even this amount will be reduced further through adoptions.

Looking at the age distribution<sup>(1)</sup> of "Neglect" Wards for whom free foster homes were found in these two years we see by percentages;

YEAR	0 - 3 Years	4 - 9 Years	10 - 18 Years
1944 - 45	71 %	5%	24%
1945 - 46	76 %	3%	21%

10. We recommend that the Department's present policy of placing the vast majority (90% - 96%) of all "neglected" Wards in care, in "free foster homes", be discontinued, and that a broad, diversified boarding foster home placement service be substituted as better suited to meet the needs of most children; such boarding homes being selected, used, and supervised, by staff trained for this type of work, who would observe generally accepted standards in practice.

We are aware of arguments advanced by the Department of Child Welfare in defence of the use of free foster homes in preference to paid or boarding homes. The Departmental view has been that willingness to accept a child for care without receiving payment from the Department can be accepted as proof that the motivation is to assist a child in need - whereas payment for the child's maintenance prompts people to apply for mercenary reasons.

Experience in other places has proven this to be incorrect. In compensating them, at least in part for the extra expense incurred by the addition of a child to the family group, many excellent foster parents who would like to take a child into their homes can and do so, where this would otherwise be impossible. The Child Welfare League of America, one of the best known and most generally recognized authorities

---

(1) First and Second Annual Reports of the Department of Public Welfare - Province of Alberta; Page 31 - 1944-45 Report; and Page 43 - 1945-46 Report.

on child welfare on this continent states<sup>(1)</sup> "Boarding homes offer the greatest range of choice in family make-up, personality qualifications, nationality, religious affiliations, cultural and economic levels, and neighbourhoods" Also - "Homes suitable for the majority of children requiring foster family care are boarding homes, where the agency pays for the care of the child"....."It should be recognized that board rates do not include payment for service and do not therefore compensate fully for the care which the child should receive.".....Also "The limited usefulness of the free home should be recognized."<sup>(2)</sup>

Experience has shown that it is not safe to assume that all persons promising to maintain a child without financial compensation, do so from humanitarian motives. Use of free foster homes by agencies of good standards is limited, and, because of the recognized danger of possible exploitation, even greater care and vigilance in supervision and placement than for other types of foster placement, is thought necessary.<sup>(3)</sup>

That all free foster homes in use by the Alberta Child Welfare Branch are not what the Department claims for them, and permit, under present methods of administration, shameful exploitation and mis-treatment of children is illustrated in Summary of Cases -

Appendix B - (See Jerry, Case #9; Bob, Case #4; Michael, Case #10  
Mildred, Case #11; Martha Case #12)

- (1) "Standards for Children's Organizations Providing Foster Family Care" 1941 - page 43 - Appendix A.
- (2) Ibid - Page 44 - Par. 2.
- (3) Fundamental criteria for the selection of homes, placement and supervision standards and procedures, and numerous other aspects of foster home care are discussed in the same pamphlet referred to above.

11. We recommend that responsibility for the investigation and the supervision of children in foster homes should rest with the staff who place the children in the homes, and that the Home Investigating Committee, established under Section 8 of the Child Welfare Act, be discontinued, creating as it does an unsatisfactory division of responsibility among a number of people for what are essentially all parts of one process.

12. We also recommend that the amount of Departmental investigation and supervision given in connection with child placements be greatly intensified, and that all children in care, wherever placed, should be closely supervised.

The Department's report for 1945-46<sup>(1)</sup> states that the Home Investigating Committee, with the assistance of its field workers, made 1633 home inspections during the year. No indication is given in this report of the total number of wards in care during that period. However, as at September 1946<sup>(2)</sup> these numbered 1613. It is believed that inspection visits are largely limited to children in free foster and adoption homes, in which there were 1034 children as at September 1946<sup>(2)</sup>. Thus the average number of visits per year to this group appears to have been about one and a half per home. This is considered seriously inadequate<sup>(3)</sup> and reflects the fact that some children having had of necessity, several visits, others could have had none. The conditions under which children like Jerry, Bob, Michael, Martha and Mildred are, or were, living, lend support to this latter conclusion, since it seems difficult to believe that any Departmental official would, with knowledge of the facts, consider such placements satisfactory. It should be noted however, that Mildred's foster home (Case #11) was apparently visited once in the four years she was there, and was presumably approved.

13. We recommend that the Department should employ its own staff (some of whom should be women) on a district or regional basis, outside of Edmonton and Calgary, for inspection and supervisory work in relation to children in its care, and that it should cease to depend upon officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to do this work.

Child Welfare is not considered a police function, and it is also felt that this demand is an unjustifiable one to make of an already over-worked police force.

(1) Page 37.

(2) Appendix A - "Child Welfare Work in the Province of Alberta" - Page 16. The balance of the wards in care (579) being presumably in boarding homes and institutions, or their own homes, and not inspected.

(3) Appendix "A" - "The Placing of Children in Families", Page 28 - Par. 2 for statement of desirable frequencies of supervisory visits.

The Department's 1945-46 report<sup>(1)</sup> makes no claim that medical examinations are given to wards other than those placed in "free" foster homes, but the 1944-45 report is somewhat ambiguous, stating as it does, "all foster homes".<sup>(2)</sup> Judging from cases cited by some Edmonton institutions<sup>(3)</sup> and from a boarding foster home, it would appear that this is not part of Departmental routine insofar as institutional or boarding home placements are concerned. If a child appears to be, or becomes, ill a physician's services will be provided upon the institution's or the home's request, but this seems hardly adequate, particularly when the danger of exposing other children to possible infections is taken into consideration.

17. We recommend that a more uniform and satisfactory procedure be developed for meeting the clothing requirements of Wards.

There appear to be wide variations in the procedures followed by the Department in dealing with institutions with reference to the provision of clothing required by Wards in their care.

In one institution clothing is provided by the Department only twice a year. Some items are insufficient in quantity and others are of poor quality - making it necessary apparently, for the institution to supplement. In another institution an arrangement has been worked out whereby the Department permits the institution to purchase necessary clothing for Wards, and render the bills to the Department. This seems by far the most satisfactory scheme in effect.

18. We recommend that adequate shelters for the temporary care<sup>(4)</sup> of neglected, non-delinquent children be established throughout the Province as required, and called for in Section 57 of the Child Welfare Act, but that shelters should not

---

(1) Page 37.

(2) Page 25.

(3) Institutions report cases of Department wards admitted later found to have (a) Pediculosis, (b) sores of unknown origin, (c) tuberculosis.

(4) Refer to pages 7 and 8, regarding more explicit definition of the term "temporary". Recommendation #8.

serve also as detention homes for juvenile delinquents<sup>(1)</sup> and that Section 85 of the Child Welfare Act be amended accordingly to remove this confusion of function.

We endorse the statement of the I.O.D.E. Welfare Study that "it is a matter of common agreement that the functions of a receiving home for dependent and neglected children and of a detention home for delinquents just do not mix", we also are in agreement with the balance of the paragraph<sup>(2)</sup> in which some of the major reasons for this opinion are set forth.

Adequate shelter arrangements would also eliminate the necessity of direct admissions of Government wards to Edmonton institutions, on very short notice, or, as has happened, with no advance notice at all.<sup>(3)</sup> Likewise, shelter accommodation would permit the Department to have the children medically examined, and properly clean and clothed before being sent to institutional residence.

19. We recommend that more placement facilities suitable for the care and training of backward and mentally deficient children be developed, particularly for children under the age of five.

At the present time, due largely it is believed, to the lack of sufficient foster home and institutional facilities suited to this kind of work, the Department is placing markedly backward and mentally deficient children in institutions in Edmonton which are intended for, and only equipped to deal with, normal children.

This is not in the best interest of either the handicapped child

(1) See pages 31 - 34 for further discussion of Detention Homes. (Recommendation #35)  
 (2) "Welfare in Alberta" page 83, par 2.  
 (3) e.g. (a) Seven children brought by a worker to the Home's annual Christmas party with no advance warning, and left at the Home when the party was over; (b) Department staff worker arrived at an Institution camp unexpectedly to place a boy - no advance notice; (c) workers come to remove certain children from the institutions - sometimes on an hour's notice - and sometimes they bring other children with them whom they expect to and do place, but without any previous indication to the institutions that this is a part of their plan.

or the normal children with whom he is placed, to say nothing of the additional responsibility and burden which it puts upon the institutional administration.

For example, one institution in September had in care a girl of 6 with a mental age of 3 years, placed there by the Child Welfare Department. She can not attend school - is destructive - a problem to the Institution, and unsatisfactory from every point of view.

Another has had a defective child for three years, whom it has been necessary to keep tied and in bed to prevent him injuring himself and others.

Another had a child considered mentally deficient, who could not be controlled either at school or in the institution. He sets fires whenever given an opportunity.

20. We recommend that Section 53 of the Child Welfare Act prohibiting any parent from surrendering custody of his child without the written approval of the Child Welfare Commission, be revised in order to permit parents to arrange transfer of custody at least to relatives, without having to have the Commission's consent.

We believe that this is a right which the parents themselves should be entitled to exercise, and that the protection of the child is amply guarded by the provisions of the Child Welfare Act governing neglect. This position is taken however, in relation to transfer of custody only, and is not intended to be interpreted as applying to transfer of guardianship which, as we have recommended, should be permitted to take place only through the courts (See Recommendation #7).

21. We recommend that a comprehensive system be instituted for the inspection and licensing of places in which children are cared for outside their own home, (other than homes of persons related to the child by blood, marriage or adoption, or having been appointed the child's legal guardian).

For general public protection hospitals must meet minimum standards and be licensed in order to operate. Children's institutions also, under

Section 51 Clause 9 of the Child Welfare Act, are subject to periodic inspection by the Child Welfare Commission and are obliged to meet certain requirements designed to safeguard the welfare of the children. (From information given to this Council it appears that the Section of the Act governing this ( 51 - (5), (6), (9) & (10) are not being enforced, nevertheless the intention of the Act that certain protections be afforded is obvious).

By amendment of the Act in the spring of 1947, recognition was given by the Government to the need for further protection of children placed in institutions and nurseries, by requiring "institutions" and "nurseries" as defined in the Act, henceforth to be licensed. Assuming that granting of a license is always dependent upon approval following careful investigation by a competent staff member, it would appear that implementation of the 1947 Amendments should bring about some improvement over the reportedly unsatisfactory conditions which had existed for years - notably in homes boarding numbers of infants and children.

In the opinion of this Council however, the 1947 amendments do not go far enough. For some reason which is not readily apparent, the protection of children which adequate inspection and licensing would afford does not begin to operate until there are four or more children being paid for in a home, and then only when these are six years of age or under, or when they (at any age up to 18 years) are maintained by moneys contributed by the Dominion of Canada, the Province (presumably of Alberta) or a municipality.

In our opinion the system now devised by the Department not only falls seriously short in coverage, but also presents major operational difficulties. Much, of course, will depend upon further interpretation

of the term "maintained by public funds" but even when clarified a detailed knowledge must be presupposed on the part of boarding foster mothers of the sources of income of those placing the children, which, we believe in the majority of instances will not be the case. Without this information a woman caring for four or five children over six years of age will not know, even if aware of the Act, whether or not she requires a licence. Fluctuations in the numbers, and sometimes rapid changes in the actual children accommodated, under differing board payment agreements, also confuse the picture.

This Council, at the request of the Provincial Department of Public Health, prepared and submitted in 1946 suggestions and recommendations for a system of inspecting and licensing homes caring for children in Alberta, together with an outline of minimum standards upon which the granting of licenses might be based.<sup>#</sup> These recommendations were drafted following careful study of systems and regulations in successful operation elsewhere<sup>(1)</sup> and were adapted to Alberta conditions. Attention is directed to the fact that this material was prepared prior to the 1947 Amendments to the Child Welfare Act, and that the Department at that time was considering trying to bring about some regulation through application of the "Private Hospitals Act". It is believed however, that those recommendations are still sound and desirable although the situation with reference to Provincial legislation has changed slightly.

22. We recommend that the Commission undertake an examination of the Department's files with a view to determining whether sufficient attention is given to the individual needs of the children when homes are selected for them - particularly as reflected in the number of re-placements made and in the interruptions in schooling occasioned by placements and re-placements.

---

<sup>#</sup>See Appendix A. "Suggested Standards for Licensing and Inspecting Baby Shelters and Foster Homes in Alberta."

(1) Province of British Columbia, City of Toronto, State of Alabama and State of Maryland.

Instances coming to the attention of this Council indicate that children are moved from one home to another, and one place to another at brief and frequent intervals - a situation which we believe would naturally be aggravated by the Department's policy of using free homes wherever obtainable, and by the fact that investigation of homes to which the children are sent, is carried out by an independent committee (Home Investigating Committee) rather than by the staff members who place the children. Some of the cases of which we have heard involve as many as four moves in twelve months, five moves in sixteen months and three homes in nine months. Frequent moving is an unsettling experience under any conditions, and much more so for children deprived of their own homes and families. One of the greatest contributions which foster family life can give to the child cut off from his own, is a growing sense of stability, security, and genuine affection. Moving a child approximately every three months denies him any possibility of achieving these.

Frequent moves also interrupt a child's schooling, and it would appear that not enough importance has been attached to this when re-placements are being planned. More than one Edmonton institution has remarked on the removal, part way through the school term, of children who were being sent to foster homes (See cases #15, Maurson, and #14, Edith, Summary of Illustrative Cases - Appendix B. - Page x).

It also seems that, particularly in the case of older children in free foster or work homes, they are kept home from school without Departmental intervention. (Refer - cases of Jerry, Bob - Appendix B). This is probably in large measure due to the infrequency with which the homes are visited - (see page 15) although it appears - as in the case of Mildred (See Appendix B, Case #11, page ix) that Departmental approval for leaving school before the legal age, is sometimes at least, rather easily

obtained. In view of the Act<sup>x</sup> it would be interesting to know on what grounds Mildred was exempted from attending.

23. We recommend that placements of children in foster homes and institutions be made thoughtfully and carefully following serious study of both needs of each child and the ability of the home selected to meet those needs; and further, that it be required that careful case records be maintained at all times for each child under the Department's care.

It seems certain that if these fundamentals of good child welfare administration were observed, re-placements of children could be reduced in Alberta; also that deplorable incidents such as occurred in the case of Jennie would not happen. (See Appendix B - Case #15, Page xi).

The subject of foster home selection and placement is discussed at further length later, in connection with adoption placements (Recommendation 25) and several publications setting forth generally accepted standards are referred to at that point. (See footnotes Page 25).

24. We further recommend that the responsibilities placed upon the Child Welfare Commission under the Child Welfare Act, for developing and requiring from child care organizations and institutions, reports, case histories and other detailed records for all children under care, be carried out.

The Sections referred to are specifically Section 5 (c); Section 51 (5) and (10).

It is understood that the institutions do keep a register, as required under Section 51(4). It is also recognized that the extent to which, and the form and manner in which, the other records,

---

<sup>x</sup> The School Attendance Act requires that a child shall attend until fifteen years of age or having passed Grade IX or the equivalent. Exemption may be obtained under Section 6 - 2 under circumstances as follows: "When the services of any child are required in husbandry or in urgent and necessary household duties, or for the necessary maintenance of such child or of some person dependent upon him, a Justice of the Peace, police magistrate, judge of the juvenile court, or principal of the school attended by the child, upon written application from the parent or guardian, may, by certificate setting forth the reason, relieve the child from attending school for a period not exceeding six weeks in each school term".

reports and case histories are to be kept depend upon instructions and regulations being prescribed by the Minister and the Child Welfare Commission, and that these have not been issued.

5 We believe however, that it is clearly the intention of the Act that such records be kept, and that it is important that they should be.

10 We draw attention here to the untenable position in which the institutions and child welfare organizations are placed under the Act at present, in that it is clear that these organizations are intended to keep complete case histories of all children in their care, and that they must produce these records when called for by the Commission. Yet, in many cases, the only source of some information required is in the Commission's hands, and it is prevented, under Clause 69 of the Act, from making it available to the institutions. (See also Recommendation 15 - page 14 - already discussed).

15

#### ADOPTIONS

25. We recommend that the Commission investigate the present procedures and practices of the Department regarding adoptions. The investigation procedures and standards used in assessing adoptive homes, the use of written endorsements or references, the frequency of follow-up visits during the probationary year, are some areas suggested for close scrutiny.

20

There is no implication intended that all adoptions made by the Alberta Department are unsatisfactory. Indeed it is only to be expected that a great many of the adoptions made will turn out to be altogether successful. We do believe however, that under the present system, grave errors can and do occur.

25

The case of Mrs. A. (Case #17 - Summary of Illustrative Cases - Appendix B - Pages xii & xiii) is recommended for close attention, illustrating as it does, a great many things which in our opinion should not, and would not, be allowed to happen in any adequate child placing programme.

30

It is not known what methods were used in investigating and evaluating Mrs. A's home and her qualifications as an adoptive mother, but it seems probable that reliance was placed largely on the customary written application forms and references<sup>x</sup>. In any event, the Department either failed to  
 5 discover or did not consider significant, this woman's chronic ill-health, her serious emotional and mental instability - the fact that there was a difficult marital situation, or that her financial resources were extremely slender, coupled with sizeable outstanding debts.

Placement of not one but two children, in a home about which so little  
 10 was known, and without having any direct indication from the husband of his attitude towards the adoptions, are other serious faults in these placements.

Failure to visit or follow-up after the placements were made seems apparent, but the Department's failure to take any action for the children's  
 15 protection when the facts of the situation were, on more than one occasion, brought to the Department's attention, indicates that it could not have considered these placements of Government wards unsatisfactory. Moreover, being in possession of the facts, the Department continued to hope that the husband would eventually sign the necessary papers to permit the adoptions  
 20 to be finalized - even though he might never return to this country to his wife.

The wrongs done to both the children and the woman in this case are so obvious that further comment seems unnecessary.

---

<sup>x</sup> Children have been known to have been sent to adoption homes by the Department without waiting to receive even these references - indicating that the Department must consider them of little real importance or value.

26. We recommend that placements for adoption be carried out, in accordance with the general principles governing good foster family care<sup>(1)</sup> with of course, additional considerations and safeguards; also that adoption be regarded as only one method of child placement, suitable for certain children only.

5 We believe that a study of policies, practices and procedures, as revealed in the records and files of the Alberta Child Welfare Branch and the Child Welfare Commission, and a comparison of these with standard policies and practices elsewhere, will show that placement of children for adoption in this Province does not follow the same careful procedures  
10 which others have found by experience to be desirable and necessary.

64% of all wards in care by the Department as at September, 1946 were being adopted or were in free foster homes which might lead to adoptions and it was confidently expected that the majority of another  
15 296<sup>(2)</sup> would also be placed in adoption homes. Thus adoption is viewed as the solution for somewhere between two-thirds and four-fifths of all children in need of care, who come into the Department's hands. We believe this preponderance of adoptions to be decidedly at variance with the practice in most other parts of the country.

20 It seems that it should be obvious that many children, particularly the older ones, who pass into the Department's care, will not be

---

(1) See Appendix A - "The Placing of Children in Families" prepared for the Advisory Committee on Social Questions - League of Nations  
Part II, Pages 10 - 20  
Part I, Pages 24-25 Service Standards.  
Part III - Page 278 - Child Supervision.  
- "Standards for Children's Organizations Providing Foster Family Care" - Chapter on Minimum Safeguards for Adoption Procedure - Published by Child Welfare League of America.  
- Manual published by Social Welfare Branch B.C. Dept. of Health and Welfare - Vol. 2 - Adoption Section #14.  
(Published for guidance of B.C. District Staff and to meet B.C. conditions).

(2) See Appendix A - "Child Welfare Work in the Province of Alberta" - Page 16.

psychologically and emotionally capable of forming new attachments permitting them to fit into a substitute family situation to the same extent as if born into that family. For example, many will have kinship ties of which they should not be deprived. Others' backgrounds or physical and mental inheritance will make them poor adoption risks.

Similarly, many homes which might be perfectly satisfactory as foster homes, will not necessarily have the qualifications which should be required for adoption homes, much less for the particular children who have been placed there.

In consequence the present policy of the Department which aims at placing as many wards as possible in free foster homes, and which regards each child so placed as eligible for adoption in those homes, appears to this Council as poorly conceived and not in the best interest of the children. Certainly some free foster homes in which wards have been placed by the Alberta Department should never be considered as possible adoption homes. (For example, the homes in which Mildred and Jerry were placed - and the home provided by Mrs. A - all of which have been previously cited)

27. We recommend that where there are a number of children in a family who must be made wards, these children ordinarily should be placed together - preferably in a family foster home - and the ties of kinship maintained, rather than placed separately for adoption. Where it is not possible to place them all together, definite arrangements should be made to bring them together frequently.

Reference to the cases of Martha - who was one of several children - and the J Family (See Appendix B) Illustrates that present Departmental practice seems to favour adoption of children singly, although it would appear that they should be kept together, and therefore, in most cases, not adopted.

28. We recommend that the unmarried mother who wishes to keep her baby be given some assistance in trying to do so, by assuming at least temporarily, and immediately, responsibility for providing financial aid in such cases where  
5 required.

That this is apparently not in accordance with present Departmental policy has already been shown in the Section dealing with Non-Ward Care - pages 3 to 6.

29. We recommend that unmarried mothers should not be subjected to pressure to surrender their babies for adoption.

10 Although it may not be the policy of the Department to press girls or unduly "persuade" them to surrender their babies, it is believed that there have been instances where this has actually occurred (See case of the D Family - Ruby D - Appendix B, Case #5, page iv, Last two paragraphs).

15 More typical, perhaps are cases like Jennie - (See Appendix B - Case #15) who really wish to keep their children, but surrender them for adoption simply because they can think of no other plan and no alternative is suggested or made available to them.

Others, we believe, give consent for adoption because of their inability to maintain the baby immediately upon leaving hospital, and  
20 Department policy does not include the assumption of financial responsibility for non-wards<sup>x</sup>

The scarcity of good boarding foster homes may also influence such a decision. In the case of Donna (See Appendix B - Case #16, page xi) the mother did not have to relinquish her child, but only because she was  
25 fortunate in securing a boarding home through the assistance of a private agency. The Department was not interested in her case, unless she would adopt.

<sup>x</sup> There will of course presumably, always be a few "neglected" children under the care of the Department, for whom wardship is planned but has not yet been officially declared.

In some of the other Provinces great care is exercised to see that as far as possible no pressure, direct or indirect, is brought to bear upon the mother in making her decision. To quote from the annual report of the Director of Child Welfare<sup>x</sup> of the Province of Saskatchewan, -

5 as an example - "Owing to the intense emotional experience through which they pass the mother is not encouraged to make her final decision as to the disposition of the child in a hurry. We feel that if the girl is to be rehabilitated into the life of the community the decision with respect to her child's future must be made if at all possible by herself, and

10 after all alternatives have been considered. A minimum of six weeks is encouraged before the final decision is reached. After a decision is reached the Social Worker will assist her to carry out her plans. If she is unable to establish herself immediately but wishes to keep the child, foster home care can be arranged or temporary commitment. Later on

15 she may apply for Mother's Allowance. If she is unwilling to keep the child this Branch arranges for its care. We feel that whether the child is adoptable or otherwise an unwanted child is a neglected child just as much as a child showing the signs of physical abuse."

20 30. We recommend that once an unmarried mother decides that she does not wish to keep her child, wardship action should be started at once by the Child Welfare Branch of the Department - without regard to whether the child will be adoptable or not.

We consider that an unadoptable child is just as much in need of protection and care as if it had been actually physically abandoned or neglected, and the possibilities of whether or not free care can be

25 obtained for it should not be permitted to enter into the situation. That this is not in accordance with present Departmental practice is illustrated in the case of Mabel (Case #2, Appendix B, page ii, Par. 4).

(x) Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare of the Province of Saskatchewan - Year 1945-46. Page 23.

31. We recommend that adoptions to people living outside of the Province be not permitted except in special circumstances, (usually when children are going to relatives) - and then only when the children are transferred to the care of the proper, responsible child welfare authority in the place to which the child is to be sent. Further, we believe it essential that where a child is adopted out of this country that every precaution be taken to protect not only his person, but his future, particularly in regard to citizenship and inheritance.

#### CARE OF DELINQUENTS

32. We recommend that Juvenile Courts be regarded not so much as society's agents for determining a child's guilt in connection with the committing of a crime but rather as facilities for the early diagnosis of causes and the treatment of delinquency among juveniles, and that they be organized and equipped to function on this basis.

There seem to be definite indications that in Edmonton at least, child welfare officials consider appearance of a child before the Juvenile Court as something which should be avoided as long as possible - on the grounds that once having been brought before the Court, the Juvenile is fully aware that its powers to punish are limited, and therefore, the Court can no longer be used as a threat. There is also a lingering feeling on the part of the public, that a child brought before the Juvenile Court, is branded thereby.

Whether or not these are the real reasons, it appears to be a fact that many children, who might benefit greatly if the resources of a well established Juvenile Court were placed at their service when they first begin to manifest delinquent behaviour, are not coming to the Court's attention, at this point.

There appears to be no doubt that in Edmonton:

(a) police and detectives very frequently handle situations "on the spot" without apprehending the child, and that sometimes the same child is dealt with in this way on quite a number of occasions.

(b) many children against whom a complaint has been laid are seen by child welfare officers or by the Juvenile Court Judge unofficially, and do not appear in the Court on the charges laid.

(c) it has been the practice of the Court not to have a child brought before it on the first official charge, unless it be a very serious one, although it is recognized that the first official charge may not be, by any means, the child's first offence.

5           Thus, it is probable that under the present system of handling juvenile delinquents many children are being permitted to develop well established patterns of delinquent behaviour before they ever appear before the Court.

10           This conclusion is supported by the Child Welfare Commission in its statement in "Child Welfare Work in the Province of Alberta" - page 14, (see Appendix A), which reads as follows: "Reports from our child welfare workers and Juvenile Courts indicate that delinquencies, in nearly every case, originate in children between the ages of six and ten years, but they are seldom brought to the attention of the Commission or Probation Officers until they are well into their teens",

15

          If this is so, it seems clear that the Juvenile Courts should be re-organized in such a way as to ensure that cases of juvenile delinquency will be brought before it for study and treatment at a much earlier stage than is the case at present.

20           In this connection it is suggested that in view of the well recognized close relationship between truancy and juvenile delinquency, of which it is so frequently a forerunner, attention be directed to the very small number who were brought before the Juvenile Court on these grounds in 1945-46. (Only 6 in the whole Province).<sup>x</sup> It seems that

25           closer cooperation between school attendance officers and the child welfare and Juvenile Court officials may be indicated.

---

x Juvenile Delinquents for the year ended September 30th, 1946 - Page 27.  
Published by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. See Appendix A.

33. We recommend that an efficient record and statistical system be maintained for the Juvenile Court which will provide a complete social history for each child together with an account of the steps taken in treatment, also statistics which will provide a basis for measurement of the problem and study of trends, in any given community.

Several unsuccessful attempts have been made by this Council in the past two years to obtain accurate figures regarding the extent and nature of juvenile delinquency in the City of Edmonton. Highly contradictory reports emanating from time to time from official sources lead us to believe that the difficulties and discrepancies are partially due to widely differing interpretations as to what constitutes a "juvenile delinquent". We are also of the opinion that the problem is a larger one in this City and Province than some statements and statistics would indicate.

Figures published annually by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, relative to children dealt with by the Juvenile Courts show that, even under Alberta's present system wherein, usually, only the more obviously serious cases come before the Courts, there is a sizeable group of delinquents in this Province. See TABLE below.

ALBERTA JUVENILE DELINQUENTS - UNDER 16 YEARS						
Year ended Sept. 30	PROVEN OFFENCES <sup>x</sup>			REPEATERS 1 - 4 TIMES <sup>(1)</sup> or more (MAJOR PROVEN OFFENCES ONLY)		
	Total No.	Major	Minor	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL MAJORS	
1926	506	326	64%	180		
1931	589	430	71%	159		
1936	416	315	76%	101		
1941	716	378	53%	338		
1942	835	472	57%	363		
1943	447	349	78%	98		
1944	565	431	76%	134	115	27%
1945	531	384	72%	147	91	24%
1946	405	327	81%	78	101	31%

<sup>x</sup> Juvenile Delinquents for the year ended September 30th, 1946, pg. 39 Appendix  
 (1) Ibid - Table 11 - page 12.

(1)  
 NOTE: There were, in addition, 226 juveniles of 16 and 17 years of age, guilty of major offences in 1945-46, making a total of 553 juveniles appearing on proven major charges. Figures on proven minor charges for this age group were not shown, nor were figures on 16 and 17 year-olds available for previous years. Recidivism in 16-17 year age group was not given.

Total delinquents under 18 years of age appearing before the Juvenile Courts in Alberta in the year ending September 1946 numbered at least 681, and probably the figure was well in excess of 700 if appearances on minor charges are added. This checks closely with the total reported by the Department for the 12 months ending March 31st, 1946. (2)

. . . . .

It should be noted that although the incidence of proven offences among juveniles has been decreasing in Alberta since 1944, this is also the national trend. Unfortunately, the greater reduction in Alberta has occurred in minor offences, and, in 1946, 81% of all proven offences (in the under 16 group) were on serious or major charges.

The fact that nearly one in three under 16 years of age convicted of a major offence in 1945-'46, had previously been before the Court one to four times or more, also given cause for reflection, and seems considerably at variance with the Commission's statement that "children are very responsive to the adjudication given them in Juvenile Court. With few exceptions they never appear in court again." (3)

54. We recommend that probation services be considerably strengthened - and that the compensation offered probation officers should be sufficient to attract men of personality, education and experience who would be prepared to train for this work as a career.

It would appear that in Edmonton, at least, the probation staff is required to carry too heavy a work load to permit as much attention being given to each individual case as is required for good probation work, and that the Juvenile Court Judge has been handicapped as a result.

At the present time in Edmonton, Probation Officers are also

---

(1) Ibid - Table IX - page 21.

(2) Annual Report, Department of Public Welfare, 1945-46 - Total before the Juvenile Courts - 721 - See page 44.

(5) "Child Welfare Work in the Province of Alberta" - page 10, par. 2.

responsible for work with and for neglected, non-delinquent children, and in addition, one of the Probation officers has customarily also served as clerk of the Juvenile Court.

5 In 1943 the Committee appointed by the Alberta Government to study the child welfare services of the Province, reported "If the probation system is to function properly it is obvious that each City and Town must fulfil its obligations under the Child Welfare Act and the Juvenile Court Act, to appoint a sufficient number of probation officers to adequately take care of probation work in the 10 City or Town, and it is necessary that competent and well trained probation officers be appointed." (See Chapter 20 of the Report).

15 In that same report (Chapter 6) the Superintendent of the Edmonton Children's Aid Department was reported as saying that the staff under his control was inadequate to cope with child welfare problems under existing conditions. The Committee's findings were that it was obvious that "the number of child welfare workers to be employed must be materially increased" and it was recommended that in addition a certain number of probation officers were needed to work in conjunction with the juvenile courts. It is true that a 20 zoning system was advocated, but regardless of whether the work is carried on through districts or zones, or through a centralized staff as in the past, it seems obvious that the work remains to be done.

25 There has been no material increase in child welfare or probation staff of the Edmonton Civic Children's Aid in the four years since that report was made, although the City has increased quite considerably in population.

Probation and supervision should entail detailed study of the child and the child's home, and concentrated work directed towards

the correction of unfavourable conditions. Reporting by the child to the Probation Officer periodically, is not alone sufficient, nor does a talk with one of the parents, in the Office, ordinarily provide enough information or insight into the family situation to permit constructive treatment.

For standards on good probation and supervision, see Appendix A - "Juvenile Court Standards," Section VII - pages 7 - 9. Published by the U.S. Children's Bureau.

To illustrate the limitations and lack of effectiveness of probation under the present type of organization see the Case of the F Boys - #18 Appendix B, pages xiii & xiv. Here a parent was in need of and sought help from juvenile court probation officers in the management of boys who were sinking deeper and deeper into trouble. It will be noted that even after two of the boys had been made Wards, in the process of which all legal authority to control the boys had been removed from the mother, she received no active support from child welfare officials and was left to struggle along alone. The older boy finally served a jail term.

35. We recommend that Juvenile Court Judges be not members of the Child Welfare Commission since this interferes with their judicial functions.

This view has already been transmitted to the Minister of Public Welfare - See Mr. Field's letter, March 14, 1947. Page 2, par. 2, Third Sentence - Appendix A.

36. We recommend that arrangements should be made to have all cases of a serious nature under the Juvenile Delinquents Act, tried before a magistrate who is also a juvenile court judge, or before a juvenile court judge who has had legal training, and that all cases against adults under Section 33<sup>x</sup> of the Juvenile Delinquents Act should be tried by a magistrate.

This also was recommended by the Government's 1943 Committee. but appears not to have been acted upon.

---

<sup>x</sup> Contributing to Juvenile Delinquency.

37. We recommend that probation officers of the juvenile court should be under the direction of the juvenile court judge, as required under Section 32 of the Juvenile Delinquents Act and Section 81 of the Child Welfare Act - ~~the~~ and that in Edmonton at least, they be relieved of responsibilities in other areas of child welfare work.

At present they seem to be operating in a confused setting being responsible to the Superintendent of the Civic Relief and Children's Aid Society, subject to the direction and supervision of the Child Welfare Commission, and also directly responsible to and under direction of the juvenile court judge. (It has already been recommended that the Juvenile Court Judge should cease to be a member of the Child Welfare Commission. Recommendation #35).

38. We recommend that the Child Welfare Commission discharge the responsibility placed upon it under Section 19 of the Child Welfare Act and require municipalities to provide suitable premises for the custody of children apprehended as "neglected"; we also recommend that they be required to make suitable provision for the detention of children apprehended as "delinquent", and further that neglected and delinquent children be not cared for at one time on the same premises. (It will be noted that this Council has already recommended that the Act be amended so that a shelter be not required to serve also as a Detention home).

It is believed that it should not be necessary to bring to Edmonton so many children from points outside the City and detain them in the Edmonton Detention quarters, if suitable detention quarters and suitable shelters were available at a number of other points throughout the Province. It would not seem that every village, town and municipality should be required necessarily, to make such provision so long as there were sufficient suitable accommodation within a reasonable distance in any given area. If this were done problems relating to intake control and other phases of administration in the Edmonton Detention Home could probably be greatly simplified.

Approval of these facilities by the Child Welfare Commission should be necessary - as is at present required by the Act, but it is recommended that the standards to be met be very much higher than in

the past. The long continued use by the Provincial Department of the Edmonton Detention Home for Boys (before the present alterations were finally undertaken) is cited as a case in point.<sup>x</sup>

In a previous recommendation (#18) it was stated that we  
 5 endorsed Mr. R.E. Mills' remarks on the undesirability of combining care of neglected and dependent children and of delinquent children, in one shelter, under detention. We wish to add further to that at this point and quote Mr. Sherwood Norman of the National Probation Association - an organization with many years experience in the  
 10 study and organizing of services for juvenile delinquents. He says: "A careful distinction should be made between the detention of delinquent children and those who are dependent, neglected and more neglected than delinquent, because mixing these groups has proved most unsatisfactory."

15 The National Probation Association has recently completed a study of juvenile detention services and its report<sup>(1)</sup> sets forth a number of basic principles many of which appear to apply very directly to the Alberta situation. We quote: "The Detention home should not be a "catch-all" due to lack of other placement  
 20 facilities"....."A poor home, need for discipline, need for commitment to a long time institution, need for psychiatric study and treatment are not in themselves valid reasons for detention.".....

"Only the following groups of children need to be detained:

- 1) Children so beyond control that parents or guardians  
 25 may not be able to prevent a repetition of behaviour

<sup>x</sup> The Department should also be responsible for seeing that the staffs and programmes and care generally, meet desirable minimum standards.

(1) "Detention for Juvenile Court - A discussion of Principles and Practices - See Appendix A .

which is menacing to themselves or the community.

2) Children who are in physical or moral danger in their own homes and for whom no other emergency placement is possible.<sup>x</sup>

3) Children whose presence in court, return to another community, longer time placement, or uninfluenced testimony can only be assured by detention.".....

"The number of children detained should be kept to a minimum through effective intake controls established by the juvenile court in cooperation with the police. No child should be detained except by the authority of the juvenile court judge or his representative."...

"Lack of adequate institutional and foster home placement facilities is by far the most general cause of long detention.".....  
"It should not be necessary to hold children in the detention home following the Court hearing." If this is necessary steps should be taken to organize facilities to fill the placement gaps. "A detention home is not a disciplinary institution." (It) "is not an institution for long time care and should not be confused with one. It should not be used for purposes of commitment.".....

"Detention is often thought of as no different from other temporary care. Actually it is an especially complicated area of temporary care. All temporary care of children is complex because of the varied ages and needs of uprooted children and their unsettled condition. Children awaiting court action are an especially varied and unsettled group"....."A good detention plan will provide thorough physical check-up, good physical care, and in addition, activities and adult-child relationships which will relax the child's tension and

x It is repeatedly emphasized throughout the report that this group should really be placed in specially selected foster homes or small shelters specializing in a homelike type of care where they do not have to be held under the restrictions of detention, but it is recognized that in emergencies, sometimes, such accommodation is not available.

rebuild his confidence"....."Shifting population is not an enduring obstacle to a good program..... The detention home school's task is not to keep the children up with their studies but to provide mental stimulation through activities of high appeal and absorption value to detained children".....

"A good STAFF is the most important factor in good detention care. The ratio of staff to children should be considerably higher in an institution for detention than in an institution for longer time care". They should be well qualified, well paid and have reasonable working hours.

"The use of long time care facilities for detention purposes is not recommended. Detaining children in training schools is disrupting to the programme and has a demoralizing effect on the committed youngsters."

39. We recommend that Detention home facilities for girls should be provided on the same basis as for boys, as a public responsibility.

40. We recommend that the Child Welfare Act be amended to stipulate a maximum length of time that a child may be held in detention without hearing.

At the present time, it seems, the Child Welfare Act requires only that investigation of the facts of the case be held not more than twenty days after the date of apprehension of the child, (Section 14 '2') but no time limit is set for the hearing.

41. We recommend that the Provincial Government start planning at once towards the establishment of two schools - one for boys and one for girls - for the training and re-education of juvenile delinquents who are in need of this type of care.

We also recommend that these schools be viewed not as a final resource to be used when all other methods have failed, but rather as a means of re-education which should be used at the point in the child's career where the programmes which the schools provide are deemed to be what a child requires.

We recommend further that the schools be operated preferably on a cottage plan under the administration of persons with special training and qualifications for this type of work. Should it be found that the numbers of children in Alberta requiring this type of training are too small to warrant the cost of operating institutions of satisfactory standards for this Province alone, we recommend that consideration be given to the feasibility of

establishing schools which would meet the needs of possibly Saskatchewan and Alberta, or alternatively, of the three western provinces.

5 A committee of this Council gave considerable study to this matter about a year ago, and a copy of the report, outlining the plan proposed is included herewith - See Appendix A.

This Council is aware of the fact that it is the view of the Alberta Department of Public Welfare that training schools or institution are an undesirable method of dealing with juvenile delinquents and that the use of foster homes is greatly to be preferred.

10 Most child welfare experts would agree that many delinquents would benefit greatly from placement in foster homes under given circumstances. However, it has been found from experience in most places where foster home placement of delinquents has been tried that the amount of staff work required for the skilful selection and  
15 supervision of such homes, on any wide scale, is great, and from an administrative point of view is not practical.

The National Probation Association has found that foster homes for delinquents can be counted on only when a City's population is stable, when an established agency has popularized and built up  
20 boarding homes over a period of time, when supervision is close and skilful, and when sufficient subsidy can be granted to boarding parents. It is not considered generally advisable for the Court itself to undertake selection and supervision of boarding homes as most probation staffs are already overburdened.

25 In Edmonton no general community boarding family foster home service has as yet been established - even for the more easily managed non-delinquent child of Juvenile Court age. No agency in the City at the present time is prepared or equipped to find suitable family foster homes and provide the amount and kind of intensive supervision and

casework service which would be required for the adequate care of delinquents, presenting as they do, special and complex problems requiring much more patience and understanding than the average foster parent would ordinarily bring to the situation. It seems very doubtful, therefore, whether at this stage of development of the community's child care services, foster home placements of delinquents on any wide scale should be attempted or recommended even in a city with some organized welfare agencies. This is even more true of rural areas. A good training school may be considered costly, but foster home care for this group of children, to be good, is likely to prove even more so.

42. We recommend that until such time as the number of juvenile delinquents requiring psychiatric observation and treatment becomes great enough to warrant, specialized staff of this type for the exclusive service of the Detention Homes, that the Government concentrate its efforts upon increasing and strengthening the facilities of the Provincial Guidance Clinics.

In this way service can be available to all children in need of it, and not restricted to delinquent and/or possibly, neglected, children who come within the care of the Department. This recommendation is submitted with full recognition of the need for wider use of scientific methods in the work of the juvenile court, and full approval of recommendations made along these lines in previous enquiries. It is considered merely as a practical means through which the same ends could be achieved while serving at the same time a wider cross-section of children generally.

43. We recommend that the Department and the Government of Alberta seek the active support of appropriate officials in the other Provinces directed towards obtaining institutional training facilities along the lines of Borstal Schools, in the upper age range (16 - 25 years).

Although the Alberta Juvenile Court age extends to 18 years it is believed that some boys between 16 and 18 might obtain more benefit from the Borstal type of training programme than from a training school

more particularly designed for the re-education of younger lads. Discretionary powers carefully exercised in this area should therefore be permitted and, as recommended in relation to the proposed Provincial Training Schools, with the delinquent referred to a particular kind of training at the point where it is judged to meet his needs, and not (a) when everything else has been routinely tried without success and some of which may have been quite the wrong things for him - or (b) when the boy has reached a particular chronological age. It is considered that the decision in each case should be reached through joint consultation of all agencies and services connected with the child's care.

#### FAMILY ALLOWANCES

44. We recommend that more consideration be given to the constructive use of Family Allowances in pay to the Department in behalf of wards, throughout the year.

Despite the limitations placed upon the use of these funds by the Department of National Health and Welfare, it seems difficult to believe that the standards of care provided Alberta wards is so high that there is little additional that this money could provide for the child's benefit.

It would appear that at least insofar as wards in institutions are concerned, wiser and more worthwhile use of this money would result if there were closer cooperation between the institutions and the Department in planning these expenditures.

SOCIAL SERVICE EXCHANGE

45. We recommend that the Department cooperate to a greater extent than at present with the private welfare agencies, and that as one means to this end it participate in the full and regular use of social service exchanges where these exist. Further that Clause 69 of the Child Welfare Act be amended as necessary, in order to make this possible.

The Social Service Exchange - sometimes referred to as a Central Index - is a confidential cooperative service maintained usually, by the coordinating, central planning welfare organization in a community. In the larger centres these are the councils of social agencies or community welfare councils.

The Exchange is widely used, and most satisfactorily, by Provincial and Civic public services elsewhere, and they are thought of so highly, and considered so valuable in some places, that the Provinces and Cities make substantial financial grants towards their support.

Emphasis is placed upon the fact that no information about the cases is registered in the Exchange - merely sufficient identifying data to permit a member organization to be directed to the agency or organization which has previously known that case - and the whole operation is surrounded with safeguards to protect the confidential nature of this service.

.....

This brief has been prepared as directed by a general meeting of the member agencies of the Edmonton Council of Social Agencies. The material in it has been approved by the constituent members of the Council and by the Council Executive Committee, and instructions received for its presentation to the Commission, together with relative material in support of it.