

Children's Aid Society, which is the principal agency in the metropolitan district for serving transient boys. Of the six thousand boys, of sixteen to twenty-one years, registered at the Central Registration Bureau in 1932, three thousand were served by this Society. The Society maintains a Boys' Lodging House with a capacity of 250 where the boys are registered, and all possible information secured about them. They are bathed, clothed, lodged, boarded and given, as far as possible, the benefits of a homelike atmosphere. Efforts are made to induce them to return home when, on investigation, that appears the best policy. Otherwise efforts are made to find them jobs in the city or if they are inclined to rural life they are sent for training to one of two large farms where they are given instruction in dairying, poultry culture, horticulture and general farming, in the fundamentals of forestry and in such industrial pursuits as automobile mechanics, painting, carpentry and the like. Meantime, agents of the Society are canvassing the state to find farm homes, filling stations, service stations or other places of employment where they can be placed as soon as they are ready.

Growing out of this experience the following possibilities are indicated on a national scale:

(1) Hundreds of farms are financially on the rocks. Many are in the hands of banks which have been compelled to foreclose and which are eager to liquidate. If the occupants of these farms could be offered a small group of boys with a competent overseer who would help rehabilitate the farm with no expense to the farmer beyond their "keep" it is believed that many hundreds of such openings could be found and the real value of farms that are now in distress be greatly enhanced.

(2) There are millions of acres of barren land in the country where magnificent forests formerly yielded fabulous wealth. These areas are now of negligible value even as grazing lands and the marginal farmer who attempts to eke out a living simply dooms himself and his family to slow starvation. At almost no expense beyond the cost of food, clothes and lodging large groups of transient boys could be employed in reforesting these areas, and as the young stock grew the more capable could be uniformed and employed as junior forest rangers to protect against forest fires which annually destroy millions of American wealth. In fifty years the country would possess forest wealth probably more than sufficient to wipe out the national debt.

(3) Every American boy loves camp life. There are probably at least a hundred boys' camps in New York State with an average capacity of a hundred. A similar wealth of developed camp sites exists in other states. It is estimated by experienced architects that at moderate expense most of these could be remodeled for all-year use. With a well-coordinated program of work, study and recreation these might be turned over to the use of transient boys, thus making them the best substitute for the home, school and community from the defects of which the boy has fled.

With the appropriation of fifteen million dollars contemplated in the federal bill for emergency relief to transients it is believed that a network of service could be developed throughout the country that would at once put a stop to the aimless wandering of boys, would furnish them healthful and educational environment and would tend to build in them elements of good citizenship, without the highly dramatic elements that would still further draw youth away from home and defeat its avowed purpose by adding to the volume of the group to be served.

How California Anchors Drifting Boys

By K. J. SCUDDER

Probation Officer, Los Angeles, California

TOM's mother died when he was twelve. After three years battling with a stepfather who didn't want him, he took to the road and headed West.

Dick was too big for his age and couldn't make the grade in school. When Dad lost his job and things were all wrong at home Dick figured that if he took to the road there would be one less mouth to feed. He also headed West.

Harry, who wasn't very bright, spent his early years dodging Chicago cops. Came retribution, Juvenile Court and escape from the reform school—and he too headed West.

All of them, hundreds,—yes, thousands of Toms, Dicks and Harrys land in Los Angeles, after months of ganging up and idle wandering in that borderland of delinquency where getting-by is glorified.

While it is true that Los Angeles County has invited the nation to visit her she has a right to qualify the invitation. She is interested in good citizens, not in wandering young riff-raff who shy from work and defy anyone to do anything about it. They arrive destitute and without friends and even the well-intentioned ones, after months on the road, are apt soon to find themselves in trouble. When this happens the Juvenile Court has the choice of committing the offender to a state institution or of sending him home. Naturally the latter course is preferable. Whenever possible

parents or relatives are induced to supply transportation, but this failing, as it usually does, the county pays the bill. This system worked fairly well in the old days, but latterly we have found the same boys returning three, four and five times.

When in 1931 the influx reached alarming proportions, the Los Angeles Probation Department made a sample study of 212 boys between twelve and twenty-one, taken into custody for vagrancy and other offenses. It found that half of the boys were between fifteen and eighteen years with the older group rarely receiving any help from home. Most of them represented a school problem. Half were from southern and mid-western states. Fewer than half had been picked up as runaways; offenses of the others covered a wide range. More than half, usually in the over-fifteen group, had a record of serious trouble, including many crimes of violence. What, then, could we do about it?

The experience of our neighbor, Riverside County, in dealing with its own home-grown problem boys held possibilities. For three years Riverside County has experimented successfully with a juvenile industrial training camp in the San Jacinto mountains (see *The Pine Tree Cure for Delinquency* by Stella M. Atwood, *The Survey*, November 15, 1932, page 603). The proposal for a forestry camp for juvenile wanderers brought one reaction from court

officials and social workers and another from the juvenile wanderers themselves. Judge Samuel Blake had long dreamed of a camp for court wards. In it we all saw the hope of sound social adjustment in a program comparable to the life of a forest ranger with regular hours of outdoor work and sleep, wholesome food, strenuous athletic competition and wise use of leisure.

The boys saw it as a new device to enslave them. Suddenly home developed attractions. "Send to dad for money. I ain't gonna work in any camp. I wanta go home." The night after the plan was mentioned at Juvenile Hall, the detention home, five boys climbed over the fence and have not been seen since. All of which led us to believe that the idea was a good one.

Forestry Camp No. 10 was opened in February 1932. It is located in San Dimas Canyon, about thirty miles from Los Angeles. The population never exceeds thirty. About a hundred and fifty boys a year can be handled. It is administered by the County Forestry Department which furnishes equipment, supplies and certain personnel. The county welfare and probation departments turn over to the Forestry Department the funds which under the old plan would have been used to ship the boys home. A foreman, an assistant and a cook handle the routine of the camp. Two carefully selected assistant probation officers, designated counselors, are on full-time duty in charge of all activities,—work assignments, custody, discipline and supervision day and night.

Boys between sixteen and eighteen are sent to the camp through the Juvenile Court which suspends commitment to the Preston School of Industry and substitutes the camp as a privilege of good behavior. The length of stay depends upon the distance from home. Each boy receives, in addition to maintenance, a credit of fifty cents a day toward the cost of his trip back to his home. If he lives in New Jersey it takes him longer than if he lives in Texas. That's his hard luck. The average stay in camp is three months.

THE camp routine includes eight hours of good hard work a day, lusty meals, regular hours of sleep and a vigorous program of sports for which the boys are divided into two highly competitive teams. The newcomer arrives while the work-crews are out on the job and has a chance to look over the place, get his outfit and talk things over with the counselor and the boy officer of the day. When the gang comes in he observes that every boy has a bath and clean underclothes before supper. He participates somewhat awkwardly in the ceremony of lowering the colors and gapes at the rush to the bulletin board where the chief counselor posts the merit marks for the day. Then follow the arguments over the rating. This one protests a poor mark, but is informed that his bed was badly made; another protestant is reminded of his failure to curb the habit of "shooting off his mouth." Anything below an average of two for the week cuts the unfortunate out of the Saturday movie as a guest of the Fox theater in Pomona.

After supper, with officers and boys eating the same fare, comes an hour and a half of baseball, followed by a session in the boxing ring where the newcomer must put on the gloves, learn to protect himself and take it on the chin without trying to gouge out the other fellow's eyes. About eight the boys gather in the dormitory and the singing begins. The singing is simply terrible but it looses many a boyish emotion and who cares how bad it is? Then for half an hour or so some of the boys play cards, some

checkers, others read or listen to the radio. Back in the corner the coach is showing half a dozen hardy young souls how to build a human pyramid. He turns with a smile and says, "You just can't tire them out." At half-past eight things quiet down. At nine the lights go out.

The work on which the boys are now engaged is the building of a fourteen-mile motor-way into the mountains where forest fires would create havoc. This new road will permit the use of fire fighting apparatus and will greatly reduce the fire hazard in a valuable and important watershed area. It is a definitely useful public project.

These are all runaway boys. More than half have committed crimes of violence, yet there is not a lock on a door in Forestry Camp No. 10 nor a heavy screen on a window. There are no guns in camp, no corporal punishment of any kind. Boys come and go at will. Only two miles away is the famous Los Angeles Foothill Boulevard over which thousands of motor cars pass daily. Yet there are no more runaway attempts than from many road gangs where the guards are heavily armed and the men locked into a steel cage at night. We have had only two runaway attempts in the last three months and a half.

OF course it is not all velvet in the camp. A few of the boys are hard. They have never worked and they do not intend to. A boy throws down his pick and stages an old fashioned temper tantrum with as large an audience as possible for his defiance. The counselor gives him plenty of time to quiet down before he puts the question, "Are you sure you do not want to go to work?" More fireworks till a ranger steps quickly into the picture and handcuffs snap. There is no compromise when things reach that stage. "That darn fool'll be on his way to Preston tomorrow," murmur the boys as, the excitement over, they go back to work. No need for "rough stuff"—if they won't work we merely take them out of the camp. Less and less do we have to do it.

Runaways are almost invariably caught by the rangers or picked up by motor police and brought back to camp—no longer heroes. They are at once taken to Los Angeles to appear in the Juvenile Court. The action of the judge is swift and sure. They have abused the privilege of Forestry Camp No. 10. The former stay of execution of the commitment to the Preston School of Industry is revoked and by night they are on their way for eighteen months. About two out of every twenty-five boys fail to respond to the treatment at the camp. They wish to remain "tough guys," seeking the easy way out of everything and seizing the first opportunity to run away. But what if they do run away? We are more concerned with building up the twenty-three who don't, and we see no justice in subjecting them to repressive methods for the sake of two who cannot adjust. We are not interested in punishment. Ours is a job of social adjustment with open air, hard work, harder play and decent treatment as our tools.

More than one hundred boys have been through the camp, all problem boys from the open road. Many of them had been sent home more than once, and had turned up, again in trouble, in Los Angeles. So far not one of the camp boys has returned. Perhaps they will come again, but the months roll by and they are not here. Are they afraid to come because of work? Perhaps—some of them. But from many letters we know that there are more who, through their stay in the camp, found the road to a better way of life and that California will see them no more.

When Your Client Has a Car

By GERTRUDE SPRINGER

NOW I don't want to make any trouble, Miss Bailey, but you remember I called you yesterday to send me an unemployed man to clean up the yard. Well, he's here, and I think the welfare ought to know that he came *in his own car*. It's out in front of the house this minute. Isn't that *terrible*? You can't trust anybody, can you? I thought you'd be glad to know."

Miss Bailey wasn't glad to know. She hadn't been glad the other four times that poor old car had been reported to her. She knew the car well, knew the miracle of mechanics that kept it together, the shrewd bartering that kept it in gas and oil. She knew too that it wouldn't sell for five dollars but that, running, it had in a month added twice five dollars to the resources of a big family reduced for subsistence to a meager food order. She knew the quarters it earned taking a load of neighborhood children to school on rainy mornings, or a load of lucky men to their work; she knew the odd jobs it had had a part in picking up, the car-fares it had saved in hustling from a few hours work here to a few hours there. And she was perfectly certain that it hadn't cost the public a nickel. Yet it was apparent that the five people to whom she had sent this man for odd jobs were shocked by the fact of his car, and attached a quality of guilt to its possession by one of the unemployed. And she hadn't the least idea what to do about it.

There is perhaps no point in the whole business of relief about which the public is so sensitive as in the matter of car-ownership. The question comes up even in the most car-conscious communities. Stories of abuses multiply at dinner and bridge tables and sooner or later magnify into newspaper headlines. More than once they have occasioned formal investigations of relief agencies and sweeping "reforms."

Said the executive of a small-city family society, now handling the whole relief program with public funds:

It's probably the plaguingest thing we have to deal with. We get more kicks about it than on any other single score. If the public would think more about the kind of food orders we have to dole out and less about a few rickety old cars we'd get on faster. We haven't any policy and we don't want one. If we got one it would, if I know my public opinion, force the impounding of license plates as the price of relief. And that wholesale rule is what we are trying to avoid. It would work great individual hardship, destroy that modicum of self-respect that car-ownership still seems to carry, and, if our investigations are as good as we think they are, would wipe out an earning power which, though small and uncertain, is all the earning power many families have left. Of course we don't encourage joy-riding. We make no allowance for gas and oil and believe me it would take a high-class financier to squeeze a nickel's worth of either out of the provision we make. If the client, by his own ingenuity and initiative can keep his car going—and some of their ways of doing it are worthy of a bigger enterprise—and if we are satisfied that he uses his car to turn an honest fifty cents, that it is an asset in his total situation,—then, strength to his elbow, say I. But don't quote me. The whole business is full of grief.

With public opinion as sensitive as it is, this policy of

no policy seems to be the one best calculated to hold the question to case-by-case consideration where social workers believe it belongs. In Pennsylvania the practice varies county by county in accordance, it seems evident, with the experience and background of the County Relief Board and its staff. Some boards, steeped in the old traditions of poor relief, have made an iron-clad rule that license plates must be turned in when the first food order is issued. Others, more enlightened, make exceptions for men who can prove that they have a little work that is dependent on the use of the car.

In New Jersey the temper of the state relief administration is to give the car-owner the benefit of the doubt, but in some communities, particularly those backward in social-work organization, local opinion has forced rules which amount to "Take your choice, car or food."

IN New York City, where home-relief investigators are themselves work-relief cases with a weekly wage of \$20, the question is constant. In one outlying precinct in the Borough of Queens twenty-two of the forty-five home-relief investigators use their own cars on the job, thereby covering twice as much ground in the sparsely settled district as if they had to go on foot. But there is no kink in the law which permits them any allowance for operating their own cars literally in the service of the state, nor was there any way to get around the \$10 license fee which the state required in January. Here again only miracles of personal ingenuity and initiative have kept the cars going. Moreover public opinion on this point is just as edgy in New York as in more intimate communities with many of the complaints coming from the home-relief clients themselves.

HOW some of the new problems in relief work, rarely encountered by the case worker of a few years ago, are being treated; how new workers without extensive training are being prepared to meet situations and make the quick decisions demanded when case-loads are unwieldly and supervision limited, will be the subject of a series of articles for which The Survey has drawn on the day-by-day experience of workers directly on the job. When the Client Has a Car is the first of these articles. Others to follow include: Are Relief Workers Policemen?; What Price Power; and How We Behave in Other People's Houses—and Why.