

indicated. When local or state facilities for care or supervision are lacking, there is little choice but to hold the juvenile for trial in federal court and probable sentence to a year at Alderson. For example, such would be the almost unavoidable procedure in the case of a fifteen-year-old Negro girl whose home in North Carolina was not conducive to constructive supervision, for North Carolina has no institutional facilities whatever for the care of Negro girls.

The Federal Reformatory for Women at Alderson, W. Va., is a model institution which uses all the modern sociological methods for rehabilitation. It may be that several months of its treatment is just the remedy needed to bring strength to some girls. But it may also be true that in some instances a confused girl could be put on firmer ground without a prison sentence through the aid of someone who could diagnose the source of her maladjustment and prescribe the most likely remedy for its cure, whether it be home supervision, constructive employment, vocational training, or institutional care. It was such reasoning which prompted the North Carolina State Department of Welfare to put in a request for Lanham act funds for a Classification Unit to provide a temporary home for all girls apprehended in the military areas as well as some who might voluntarily come for aid, and to be staffed with skilled personnel equipped to help them individually to plan for their future. However, the request was turned down, so that now in North Carolina there are no detention facilities for arrested girls—infected or non-infected, juvenile or adult—other than the county jails.

The May act juveniles and teen-age girls who share the crowded women's jails with long-experienced prostitutes sometimes have to wait for several weeks or even two or three months before they are brought to trial or "diverted" to their home authorities. It is allowable, of course, to make bond, but this is usually set around \$500 and few but the more prosperous prostitutes can afford to pay it. The January May act trials were held in a special session of the court called because the jails were so full that a clearing out was necessary if new arrests were to be made. Many of the girls who then appeared in court had been in custody since the preceding November. Those with venereal disease were not receiving treatment in the jails.

COMMON DENOMINATOR, THEN, IN THE TENNESSEE AND North Carolina May act areas where the federal government's attempt to perform what is usually a community function has met with such contrasting results, is the fact that the promiscuous girl is still a serious problem, as she is in every cantonment area. Perhaps the federal government cannot be expected to get at causes and lay plans for prevention, but it is unfortunate that so many of the areas where the problem is greatest because of large concentrations of troops are the very areas where local social resources have been at a minimum even in normal times.

In some localities the USO is taking constructive steps to meet the problem through its services to women and girls. In Fayetteville, N. C., for instance, the USO Travelers Aid unit operates a lounge on a twenty-four hour basis, which is available for newly arrived girls who might otherwise have to spend the night in the bus or railway terminals. The unit also operates a room registry and has two case workers available for counseling services. All the USO recreation clubs in Fayetteville schedule group pro-

grams for soldiers' wives faced with lonely unoccupied hours in a strange community. But the scale of the USO's work with women and girls, at least in that overcrowded town, makes it hardly more than a demonstration project. Moreover, in its case work services the USO is consistently being hampered by the lack of local resources with which to work.

If the federal government sees its main role in social protection as protecting the soldier from the dangerous girl, local communities are hardly absolved from the social responsibility of protecting the young girl not only from infection but also from the moral and spiritual degeneration that are among the greatest hazards of war. Perhaps local social agencies can do more than regret that law enforcement agencies do not call on them for help. Perhaps it is up to them to tell the law enforcement agencies of the kind of help they can render. It would seem that a simple and possibly effective step would lie in the area of community organization. A planning committee composed of representatives of every agency that comes in contact with or is in a position to help the promiscuous girl might be able to devise a comprehensive program that would put as much emphasis on prevention as on treatment. Such a committee could at least perform an interpretive job so that local resources would not be passed up because of unawareness of what they have to offer. It might also serve to stimulate interest on the part of the local community in injecting some preventive serum into the problem by increasing the recreational and counseling facilities available.

Social workers alone, perhaps, cannot be expected to work the miracle of eliminating the "inevitable" wartime problem of camp followers, but they can help the public to realize that the part that Mary and Betty and Flo are playing in making up the problem is not inevitable. If, with the resources they have at hand, they can accept their age-old task of demonstrating the value of prevention, perhaps they can get the public to understand what a large proportion of these teen-age "menaces" represent unnecessary casualties of war. Once the public understands, there is only a step to a change in the official view that "social work involving the temporary care of young girls is not . . . necessary to the war effort."

## Conference Preview

By HOWARD R. KNIGHT

*General Secretary, National Conference of Social Work*

THE National Conference of Social Work was born in the midst of the depression of 1873—an aftermath of the Civil War. It carried on through the Spanish-American War and World War I. It held fast to its purpose through the dark days of the great depression of the 1930's. No one who was present at the 1933 meeting in Detroit in the midst of mass unemployment will ever forget the new courage and inspiration of that occasion. Ten years later, with the freedom of all peoples at stake, our National Conference faces its task impelled by a sense of grave responsibility.

For social work has a vital contribution to make in these days of global war. Look at the services to the men in khaki and blue that have been organized and expanded

until they encircle the globe. Look at the responsibilities that have fallen to social work on the home front. Family life has been disrupted by the mobilization of manpower for war and for war industries. Staggering problems of health and housing, recreation, morals and morale, door-key children, all these and more have been thrust on hundreds of communities, ill-equipped with organization and experienced leadership to meet them, not to mention financial resources. Any social worker worth his salt knows that the battle on the home front is no less real than the battles overseas. If the coming peace is to be worth fighting for, victory must be won on both fronts.

New claims are already pressing on us and will continue to do so. A long-haul job is still ahead. The casualties that come home broken in body and mind, the families that inevitably will have to carry on somehow with the circle forever broken, will call for every bit of skill and experience we have to give. We, too, will have our full share in the task of succoring the plain ordinary human beings who survive the heels of oppression in the war devastated countries of Europe and the Far East. This must be done if any semblance of civilization is to survive. Human concern—not guns or machinery alone—must bring the future for which we are fighting.

For nearly three quarters of a century the annual meetings of the Conference have enabled social workers—leaders and fresh recruits, lay and professional, public and private—to exchange experience, to learn of new thinking and study, to face new problems, to plan together ways of meeting these problems, to share courage and craftsmanship in their everyday tasks in a thousand communities, to see the job as a whole and the part each one of us plays. And the purpose of this is, that all of us, no matter what or where our duty may be, shall do a better, more efficient, more understanding job in the months ahead. Was there ever a time when the potential service of the Conference to social work was more needed than in the year of our Lord, 1943?

**I**N trying to meet its responsibilities, the Conference has faced difficulties. There was the transportation problem and the desire to square wholeheartedly with both the spirit and the letter of government directives. At its first meeting last fall, the executive committee adopted a plan for regional meetings instead of the customary national gathering that had been scheduled in Cleveland. The span of each regional meeting was cut down and placed in the middle of the week. Cities were selected after consideration of local facilities and their availability to serve our constituency with the minimum of travel. First came careful estimates of possible attendance. Previous experience was canvassed with respect to distances traveled and the habits of arrival and departure of delegates. A check was made as to how much each regional conference would increase the average traffic through the railroad and bus terminals of these cities. Our best guess is that this will be less than one percent.

The present plans call for meetings in New York City, March 8-12; St. Louis, April 12-16; and Cleveland, May 24-28. Originally San Francisco was also singled out as the location of a meeting. However, after consultation there with social workers and others concerned, the idea of convening on the West Coast in 1943 was dropped, with the expectation that if regional meetings are similarly organized

in 1944 every effort will be made to have one accessible to the Pacific states. The Missouri Association for Social Welfare canceled its state conference and joined forces with the National Conference in a mutually happy arrangement. All this preliminary work was done, knowing that at any time the national situation might call for further changes or even the abandonment of the projects.

The three regional meetings are war conferences and the program is a war program. This is in response to a clear mandate from social workers the country over. Late last summer the Conference followed its usual procedure and asked individuals and groups in the main centers of practically every state to send in subjects or problems they felt were most important for discussion. Something like 1,500 people have participated in formulating this year's topics. Thus they are rooted in the social needs of hundreds of American communities as seen by social workers.

**T**HE old framework of the Conference program is gone for the duration. The thinking and planning of section committees has been pooled. In addition, tentative plans were discussed with local leaders in each of the three cities where the meetings will be held. No previous program for an annual meeting has been so thoroughly reviewed or had the benefit of such widespread counsel. Last year, sections and special committees organized nearly one hundred programs. This year at each regional conference there will be about fifty meetings on subjects that seemed most important and in general are directly related to the war. This telescoped program will be presented at each of the three regional meetings with only minor changes. In a few instances one person will speak on the same topic at all three places. Usually, however, the topic will be presented by different speakers in each city. This may elicit interesting results. An effort has been made in each program to bring some speakers from other sections of the country so as to spread national thinking and experience.

Practically all of the usual associate groups will meet at one or more of the regional conferences. Only a few will be at all three. The annual business meeting and the meetings of the administrative committees—Time and Place, Nominations, Executive,—will be held at the Cleveland meeting.

Perhaps the keynote of the program is to be found in the topics for the sectional meetings the first morning. There will be no waste of time.

Meeting No. 1 is on The Impact of the War on Family Life; No. 2, The Mobilization of Manpower and the Social Problems Created Thereby; No. 3, The Impact of the War Upon Community Welfare Organization. Immediately following come: Children in Wartime; Youth in Wartime; Some Psychological Effects of the War; Defense Councils; and so on through the four days until on the last we find: The Contribution of Social Work to Postwar Reconstruction in the War Devastated Countries; Needed Changes in Social Security in this Country; Social Work in New Settings. In between are discussion meetings and the presentation of subjects that carry the more general subjects into particular sectors of work.

The general evening sessions—four at each regional meeting—will present, among others, Paul V. McNutt, chairman of the War Manpower Commission, on "The Mobilization of Manpower"; Max Lerner of Williams College, who will be remembered for his brilliant address

at Grand Rapids, speaking on "What Makes Wartime Morale?"; and Herman Finer, one time reader in public administration at the University of London and now with the International Labour Office in Montreal, on the "Beveridge Report for Postwar Social Services in Britain."

These regional meetings will not be "business as usual." As this is written, our Conference president, Fred K. Hoehler, is overseas on an important mission for the government. His address, however, will be given. If he is not back he will be with us in spirit, for the program itself reflects his effective leadership throughout this trying year. And back of that has ranged his work at a score of points in the national effort as director of the American Public Welfare Association.

Not a few of the conference members are in uniform, among them Lt. Col. M. O. Bousefield, Major Charles I. Schottland, Major Alvin R. Guyler, Major Elwood W. Camp of the U. S. Army; and Lt. Commander Geoffrey May, Lt. Robert Heininger, Lt. (j.g.) Louis Hosch of the U. S. Navy. Others, though not in the military service are overseas. Our thoughts at the meetings will go out to our president, Fred Hoehler, in Africa; to Helen Hall and her Red Cross associates in Australia; to Eric Biddle, observer for the American Public Welfare Association in England; and to the many other conference friends at United Nations posts around the world. We know that these far distant social workers are counting on us to hold the home front. We will.

# The Beveridge Report

By BEULAH AMIDON

**T**HE Beveridge Report\* is establishing some sort of record as a best selling public document both in Britain and the United States. It has been widely commented upon and discussed on both sides of the Atlantic. Over-exuberant references to it as "a blueprint of the future," "a formula for abolishing poverty," and so on, have created widespread misunderstanding as to the proposals submitted to Parliament by the British economist, Sir William Beveridge.

As the report itself states, it puts forward "a scheme of social insurance against interruption and destruction of earning power and for special expenditure arising at birth, marriage or death." It is, in other words, an extension and integration of existing British social insurances, and a "streamlining" of their administration in the interest of efficiency and economy.

The Beveridge plan can be understood by Americans only against the background of British experience with social insurance. The British were pioneers in this field. Where American experience with nationwide social insurance goes back less than a decade, the first British unemployment insurance measure was enacted early in 1911. Old age and a form of survivors' insurance were introduced in 1925. Compulsory sickness insurance was enacted in 1911, but earlier than that a large proportion of British workers were members of organizations providing sickness insurance on a voluntary basis.

The Beveridge report is based on a study of want, in which many governmental agencies participated through an Interdepartmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services, appointed in June 1941. The first responsibility of the committee was to survey, the second to recommend. But while the entire committee participated in the study, the recommendations are offered by the chairman alone. This, Sir William Beveridge explains, is due to the fact that "all members of the committee other than the chairman are civil servants. Many of the matters dealt with in the report raise questions of policy, on which it would be inappropriate for any civil servant to express an opinion except on behalf of the Minister to whom he is

responsible; some of these matters are so important as to call for decision by the government as a whole." The document is, therefore, in a literal sense "the Beveridge Report."

The author had three guiding principles in formulating his recommendations. The first is that "any proposals for the future, while they should use to the full the experience gathered in the past, should not be restricted by consideration of sectional interests established in the obtaining of that experience." The second principle is that "organization of social insurance should be treated as one part only of a comprehensive policy of social progress. Social insurance fully developed may provide income security; it is an attack upon Want. But Want is only one of five giants on the road of reconstruction and in some ways the easiest to attack. The others are Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, and Idleness." These other "giants" are not tackled by the report. The third principle is that "social security must be achieved by cooperation between the state and the individual."

The plan takes into account the present decline in death and birthrates, the author pointing out that "the first fact makes it necessary to seek ways of postponing the age of retirement from work rather than of hastening it. The second fact makes it imperative to give first place in social expenditure to the care of childhood and to the safeguarding of maternity."

**T**HE scheme embodies six principles: a flat rate of subsistence benefit; a flat rate of contribution; unification of administrative responsibility; adequacy of benefit to maintain the minimum standard; comprehensiveness; and classification, that is, adaptation to "the different ways of life of different sections of the community."

In this country, unemployment compensation and old age and survivors' insurance benefits depend in part on the earnings of the insured person. Britain has always preferred a flat rate, regardless of earnings. Under the Beveridge plan, this flat rate normally would be the same for unemployment, disability, and old age, on the principle that the individual requires the same sum to avoid want, whatever the cause of the cessation of his normal income.

In line with the principle of flat benefit rates, the British favor a flat rate of contribution, instead of a percentage

\* SOCIAL INSURANCE AND ALLIED SERVICES: Report by Sir William Beveridge. Macmillan, 299 pp. Price \$1, postpaid by Survey Associates, Inc.