

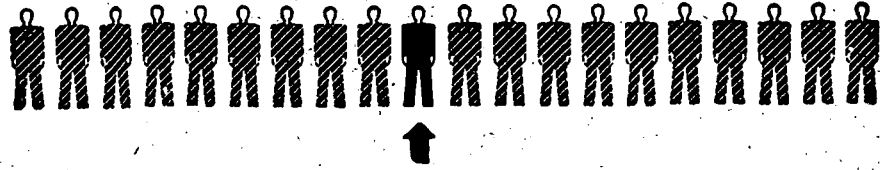
bles which later become the concern of law enforcement authorities, our institutions, the divorce courts. These disturbances often originate in unsatisfactory home conditions and the schools themselves frequently intensify the problems by failure to understand or meet the special needs of these handicapped children.

Evidence from the juvenile Court further confirms this point. Juvenile offenders were generally from this same group which had not gotten along well in school. Indeed, of those who came before the court in 1944, only 63 percent were in school at all. The other 37 percent had left school on working certificates or for other reasons. Many of those still in school were outstandingly retarded and were finding little or no real satisfaction in their school work.

And only one had finished high school, and although the median age was sixteen, the seventh grade was the median for educational accomplishment. Also, these juvenile offenders, retarded in school, were particularly prone to sex offenses, truancy, running away, and to charges of being ungovernable.

Coordination Needed

Offenses against the law, retardation in school, mental disturbances, divorce, frequently are but symptoms of frustrated needs for security and self-con-



ONE OUT OF EVERY 22 SPENDS PART OF HIS LIFE IN MENTAL HOSPITAL

This illustration reproduced courtesy of Public Affairs Committee, Inc., New York City. Pamphlet No. 120, "Toward Mental Health," by George Thorman

fidence. Punishment, or giving "another chance" may be equally ineffective treatment for either child or adult. The child is apt to need expert help in working out his conflicts and meeting the threat to his security or self esteem.

Thus the police officers of the county, like their urban counterparts, need help in securing information on which to make a sound decision regarding a juvenile offender. Without it, they can only guess whether to dismiss him with a warning, report him to the school authorities, refer him to a social agency or send him to the juvenile court.

The County Juvenile Court soundly believes that the welfare of the community is best served by studying each child and treating him according to his personal and social needs. But the court needs to enrich its own services by cooperating with other agencies providing psychiatric, psychological, case-work or recreation services. At the same time, the court and other law enforcement agencies can assist social

agencies in over-all treatment plans, by the constructive use of their authority.

In other words, this study in a typical rural county showed the same need for planning and coordination that similar studies have shown in urban areas.

Its social service resources were somewhat differently organized, and geographically the county is much larger than any ordinary city, but the fundamental problem is the same. The schools, social agencies, law enforcement agencies, churches, and other groups need to plan together for a unified and consistent approach to the prevention and treatment of mental and social ill health.

Under the guidance of the Miami County Mental Hygiene Association a program of public education and social action to meet mental hygiene needs is being launched. It is hoped that this program will point up ways by which a rural and semi-rural area can mobilize services for the treatment and prevention of mental illnesses and for the promotion of mental health.

Yeast and Ferment in Our Town

Trial and error in organizing for prevention of delinquency, described by KARL F. ZEISLER, Monroe (Mich.) newspaperman.

It seemed so absurdly unnecessary. So after I had put a No. 2 head on the story—

Nine Youngsters Held in Theft Ring

—slugged it for page one, and read it over when the paper came off the press, I wrote to half a dozen people in town I knew would be concerned, enclosed the clippings and suggested we meet Monday. This was a decade or so ago, to give this story its proper setting at the outset.

All but one came. All who came agreed that deficiencies in our community, in the schools, the police, the courts, and the very moral climate of

the populace, were to blame. All had constructive suggestions. The next day, two of us went to the state university to find out what to do from a sociology professor who was leading a one-man state campaign against delinquency. He was tickled to see us, and in rapid-fire order reeled off what other towns in the state were doing to lick delinquency. We went home radioactive with ideas.

We relayed them to the group, which now professionally called itself a steering committee. Instead of attempting itself to undertake any specific project, such as a Big Brother Movement, a Beerless Beer Garden for

Youth, a Boys' Club, or a Coordinating Council—all sure-fire delinquency remedies, as we got it—the committee decided the thing to do first was to arouse the community to action. Various organizations could then tackle these specific assignments.

That arousing took some hard work. One member set about getting the evidence—spot maps of delinquency cases, movies of slum housing and kids playing on railroad tracks, even a map showing outdoor privies in the high risk area.

Others worked on the luncheon clubs till they agreed to sponsor a joint community meeting. One lined up the

best inspirational speaker in town and loaded him with ammunition. Another made a list of all the activities any club could tackle to throttle juvenile misbehavior. All of us pitched in and sold enough tickets to fill the hotel dining room.

After the meeting was over, we waited for the big upsurge of popular backing that would set clubs and agencies to work on delinquency prevention. All that happened was an angry speech at the next city commission meeting by the member from the high risk area. Evidently the Chick Sales spot map had touched a tender spot. He gave a stirring defense of his neighborhood, its housing, its well-behaved kids, and tore into the steering committee for having maligned the people of the precinct and held them up to ridicule.

Again from Scratch

Discouraged but not defeated, we started over. This time the idea was to let the community leaders—including those from across the tracks—discover for themselves how bad delinquency really was and some of the sovereign remedies for it. We organized a Delinquency Prevention Council. We put on it over a hundred hand-picked members from every organization, lodge, church, and official body. We hand-picked a community leader for chairman and gave him a complete agenda for its first meeting. We invited the sociology professor as speaker. We spotted innocent members in the audience to make and second every required motion, nominate every officer, move that the nominations be closed and that the secretary be instructed, and so on.

We were surprised at the fine attendance, pleased with the professor's down-to-earth talk, amazed at the smoothness with which the officers of the council were elected, and sat back to wait for the results. This time absolutely nothing happened. No meetings were called, no committees set to work, no action started, no anything. I was delegated to approach the chairman.

"Well, we're organized, aren't we?" he asked, a little hurt. "What more are we supposed to do?"

I suggested he sit in regularly on the weekly meetings of the steering committee. Apparently we had to start educating the leaders before the leaders could start educating the council before the members could start educating the clubs and groups they represented.

About this time one of the state's

metropolitan papers, appalled as I had been by the stories of youthful crime its reporters dug up, called a state meeting to discuss delinquency. The steering committee rounded up the juvenile judge, some school men and a preacher or two and literally drove them to the session. The speakers hammered hard on the horrors of delinquency, urged communities to organize to attack it but were just as weak as we had been on concrete do-suggestions. A resolution was finally adopted urging some legislation, our friend the professor had drafted for a traveling child guidance clinic. We went home feeling let down.

Official Stone Walls

Meanwhile, I found a teacher who had worked in a YMCA and boys' camps and who desperately needed a summer job. He readily agreed to tackle delinquency if we could get him appointed county welfare agent, a job held then by a retired farmer. The teacher went to see the judge, who agreed to cooperate. But he declined to ask the governor to make the appointment—too many political ties with the retired farmer. So with a Democratic friend we journeyed to the capital. The governor listened sympathetically to our delinquency problem and volunteered to make the appointment. We went home elated.

The next step, we figured, would be easy. The schools had griped for years that the cops would pick up kids and get them into court and committed before the schools even learned why they were absent. We now had this problem licked—a teacher appointed county agent, with direct, official contacts with the court and the police. The Democrat and I told our story jubilantly to the school superintendent and suggested he take the final step of appointing the teacher attendance officer or at least give him some of the truancy authority. This would tie up all these contacts in a neat package.

"Why," he hedged, "our attendance officer is getting along all right; I see no reason to make a change."

"Possibly," I replied, "but here's the opportunity to coordinate in one man, one of your staff, experienced in handling kids, the efforts of the schools, the courts, and the police on all delinquency cases."

"If this teacher should accept the position you mention, it would be a political appointment, wouldn't it?"

"Well, it's already been made by

the governor, if that's what you mean."

"I'm afraid the schools couldn't have anything to do with it if it's political," said the superintendent, and that was that.

We tried another tack. We called the chief of police into one of the steering committee meetings, laid before him actual cases illustrating how, by lack of contact between the police and the schools, the kids were getting away with murder. We asked him if he couldn't work out some method of having his men get in touch with the principals when they caught a miscreant.

"Why, that ain't necessary," he replied. "All my men got orders to call the schools. Besides, there ain't much juvenile delinquency in town—just a few kids cause all the trouble; and we got our eye on them."

Our teacher spent a bootless summer as county agent and went back to teaching. Even the judge hadn't called him in on a single juvenile case all summer, despite his promise to cooperate, nor carried out a single recommendation for disposition of a case. The retired farmer was already back on the job.

We were about ready to give up, having gone full circle around officialdom and got nowhere, when the council of a sudden came to life. The chairman had faithfully attended the steering committee meetings, rapidly got a picture of the situation as we discussed it, and groaned with us as we ran into one official stone wall after another. He saw what we were up against—first, resentment stirred up when we put the finger on any one part of town as a source of delinquency; next, the resentment of all the officials at any outsiders interesting themselves in their particular field; third, the constant official denial that there was a delinquency problem (to have admitted there was, in the face of public indifference, would have been a confession of incompetence in their job); and fourth, public indifference itself.

Manna from WPA

The chairman got busy, in his own way. He induced the luncheon clubs to schedule speakers on delinquency. He called several meetings of the council to hear such speakers. He put committees to work on surveys. And he served as a recognized community spokesman for the steering committee and the council in calling delinquency problems and community deficiencies to

public attention, in speeches of his own and in statements for the paper.

Then we had a temporary Godsend. WPA was in its glory, and our county got a WPA recreation program; the district director happened to be a county man, knew of the steering committee's work, consulted it and gave us the maximum in supervision, personnel, and cooperation. With his aid and some luncheon club donations, a Boys' Club was opened in a \$15 a month empty store building—the first public recreation program across the tracks. And the city commissioner from that precinct who had raised such a stink was made chairman of the club's board of directors.

The rest of the story can be told briefly. Thanks to the council chairman, delinquency became a polite subject for all the ladies' club meetings and even a few ministers mentioned it in their sermons. And over the course of years, with the council organization undergoing various changes but keeping the issue before the public, a succession of things happened in the community which stemmed from the simple process of dragging this problem out in the open and getting it constantly talked about.

Action on All Fronts

Even before the WPA folded, that same city commissioner from across the tracks had persuaded the commission to establish a permanent city recreation program, in conjunction with the schools. One of the service clubs, prodded by a member on the council, turned newsboys annually in order to sell Christmas papers and finance tonsilectomies and spectacles for indigent school kids. Another service club forced the schools into establishing orthopedic facilities. A third launched a Christmas toy repair project. A church built a playground for its parochial school.

The state became interested in what the community was stirring up and sent in a trained children's worker, whose services the judge spurned but who managed to find plenty to do without court sanction. A women's club put through a curfew ordinance that made the parents punishable.

Eventually a revitalized community chest, organized with wide community representation, took over the needling functions of the Delinquency Prevention Council and its steering committee. And its first needling effort produced a permanent child guidance com-

mittee appointed by the mayor and having official status. Thus the process of keeping the problem before the public went on, but now with official backing and cooperation.

One of the most constructive jobs was done through the public school across the tracks, whose principal was an original member of the steering committee. It organized parents for adult education, formed citizenship classes for the large population of foreign born, put on a program of after school activities for its pupils, and stimulated community neighborliness in the high risk area. It helped organize a community center. And eventually, the



Gedde Harmon

public schools engaged a visiting teacher, replaced the attendance officer with a trained man, and joined in a tri-county children's clinic. A council of social agencies struggled into being.

The chief of police hired a police-woman to enforce the curfew, and found her so effective he hired another. One of the encouraging results of getting delinquency talked about was that the youngsters themselves awoke to their needs and demanded and got a youth center. And our last trip to the state capital—there had been many since that first one—this time with a Republican friend, secured the appointment by the governor of a new juvenile judge.

So What?

For some reason I could never quite fathom, other than curiosity, I kept contact with this local effort over the years. I suppose I wanted to see if anything would ever come of all the hard work, the constant battle against official opposition and public indifference.

Now, after more than a decade, if anyone asked me I couldn't give a straight yes or no answer. I am inclined to think some progress has been made, but hardly commensurate with the effort. Those nine kids who got into a headline stirred up more trouble than they could ever know.

The community attained more than statewide fame for its expenditure of energy and local ingenuity. The National Recreation Association, the mental hygienists, the family welfare people and several other national agencies, as well as numbers of metropolitan social work councils came in to study and report on it. So did other groups, including the distillers who were promoting a youth program to keep kids out of saloons. Sociology students gathered thesis material and newsmen wrote columns on the town in the state papers.

FAME IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL WORK, I discovered, does not necessarily follow success; the field gives perhaps over-much credit for trying. Kids still run wild, at times, in the community, as they did after a recent high school football game, and youthful gangs of parked-car pilferers often get into the headlines.

And there is still inadequate coordination of effort in handling and treating dependent, delinquent, and neglected children, especially pre-delinquents. Cops still lecture miscreants and let them go. The new, alert judge still has no place to send kids not quite bad enough for reform school but too tough for foster homes.

On the other hand, in large part, both the community and officialdom now admit that delinquency *does* exist, and both are doing something, if not all they could, about it. And, gradually, trained personnel is being employed by the agencies dealing with children and youth. Because the community is awake, it is easier now to get official action, whether for a new detention home or increased funds for foster home care. But the battle must go on, for new officials have to be educated, and ultraconservatives still try to bat down efforts to raise the standards in the juvenile courts at the state level, or expand the youth center, provide new playgrounds, or finance a needed family service agency at the local level. I suppose eternal vigilance is the price of civic virtue. But it would be nice to know if we really are preventing delinquency.



HERE IN WASHINGTON



THE FULBRIGHT BILL (S. 140) creating a Department of Health, Education, and Security is on the Senate calendar and may come up before the recess if its sponsor can find an opening.

The bill reported by the Senate Committee on Expenditures in Executive Departments is in its essence the Fulbright bill rather than the Aiken bill. However, it has been shorn of certain features found objectionable by proponents of the shorter measure, for example, the provision requiring the three Under Secretaries (Health, Education, and Public Welfare) to be professionals in their respective fields.

The department created by the Fulbright bill would be made up of three bureaus: Bureau of Public Health, including the present U. S. Public Health Service, the Food and Drug Administration, Freedman's Hospital and St. Elizabeth's Hospital; Bureau of Education, the present U. S. Office of Education; Bureau of Public Welfare, the present Social Security Administration.

The Director of the Budget is authorized to make a study of the activities of other departments and agencies of the federal government with the idea that some of those might be transferred to the new department. The study, if the bill passes this session, is to be completed by December 31, 1947.

If Senator Fulbright is lucky enough—and it will mean luck—to get his bill through the Senate, it is doubtful whether the House will have time to act. The House Committee on Expenditures has a similar measure (H.R. 573), sponsored by Representative Oren Harris (Dem. Ark.) but to date it has taken no action on it. If the Senate bill goes through, the Harris bill could be reported out without hearings. The sponsor is understood to be favorable to such a step.

HEARINGS BEFORE THE JOINT Congressional Economic Committee opened June 24. Any action taken by the committee and Congress to head off the generally anticipated "recession" will have to be taken before the recess which does not leave the "Hill" much time to avert disaster.

Kibitzing on the hearings will be a

couple of Senators who have warned the chairman, Senator Robert A. Taft, that if the committee does not take up the matter of high prices they, personally, intend to do something about the matter. They are Senators Raymond Baldwin (Rep. Conn.) and Scott Lucas (Dem. Ill.). Senator Baldwin is sponsoring a resolution (which Senator Lucas supports) creating a special investigating committee with authority to sit during the recess, to look into the present high cost of living and see where the profits are going.

The hearings are scheduled to run through July 18 with about twenty-five witnesses listed to appear. The National Association of Manufacturers will be heard, the Chamber of Commerce, the AFL, the Farm Bureau, the CIO, the Grange, CED, small business, and so on. Most of these groups already have been heard elsewhere on the subject of what ails the economic system of the USA or what doesn't ail it.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY EXPANSION bill introduced by Senator John S. Cooper (Rep. Ky.) and Representative Aime J. Forand (Dem. R. I.) is the American Public Welfare Association measure. It went into the Senate and House hoppers on May 27 and the APWA is beaming over the caliber of its sponsors. Senator Cooper is a newcomer on the Hill but has already shown that he has both courage and integrity. In addition, his sponsorship of the APWA bill indicates a social awareness unfortunately all too rare in the present Congress. Representative Forand has been in Congress since 1936 and his record as one of the outstanding liberals in those halls is well established.

The APWA is optimistic over the bill's chances before the present Congress makes way for its successor. Next year, the association thinks, will be a good year for social welfare measures. Considering the fact that it is election year and the Eightieth Congress will be anxious to demonstrate its interest in the public welfare for obvious reasons, the APWA may be right. As a betting risk, however, the odds are against it, judging from the pattern

already set. As any good handicapper would tell you, past performance must always be considered in figuring odds.

The bills (S. 1355 and H.R. 3636) differ from their predecessors mainly in form. The objectives are the same.

THE HOUSE-APPROVED BILL TO appropriate \$5,000 to help pay the expenses of the world convention of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was blocked in the Senate by the single vote of Senator J. Howard McGrath (Dem. R. I.).

Senator Arthur Capper (Rep. Kan.) asked approval of the bill under procedures requiring unanimous consent.

A TWO-YEAR FREEZE OF THE Social Security tax on wages and payroll has been approved by the House and the bill (H.R. 3818) is now before the Senate Finance Committee. The Senate committee has taken no action on the measure and unless it does the levy automatically advances to 2.5 percent next year. Chances are, however, that the committee will send the bill to the floor before the recess. If so, it will be approved.

The House bill outlines a formula for further increases. Under its provisions the tax would go to 1.5 percent on January 1, 1950, and continue at that rate through 1956 when it would become 2 percent.

THE PATMAN RESOLUTION CALLING for release of the booklet, "Fascism in Action," has been reported by the House Administration Committee in chilly silence or, in the congressional phrase, "without comment." The usual effect of such a report is to allow a single member to block consideration on the floor. That vote, if the resolution comes up, will not be lacking.

Those who have read the report find it hard to understand the opposition to its release. They declare it is not sensational, merely a documentary study of the growth of fascism in Europe. Representative Patman wrote the introduction.

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