

JOINT MEETING
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A special meeting of the City Council and the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners having been called for 2:30 o'clock P. M., in the Council Chamber, on the 8th day of February 1943, due notice of said special meeting having been sent to all Councilmen in accordance with the requirements of law, the joint Boards duly met at the appointed hour, with the following present:

For the City Council: Messrs. Baker, Beasley, Daughtry,
Painter, Ross, Slye and Ward.

For the County: Chairman McAden, and Commissioners
Cashion, McDonald and McEwen. Also
G. D. Bradshaw, Clerk to the Board.

Mr. S. Y. McAden, Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, presided and announced that this meeting had been called for the purpose of receiving the report of the Mecklenburg County Advisory Committee to the Juvenile Court, and considering the appointment of a Judge Pro Tem.

The following members of this Advisory Committee were present: Dr. P. H. Gwynn, Jr., Chairman; Dr. E. H. Garinger, Secretary, Mrs. Francis O. Clarkson and Mrs. Robert A. Moore, members of the Committee. Dr. Gwynn introduced the members, and presented to each member of the joint board a mimeographed copy of the report.

COST OF PREPARING REPORT AND ALL OTHER EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORK OF THIS COMMITTEE TO BE PAID BY THE TWO BOARDS ON EQUAL BASIS.

Dr. Gwynn stated that while he had been put to some expense in connection with his duties on this Board, having made a number of trips to Charlotte, etc., the only item in connection with their work that he would like to have paid was the cost of preparing mimeographed copies of the Committee's report, which had been done by Dr. Garinger and his students, and which amounted to \$4.47.

Commissioner McDonald, however, moved that any expense that this Committee had been put to in connection with the investigation and report be paid by the two Boards on a fifty-fifty basis, which motion was seconded by Councilman Ross and unanimously carried, after Dr. Gwynn had been asked to file a complete expense account of his various trips to Charlotte to work with this Committee and any expense that the other members might have had in connection with their work.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED BY DR. GWYNN.

The following report was then read by Dr. Gwynn with more detailed comments being made by him as it was presented:

REPORT OF THE MECKLENBURG
COUNTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE JUVENILE
COURT- MADE FEBRUARY 8, 1943 AT A JOINT
MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE BOARD
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

Gentlemen:

Your advisory committee to the Juvenile Court of Mecklenburg County has worked quietly and we hope constructively on the problem committed to its care since its appointment about eighteen months ago. From the beginning we have had no interest in personalities. We have not

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considered its pur function either to keep any individual on a job or to put any individual on a job. Fortunately, the members of the committee have no political fortunes or futures to promote. Consequently, while the committee has listened with respectful attention to every suggestion made by citizens of the community, it has refused to be moved by partisan pleas or representations. Its entire concern has been the welfare of unfortunate children in the city of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

In this connection the committee wishes to express its appreciation of the free hand given it by the two boards responsible for its existence. Although pressure may have been brought to bear upon members of the City Council or the Board of County Commissioners, no one in authority has attempted to hurry the committee, to dictate to it in any way, to interfere with its work, or even to intimate what its findings should be. For this liberty of action and generous support the members of the committee are deeply grateful.

The aim of the committee has been a fair and impartial survey of delinquency conditions in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and of the agency responsible for dealing with delinquent children. In the course of our studies, we have made a thorough investigation of the work of the Court in all of its phases and in its relationship to other social agencies. We have interviewed a large number of people interested in the functioning of the Court and its improvement. We have tried to familiarize ourselves with the law governing the operation of the Court. And we have carried on extensive correspondence with the National Probation Association regarding Juvenile Court Standards as well as with courts in other cities to discover the practice elsewhere. As you may imagine, this has taken a great deal of time and patient sifting of information to get at the facts significant for our purposes.

During the whole of our survey we have had many conferences with the Judge of the Court and members of the staff. The committee wishes to testify that it has always enjoyed a cordial reception at the offices of the Court and the heartiest cooperation from the entire personnel.

Summary of Facts Regarding the Court and Its Operation.

1. Juvenile delinquency in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County is on the increase as it is everywhere else throughout a war-torn world. The situation is distressing in the centers of Negro population, where living conditions are congested and facilities for combatting the menace are lacking. Delinquency among young white girls is becoming alarming due to the absence of normal sexual companionship and the close proximity of so many service camps.
2. As a consequence of the changing times, the Court with its very small staff is confronted by a gigantic task, which the community hardly understands and little appreciates. The duties put upon the Court are extensive and highly complex, calling for the utmost discretion and good judgment in the administration of its manifold activities.
3. The Court handled last year 1146 cases of record. Almost as many more, according to the statement of the Judge, were disposed of without formal entry--something like 2000 problems of maladjustment in the areas of domestic difficulty and youthful delinquency. This is indeed an appalling burden for one man to carry.
4. Nearly eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000) is collected and disbursed by the Court each year for the alleviation of human misery. This is almost four times the amount of the annual budget provided for the operation of the Court. Practically all of it is used for the support of families which would otherwise be destitute and in time become a charge on the public treasury.

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5. The juvenile detention home now in use fails to meet the demands of modern standards for such an institution. It is too far away from the Court for adequate supervision. It partakes too much of the atmosphere and surroundings of a jail. And it fails to provide for the exercise and recreation that the children need.

- (a) Records would seem to indicate that some boys and girls are kept for too long a time in the detention home. Investigation reveals, however, that the Court is faced with a baffling dilemma in this connection. State institutions for incorrigibles are overcrowded, and there is frequently unavoidable delay in transfer. The state has made no provision whatever for delinquent colored girls and there are always a few on hand who cannot be placed elsewhere. Furthermore, conditions are so bad at the state institution for colored boys that runaways often return to the county and must be apprehended if they are to be saved and society protected.

6. Quarters which the Court now occupies are ill-adapted to its purposes. At the present time the case workers have almost no privacy for personal interviews and counseling, an essential feature of modern juvenile procedure.

7. For its present responsibilities the Court is understaffed. In his supervisory duties and the large number of cases he must handle the Judge undertakes a super-human obligation. The case load of the probation officer and his helpers is far above the limit which experience has shown to be desirable.

8. The records reveal a minimum of professional preparation for those who are serving on the staff as case workers. A memorandum is attached giving the exact amount of training for each person. There is no evidence that any of the staff has been away recently for further study of developments in this field.

9. Court Procedure - So far as the committee has been able to discover, previous criticism along this line has been fairly well met. Juvenile cases are now handled in the Judge's private office without an array of witnesses and apparently police officers are no longer present to make accusations before the child. The offender is treated as a ward of the court rather than as a criminal. An effort is made to get at the facts without formal, legalistic ritual.

Recommendations

On the basis of the above findings, the committee makes the following recommendations:

1. Staff - That a well trained young lawyer be appointed as assistant to the Judge. If properly qualified, and that should be a requirement for the office, the entire juvenile docket should be delegated to his charge. He should be responsible for the investigation and disposition of all cases arising in that area of the Court's activities. This would leave the Judge free for general supervision and the trial of domestic relations cases, which is all one man ought to undertake. We also recommend that two additional case workers be employed, one to deal with white and the other with colored delinquents. The committee is aware that this suggestion, if approved, would call for the appropriation of additional funds. The total amount is not large, however, and we believe its investment would pay handsome dividends. Remember, the Court is saving the city and county a large sum of money in its present collections which go to the support of families that would otherwise be dependent. Besides, we ought to know by now that we can lose at home the freedom we are fighting for abroad, if we fail to raise up a generation of law abiding citizens worthy of the liberty we wage war to preserve.

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2. Detention Home - That the detention home now in use be abandoned for that purpose at the earliest possible moment. The committee feels very strongly about this matter. Continued use of the present quarters for housing and holding children is likely to bring reproach upon a community whose social thinking has gone far beyond such a makeshift. The committee urges the investigation and consideration of family boarding homes as a possible substitute for the present detention home.

3. Offices - The offices just back of the Court should be secured for the purpose of giving case workers, both white and colored, a place for interviewing boys and girls in private; OR; that the present offices be rearranged so as to achieve the same end. A rough diagram of what the Court would like to have is attached hereto. It has the approval of the committee. The change would cost very little.

4. Professional Training for Case Workers- That case workers employed by the Court be required to attend at periodic intervals a university or school of social work equipped to offer up-to-the-minute courses in juvenile supervision and correction. Terms of service could be staggered in such a manner that each case worker might get away at least once in five years for a quarter, a semester, or a summer period of study. Teachers are expected to keep up professionally, and, while the salaries of the case workers in the Charlotte Court are not handsome, they are much more comfortable than those paid by the public schools.

5. State Institutions - That the support of the public be enlisted in a request to the legislature to expand immediately facilities now provided by the training school for colored boys and that a similar institution be established for colored girls.

6. Public Relations - Every effort should be made to inform the people of the city and county more fully regarding the operation of the Court. Many of its difficult problems could be more easily solved if it had the sympathetic and intelligent cooperation of the churches, civic clubs and other organizations interested in the welfare of youth.

7. Cooperation with Other Agencies - Finally, the committee is inclined to think that there might be closer coordination of the functions of the Juvenile Court with the work of other social agencies such as the public schools, the Department of Public Welfare, the Children's Service Bureau, the Mental Hygiene Clinic, the Salvation Army, the Y.M.C.A., the Boy Scouts and the Girl Reserves. This suggestion is made without undue criticism of relations which have existed in the past. We are simply impressed with the fact that here is an opportunity whose possibilities might be explored with profit.

Respectfully submitted,

Committee
P. H. Gwynn, Jr., Chairman
E. H. Garinger, Secretary
Mrs. Francis O. Clarkson
Mrs. Robert A. Moore
Laurie C. Dickson.

Dr. Gwynn explained that while Mr. Dickson's name appeared on this report, he did not sign same since he is no longer in the city and his whereabouts could not be ascertained.

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COMMITTEE CONGRATULATED ON SPLENDID REPORT.

The Chairman stated that he felt that the committee should have the vote of thanks of the joint body for this splendid report; whereupon, Councilman Baker moved that the thanks of the two Boards be extended to the Committee, which was seconded by Commissioner Cashion and unanimously carried.

JOINT BODY ENDORSES BILL TO LEGISLATURE REGARDING TRAINING SCHOOL FOR COLORED BOYS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF SIMILAR INSTITUTION FOR COLORED GIRLS.

Councilman Baker, seconded by Councilman Ross, moved that the joint boards go on record as endorsing the bill to the State Legislature to expand facilities now provided for the training school for colored boys and that a similar institution be established for colored girls, and urging our representatives in Raleigh, by sending them telegrams from each board, to support this bill. This motion carried unanimously.

WORKABLE COMMITTEE TO BE APPOINTED BY MAYOR AND COUNTY CHAIRMAN TO ACT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE.

Commissioner McDonald stated that in view of the work done by this Advisory Committee and the recommendations made by them, he would move that the joint body go on record as asking the Mayor of the City of Charlotte and the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners to appoint a small, workable committee to proceed in the matter of seeing what can be done to carry out these recommendations, indicating the time in order to get any requirements in the budgets of the County and City. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ward and unanimously carried.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO WORK WITH THE ABOVE CREATED COMMITTEE ON NAMING OF FIFTH MEMBER TO THEIR BOARD.

The Advisory Committee was asked to work with the above created committee in the naming of a fifth member to their committee, to succeed Mr. Laurie C. Dickson, and this the Committee agreed to do.

QUESTION OF ELECTION OF JUDGE PRO TEM TO BE HELD IN ABEYANCE UNTIL COMMITTEE APPOINTED.

Commissioner McDonald moved that in view of the appointment of a working committee from the two boards, that the other matter to come before the joint meeting at this time, namely, the considering of appointment of a Judge Pro Tem, be held in abeyance until it is determined what steps the committee takes. Motion seconded by Councilman Daughtry and carried.

ADJOURNMENT.

On motion of Councilman Ross, duly seconded and carried, the joint meeting then adjourned.

Attest B. H. Conwell
City Clerk