

SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL - ANNUAL MEETING

MAY 21, 1980

Mr. Chairman, it is a pleasure to be with you this evening, and to participate in your celebration of 40 years of service. I would have been happy to participate in a somewhat less conspicuous role, and to be a listener sitting in the audience with you, rather than the speaker trying to unravel the past 40 years, and give some coherence and meaning to significant social developments.

When Trevor first asked me to undertake this assignment I was somewhat appalled at the task. However, the more I thought about it, the more I realized that no speaker could really do justice to such a vast subject matter in 20 minutes or so, and that I would have an excuse for failing to include many, many significant events, that undoubtedly other speakers with perhaps a different orientation and background, would include. So please forgive me if my professional background, my work experience, and my particular areas of interest lead to what you might consider too narrow an approach to the subject matter.

When the Council first started, <sup>1940</sup> Edmonton's population was approximately 92,000. The nation was emerging from the great economic depression and in the midst of war. Social service programs, both public and private were primitive, or for the most part, non-existent. The war served as a catalyst for bringing about more awareness in our field. In the social security area Unemployment Insurance and Family Allowance came into being and old age pensions became universal. In Britain there was great controversy over the Beveridge Report and in Canada, the Cassidy and Marsh report created much discussion related to social security for Canadians.

In the private sector the first federated fund raising effort was made with the formation of the Community Chest and they exceeded their objective and raised \$100,000 in 1941. Other new services that emerged in Edmonton included the Family Services, the Christmas Bureau, the John Howard Society and a Friendship Club for senior citizens. The Provincial Department of Public Welfare was established in 1944, previously services had been provided in branches of the Health Department. However, the same Minister, W.W. Cross, was responsible for both Health and Welfare Departments until after 1950.

There was a great deal of excitement in the latter part of the 1940's. This was brought about by a study of the child welfare services commissioned by the I.O.D.E. who were completely disenchanted with the level of services provided. They employed the indomitable Charlotte Whitton who was Director of the Canadian Welfare Council at that time to conduct the study. Although the Minister and the Deputy refused Dr. Whitton any co-operation or access to files, she conducted the study anyway and wrote a scathing report. A popular magazine at the time "New Liberty" wrote a sensational article based on the study in particular relating to adoption practices entitled "Babies for Export - Alberta's Tragic Traffic in Babies".

The answer was dramatic - Whitton, the magazine publisher Jack Kent Cooke, and the author of the article, Harold Dingman, were all charged with libel. For months this matter was national news right across the country. In addition, the Alberta Government established a Royal Commission composed of three judges to review the policies and procedures of the child welfare branch - hearings went on all through the Winter and Spring of 1947/8.

Newspaper clippings from the period make fascinating reading. Edmonton's services were also caught in the crossfire and rather damning reports are included.

The City Director was asked at one enquiry how many trained social workers he had on staff - his reply was that he didn't know what a trained social worker was.

Some of the interesting headlines - "R.C.M.P. Seize Documents at I.O.D.E. Headquarters" - "I.O.D.E. Scorns Reign of Terror" - "Welfare Commission Council Asked Magazine be Withheld". There is a report on a 41 page brief submitted by the Edmonton Council of Social Services recommending various changes in the child welfare practices.

The overall outcome is difficult to gauge. As may be happening again, the Government closed ranks behind their officials, and as Charlotte Whitton was a social worker, none could be found in the Provincial Department for many years. There was no use in any applying for a position in the Department at that time if you were a social worker. The person who came in for the most criticism was Charlie Hill, the Child Welfare Director, but I know that he was still on the job in 1955, seven years later, and I met him in Ontario at a child welfare meeting. I anticipate that he stayed until normal retirement years.

The Royal Commission came up with 23 recommendations related to the Child Welfare Act, procedures, operations etc. It is interesting to note one of the observations was that although there would be considerable cost, the Commission observed that the public would not begrudge the expenditure necessary to improve the situation.

There was some reaction at the City level. When a new Director was employed in 1949, they went to Toronto and hired a trained and experienced social worker who was working at the Toronto Welfare Department - Stewart Bishop. This was the beginning of many changes in that Department.

One author in this field has referred to the 50's as our conservative decade. I suspect that it was a consolidation and building time for the explosion that came in the 1960's. The Fund and Council continued to operate with a joint staff, with two Boards of Directors, one for the planning side, the other for fund raising. The Youth Services Division was created in 1957 and David Crickely came out as Director and attempted more effective coordination of youth services. Joint City and Council planning led to that development.

Some of the new agencies in the scene were an Edmonton Branch of the Mental Health Association, the Co-ordinating Council for Crippled Children, the Citizenship Council and Welfare Information Services. *solider beat his son to death - led to W.I.F.*

The City was gradually building a strong social service department during this period with support from Council and professional leadership that facilitated such innovations as educational leave for staff with financial aid. One of the interesting changes was the gradual phasing out during this period and in the early 60's of many children's institutions. Many will remember, Kiwanis Home, the Ex-Servicemen's Home, O'Connell Institute and several others that were in apt a carry over from the orphanage concept. The foster home development led to the requirement that institutions become more specialized treatment centres and many could not adjust to that role and were phased out.

At the Provincial level the Widow's Pension legislation was passed in 1952 and in 1953 there was the establishment of the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Branch.

R.D. Jorgenson became the first minister in 1952 with sole responsibility for Public Welfare. Toward the end of the decade some cracks began to appear in regard to staffing at the Province, and university graduates might have a chance of getting employed.

*Deanne Rogers*

*Bill MacFarland first visit*

The late fifties and early sixties led to an exciting decade of change, challenge and experimenting in roughly the period 1965 - 1975. Harrington wrote "The Other America", Galbraith "The Affluent Society" in '58, Myrdal "Challenge to Affluence" '62. Books, magazines, papers were full of stories of poverty in the midst of our affluence. A little later, Adams wrote "The Real Poverty Report in Canada" and even the Economic Council of Canada referred to poverty in strong terms:

Quote - Poverty in Canada is real. Its numbers are not in the thousands, but in the millions. There is more of it than our society can tolerate, more than the economy can afford and far more than existing measures and efforts can cope with. Its persistence, at a time when the bulk of Canadians enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world, is a disgrace."

Slogans were developed, perhaps the most memorable came from the States - "The war on poverty", others related to "participation" - "people power" and street agencies became popular.

In the midst of all this public attention, it would be expected that new legislative thrusts would develop. The Federal Government established a grants program in 1962 that encouraged studies, innovation, and pilot projects. Other Federal legislation included Youth Allowances in '64, the Canadian and Quebec Pension Plans, '63, the Canada Assistance Plan for broader cost sharing of social services, and the Medical Care Act.

At the Provincial level the Social Allowance Act of 1961 permitted the integration of previous categorical pensions. In 1962 the "Social Planning & Development Branch" was established. I would like to come back to that later, as this was the first significant move to social planning within the Provincial Department.

While one could look at many issues during this period, there are three in relation to social planning that I would like to explore a little more fully.

1. The pre-occupation with co-ordination, restructuring, and re-organizing what was seen as a haphazard arrangement of services.
2. Secondly, the whole elusive concept of citizen participation and accompanying that, the quest for client or user involvement.
3. The third is the rapid growth of planning at the public level and the relationship to physical planning.

The first issue, the pre-occupation with service restructuring was continent wide and resulted in amalgamation of Departments in some areas, the dissolvment of private agencies in others and generally a tremendous amount of time being spent on studies, discussions, defensive manouvering and all that goes with the efforts of organizations to survive and prosper.

At our Provincial level Mr. Manning issued the White Paper. One stated intent was a shift in emphasis from the development of physical resources to a concern for people. The ultimate development objective a society of free and creative individuals, was to be achieved by an integrated engagement of both human and physical resources. A new emphasis on integration and coordination was to achieve that objective.

Thus the Human Resource Development Authority was established in 1967. A Director and small staff were to serve under five Ministers. The Human Resource Research Council was funded as a semi independent council under ten appointed members.

However, four years later the H.R.D. concept was abandoned and some idealism related to co-ordination went out the window with it. Ike Glick has written an interesting M.A. Thesis on the authority. Some of his theories related to its demise suggest, lack of cabinet commitments and leadership, departmental resistance, lack of adequate planning and particularly, participation of those affected by H.R.D. decisions. With the change in power to the Conservatives in 1961, the Research Council was phased out and what many regarded as a strong and independent social research capacity, was lost.

At the City level, I was personally involved and spent considerable time at our re-structuring efforts. Terry Garvin, a community development officer assigned to Edmonton raised many questions and suggested that most of our services did not reach the most poor and needy whose problems were the greatest. This led to a Committee convened by the Mayor in 1967 to make suggestions on how the situation could be improved. The result, a year later, was the report "Developing Edmonton's Human Resources". <sup>This led to</sup> ~~The result~~ was the establishment of the Human Resource Developing Advisory Council, chaired by the Mayor and the H.R.D. Planning Group chaired by the Chief Commissioner, Peter Barger. I served as secretary for both committees and I particularly remember the frustration in trying to convene meetings of the Mayor's Committees which included the Minister, Ray Speaker, Chairmen of the two School Boards, the Presidents of the Fund and the Council and a Federal Minister. You were lucky to get half of the group to agree on a meeting time.

Peter Barger gave strong leadership to the Planning Group that included senior executives from all the jurisdictions and several City Department Heads. After another year and a half of work, a decision was made to try a pilot project that would serve a given sector of the City and provide co-ordinated services under an area council.

A contract was entered into early in 1970 with Leisure Consultants headed by Lou D'Amore to design the pilot project. The consultants recommended a sector of the City that became known as "West 10" and undertook a community development approach in that area. With high idealism a three year pilot project was initiated in 1971 and an Area Council was appointed to steer the project. While many Government staff were phased into the project including Provincial Social workers, City Social workers, City Recreation staff, Pupil Personnel staff from the School Board, Federal Manpower, Home Economists and several others, the project was unsuccessful in obtaining any significant involvement from private agencies, in particular the family agencies. I expect this was a question of **protecting one's** turf, rather than assigning staff under an area council.

Near the end of the three year project, the School of Social Work in Calgary was contracted to conduct an evaluation. The evaluation recommended some changes, but basically <sup>stated</sup> that the project continue and be expanded to other areas of the City. However, the project died and there has never been an evaluation conducted. In my view there are several factors involved. The Area Council had a very difficult time for the three years, and eventually saw themselves as an advisory committee with no real authority over the 50 or so staff assigned in from other jurisdictions. The Provincial Department retained strict supervisory control over their staff, and to a lesser degree, the same happened with other staff. Another development that started as a positive, turned out just the opposite. The project was highly successful in obtaining a lot of extra staff from the temporary funding projects that I will refer to later, and this <sup>added</sup> an extra level of service far beyond what was provided in other areas of the City. ~~was established~~. Some Aldermen began to question what we were moving toward, another political level to be established under area councils in various areas of the City. Thus despite some degree of success, the project was abandoned.



The feeling was that if there was not enough confidence to extend this area council approach to other areas of the City, then we should not continue a specialized service in one area.

If there is a particular benefit from this effort, I believe it is that many jurisdictions, particularly the Provincial Department and the City, and various City departments continued working a little more closely together. The whole question of coterminus boundaries for area services came to the fore and the City is still working on plans related to conterminus boundaries and joint housing of various city services.

At the same time the Boyle Street Co-operative received three year pilot project funding from the Federal Government for a co-ordinative effort in city centre. That is another whole story but perhaps it is sufficient to say that the goals related to service integration and coordination were not achieved.

There were a few of the coordination and integrative efforts of that period and in an interjurisdiction sense they were for the most part failures. The re-integration of Health and Social Services at the Provincial level after 20 years of separation may be indicative of more limited accomplishments.

There were more successful attempts at restructuring in some other parts of the country. Particularly in Quebec the impressive Castonguay-Nepveau Commission led to radical changes in service delivery in that Province.

The second area relating to citizen participation was I believe, a little more successful and we are still very active in the whole process. The argument for citizen participation was succinctly put by Frederick Thayer in "Participation and Liberal Democratic Government" I quote:

"most decision making studies never examine the costs of overcoming consequences not seen in advance. There can be no better way of discovering those unforeseen consequences than by involving in the decision making process, those likely to be affected. Participation, in other words, may be cost effective through cost avoidance"

I believe it was, in part at least, this whole emphasis that led to some difficulty for social planning councils. They found themselves caught between the local welfare establishment and the emerging self-help movement. this responsiveness to citizen action groups preparing new services and programs threatened established programs and a degree of support <sup>social action type activities</sup> left the Council. This has been documented elsewhere so I do not propose to comment on it to any extent. However, we did see support wither and some councils fold up entirely in this period.

While community development has perhaps a wider impact, I would like to comment on it as citizen participation is a key element. In 1964 the Province initiated a fairly extensive program under Minister, Fred Colbourne - many of us remember Jim Whitford and his ambitious plans. Again there was real resistance from the civil service to many of the C.D. plans, and so they tried to by pass the civil service. <sup>without great success</sup> As with Indian Affairs and programs in other Provinces, the governments grew a little tired of the marches and demonstrations that their own staff had a large part in organizing. While perhaps I am being altogether too simplistic, it may be sufficient to say that like H.R.D.A. the provincial initiative in C.D. fell by the way.

I believe the citizen participation movement was given a substantial boost by federal and provincial programs that were really established to create jobs. Governments were concerned about mushrooming unemployment, so we witnessed the emergence of Opportunities for Youth (OFY), Local Initiatives Provinces (LIP), New Horizons, and the Provincial Summer Temporary Employment Service (STEP). In Edmonton, as across the country, many projects were proposed and started by community groups, and a real initiative for community participation was provided. Some of these programs have survived and some of the present agencies received their start from that temporary funding. Terra Services for unmarried mothers was one such service, then named Move, and Big Sisters was another. Whether this impact, and the street agency movement has had much in the way of impact on the larger established services, is a question that needs more extensive investigation.

The emphasis of that time in trying to get more client involvement in policy making and administration decisions do not seem to have had significant results. However, there were some exciting times with welfare rights groups, sit-ins and action across the country. Our own group "Humans on Welfare" which is still active, was moderate compared to some. To be democratic, some conferences used to pay the costs of clients to attend. I remember attending one in Toronto, where the clients nearly took over the whole conference, and no speaker was sure he could finish his address. I believe this process lost some credibility when well known and self appointed representatives of the poor began to show up at every conference, took over the mikes and harangued the volunteers and professionals attending the conference.

To me the most significant development that was developed during this period was the demand for more involvement by citizens in physical planning issues, whether it be housing, roads, urban renewal, zoning, building size, master plans, etc. I think that many Alderman played a major role in insisting on this citizen participation and that it didn't really originate from the planners. Social impact studies came to the fore, and planners of necessity started consulting areas to be affected. The Council staff has been active on behalf of many community groups, and their involvement in the Mayors Neighbourhood Planning Conference, and the General Plan, are clearly in this area. While perhaps we still have some way to go in the whole process, to me significant battles have been won here and elsewhere, and it is now a question of staying alert and refining our techniques to ensure more effective citizen participation.

The third area for comment <sup>is</sup> in the growth of a planning capacity at the public service level, I mentioned that a planning branch was established in 1962 in the Provincial Department. There has been a steady growth in that area, and the unit is now headed by an Assistant Deputy Minister. While the current holder of that position has been here nearly three years, he sure seems to maintain a low image. I wonder how many of you have even met him, his name is Dan Junk. He has approximately 17 professional planning positions in his unit, plus another whole group of system planners. When we realize that this is the planning capacity in only one Provincial Department, the growth <sup>in this</sup> ~~area for~~ planning becomes apparent. I believe this development is essential when you look at the problems and issues faced by this Department. However the fact is obvious that while private planning councils (if they did manage to survive) have not grown in the last 10 or 15 years ~~while~~ the public capacity has multiplied many times over.

Howard Clifford Trust Day Care Center - Hand Care Unemployed + old projects  
67 P. office 69 Stangary - 70 Support  
74 Bandy 75 Edgelyde - Kingsway, full schools  
Provincial Regional Offices. (Home Care)

Accountability  
Responsibility  
Programming

Although fewer in members it is the same story at the municipal level. With the passing of the Preventive Social Service Act in 1966, the name of the game changed for City Social Services. The statutory services that they had historically provided were assumed by the Province and the City was very much in the service planning and development area. Don Milne joined the City shortly after the Act was passed as the first <sup>social</sup> planner. That unit has also grown in the years since and now has an establishment of eight professional positions. One of the areas developed relate to physical planning and responding to social issues related to developments. The Department <sup>has</sup> become active in the Municipal Planning Commission so ~~broadened its functions.~~ <sup>to assist in providing a social input into their deliberations.</sup>

This emergence of public planning is not unique to Alberta, but to a similar extent, has developed in most parts of the country. An interesting development in Vancouver and Halifax where the emergence of distinct social planning departments along side the longer established physical planning departments <sup>has occurred.</sup>

What has happened in the last few years ? A major review of both social security provision and social services between the Federal Government and the Province seemed to flounder and eventually be sunk by constitutional issues. Major changes like the proposals for block funding fo social services have been shelved. The role of the Federal Government is obviously in decline in regard to social services, and some fear that we will end up with a patch-work of provincial services across our country, without any real uniformity. We appear to be moving away from universal programs, as the supporters of residual programs based on need seem to be gaining strength. The social utility concept, and the seriously debated guaranteed income plans seem now to be dead issues. <sup>It</sup> isn't a more equal income distribution in our country that led to any of these trends. That picture hasn't changed in decades - the top one fifth of the population still retains 40% of the nations income and the bottom one fifth about 5%.

Background to P.S.S. Trust for the Elderly, Right to Shelter Commission Report.

Changes in City SS 1968-70. Tim... with... from... Report.

Across the continent there appears to have been frustration that many new or expanded programs seem to have produced little change. The social services area appears to have been a favourite area for government belt tightening. There seems to be no doubt that at several levels of government the commitment to services is receding.

Perhaps some of this concern and scrutiny is to be expected after a period of rapid growth. However, Governments are still responsive to public demand and there have been growth areas where concerned citizens have mobilized their resources, Home Care, Day Care, the Handicapped, Senior Citizen Programming have all achieved some growth in the last few years.

In the grey paper issued by Alberta Social Services and Community Health in 1979, a commitment is made to the mixed provision of social services, that is by the three levels, provincial, local government and the voluntary sector. I hope we the citizens hold the government to that commitment as there seems to have been an ever increasing concentration of both service provision and decision making authority at the Provincial level.

An interesting statistic from that report is that the Provincial Department will spend approximately \$85,000,000 in 1978/9 in grants to and purchases of services from private agencies in Alberta. That is a sobering figure, particularly if you believe the old adage that "he who pays the piper - calls the tune". Based on what United Ways raise in Alberta, and a rough estimate of individual campaigns by agencies, I would speculate that the Province is providing \$5.00 to the voluntary sector for every \$1.00 that is voluntarily raised. While I know that this trend is again not unique to Alberta, I wonder if we have given sufficient thought to the long run consequences, and considered all options to maintain voluntarims as far as possible.

Should for example the new Alberta Association for Human Services, attempt to obtain Provincial grants ? The growth of this capacity within Government would appear to be witness to a need. Should the Government assist as they are doing in many direct service areas ?

In closing, I would like to say that I am glad my assignment doesn't include the presentation of a scenario for the future. However, such scenarios need to be developed to provide way for concerned citizens to have some influence in future service developments. Perhaps this is an area where the Social Planning Council and the new Alberta Association for Human Services can make a contribution.

*Optimistic for future.*

*Historically up + down development.*

*Down period at present.*

*Periods of long service development will come again.*

D. Keith Wass,  
Executive Director,  
United Way of Edmonton & Area.