



*A Report on Leisure, Recreation,  
and Young People*

# TIME

## *on Their Hands*

### A Report on Leisure, Recreation, and Young People

By C. GILBERT WRENN  
and D. L. HARLEY

**T**HIS BOOK considers the leisure-time needs of youth against the background of modern social changes and the functions of recreation they create. It reviews the recreational status of young people and discusses how the situation needs to be altered.

After examining the new meaning of recreation, the authors proceed to appraise the kinds and amounts of recreation that youth receive, considered in relation to their real needs and their environment today. From this point on, the report is concerned with the part that the principal recreation agencies take and might take in seeing that these needs are adequately filled. Schools, other public agencies, various private community organizations, the state, and the federal government are in turn reviewed.

A summary chapter lists the major objectives for recreation planning and makes specific recommendations as to public policy involving local, state, and federal relationships to the problem.

This comprehensive study should be of value as a basis for discussion and action in this field of increasing importance.

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C. Gilbert Wrenn is professor of educational psychology at the University of Minnesota. D. L. Harley is author of *Youth . . . Finding Jobs*, published by the United States Office of Education. He is also the author or coauthor of a number of publications issued by the American Youth Commission.

**PRICE, \$2.00**

"The report appears to cover the problem of recreation in a broader and more incisive way than any other volume on the subject that has come to my attention. The authors of the volume have completed an extremely valuable job; one which ought . . . to fill an important and serious gap in the literature of youth problems."—*William G. Carr, Secretary, Educational Policies Commission*

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TIME ON THEIR HANDS

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and Young People

*By*

C. GILBERT WRENN

*and*

D. L. HARLEY

*Prepared for*

*The American Youth Commission*

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

Washington, D. C., 1941

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## FOREWORD

WE HEAR it said often these days that American youth are "soft" and must be "toughened." Frequently this charge simmers down to the assertion that our young people are content for the most part to sit on the sidelines, enjoying by proxy the exertions of others. Though many such statements are made with more vehemence than discrimination, their very recurrence has caused thoughtful persons to reassess youth attitudes and the opportunities (or lack of opportunities) from which in large measure they stem. Particularly is this true of the use of leisure time.

Whatever may be said of youth attitudes, the use of leisure in modern days has taken on great significance because the amount of time which must be devoted to earning a living is constantly decreasing. Young people are particularly aware of this fact because they enter the world of work much later in life than did their grandfathers and grandmothers, or even their mothers and fathers. When they do succeed in making an entry, they are likely to find themselves performing over and over a simple task which gives them little personal sense of achievement and makes satisfactory use of leisure a necessity.

In a period of national emergency like the present, the use of leisure by youth is of special importance to our country. The American Youth Commission has frequently pointed out that only as youth feel they have a stake in our democracy will they be eager to defend it. They can hardly be expected to respond with enthusiasm to demands for special effort in creating and maintaining our defenses if no attention is given to their own pressing needs, one of which is healthful recreation. Furthermore, from the viewpoint of conserving our resources, failure to provide facilities for developing the highest potentialities of all our future citizens may prove a costly error.

The present study seeks to present an overview of the use of leisure in modern life, particularly the opportunities and facilities available to youth in the United States. Its authors are well fitted to make such a presentation. C. Gilbert Wrenn, professor of educational psychology at the University of Minnesota, has had a considerable amount of experience in counseling and guidance of young people, with special interest in their use of leisure, and has written widely on these subjects. D. L. Harley, a member of the staff of the American Youth Commission, has been author or coauthor of a number of its publications, notably *Surveys of Youth: Finding the Facts* and *How Fare American Youth?* He formerly served on the staff of the Committee on Youth Problems, United States Office of Education, for which he wrote *Youth . . . Finding Jobs*. Professor Wrenn initiated the present study and devoted three months in 1939 to the collection of information and the preparation of a preliminary report. After it became necessary for him to return to the University of Minnesota, D. L. Harley was assigned to work on the study. Mr. Harley considerably expanded the report and brought it to completion in collaboration with Professor Wrenn.

The American Youth Commission was established in 1935 by the American Council on Education from which it received a mandate to:

1. consider all the needs of youth and appraise the facilities and resources for serving those needs;
2. plan experiments and programs which will be most helpful in solving the problems of youth;
3. popularize and promote desirable plans of action through publications, conferences, and demonstrations.

As in the case of other staff reports prepared for the Commission, the authors of the present volume are responsible for the statements which are made; they are not necessarily endorsed by the Commission or by its Director. The Director does take responsibility for the organization of all research projects, the selection of staff, and the approval of staff reports as meriting publication. The Commission is responsible for the determination of the general areas in which research is conducted under its

auspices, and from time to time it adopts and publishes statements which represent specifically the conclusions and recommendations of the Commission.

Recreation for youth has been an essential element in a number of statements by the Commission, notably in *Next Steps in National Policy for Youth* (January 1941) and also in *A Program of Action for American Youth* (October 1939) and *Youth, Defense, and the National Welfare* (July 1940). These statements were published in pamphlet form.

FLOYD W. REEVES  
*Director*



## PREFACE

THIS BOOK considers the leisure needs of youth against the background of modern social changes and the functions of recreation they imply. It is neither a detailed study of present organizations nor a technical treatment of procedures. It is a review of the recreational status of young people and a discussion of how the situation needs to be altered and what part various agencies can take in effecting the necessary changes. Its primary concern is with young people between the ages of 16 and 25, but the authors recognize that in some respects recreation for youth cannot be considered apart from recreation for children and for adults.

The general nature of the approach adopted in this book will be apparent from the table of contents. It need not be considered here except to invite attention to the fact that the final chapter consists of a summary of the recommendations toward which the discussion in the text has pointed. The only further information that the authors feel should be conveyed by way of preface is a concise statement of a few fundamental beliefs to which they have held throughout their volume. These are:

1. That in all recreational planning for youth the determining factor should be the needs of young people themselves rather than the functional structure of existing agencies.
2. That the greatest possible use should be made of existing facilities and the fullest measure of coordination be effected among them.
3. That broad-scale recreational planning is urgently required at every level of recreational administration—community, state, and national government.

These are principles that the authors believe must underpin any realistic attempt to improve the situation of young people in what concerns leisure and recreation.

C. GILBERT WRENN  
D. L. HARLEY



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE AUTHORS are extremely conscious of the extent to which they are under obligations to others for whatever virtues the present volume may possess. They would acknowledge three levels of indebtedness.

In the first place, they owe much to the specialized literature of the various fields touched upon and particularly the rapidly accumulating literature of youth problems. It is desired to emphasize this indebtedness here because detailed references have been held to a minimum in the present work. This is not a reference book, and it was felt that most readers would be assisted by the absence of a documentary apparatus that would necessarily have been heavy. The American Youth Commission has for five years been assembling and analyzing data on the situation and needs of young people. Persons who may wish to examine source materials drawn upon in the preparation of this volume should consult the Commission's published reference works on the literature of its field or inquire directly of the Commission. The brief bibliographies given at the ends of the chapters of this volume will suggest the authors' major obligations of this nature, though they are presented simply with the intention of helping the reader who may desire to explore a particular subject further.

In the second place, the authors are indebted to various individuals who generously supplied information and advice on specialized matters with which they are particularly competent to deal. Among individuals who rendered assistance of this kind may be mentioned George D. Butler, of the National Recreation Association; Charles F. Hoban, Jr., director of the Motion Picture Project of the American Council on Education; Kenneth Holland, director of the Civilian Conservation Corps study of the American

Youth Commission, and R. E. Iffert of his staff; M. M. Chambers, of the American Youth Commission; and Charles E. Hendry, of the Boy Scouts of America. The services of Mr. Chambers and Mr. Hendry were particularly valuable in connection with the chapter on privately supported community agencies. In preparing this chapter valuable help was also obtained from an unpublished study of this field made for the American Youth Commission by Richard R. Brown.

Lastly, the authors have to thank all the other persons—a dozen or more—who read the volume in manuscript and commented upon it with reference to their own special fields or interests. It is desired to acknowledge a particular obligation to the following, who sent extensive and detailed comments: George D. Butler and Charles E. Hendry, previously mentioned; Grace L. Coyle, of Western Reserve University; George Hjelte, superintendent of the Playground and Recreation Department of Los Angeles; Eduard C. Lindeman, of the New York School of Social Work; N. P. Neilson, executive secretary of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation; and Irma Ringe, of the National Youth Administration. The criticisms of these persons have not only resulted in the elimination of many things from the present work that would have detracted from its usefulness but have also contributed much in a positive sense. It need hardly be said that the authors themselves must be held responsible for the shortcomings of their book.

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# THE NEW MEANING OF RECREATION

WHAT IS recreation? What is it good for? Why should people spend so large a part of their time and resources in search of it? Why should society trouble to make it easier to obtain?

The subject of recreation has been much examined by philosophers, psychologists, and other social scientists, and many attempts have been made to explain what recreation is and how it functions. To define recreation is more difficult than might be supposed, for one man's recreation can be another man's work. Perhaps as good a definition as any is the simple one that *recreation is what a person finds pleasure in doing when he is not paid for it and does not feel any other kind of obligation to do it*. Recreation implies freedom of choice and action and has the quality of bringing immediate personal satisfaction. It is sought for its own sake. Its direct and immediate values are as important as the indirect benefits it confers.

## TWO COMPLEMENTARY THEORIES

None of the efforts to explain recreation would satisfy everyone who has inquired into the problem. Numerous theories have been advanced, most of them with some degree of plausibility. Two, however, deserve particular attention. One of these emphasizes the re-creative functions of recreation, the other its creative functions. The former, which may be called the *relaxation* theory, stresses the usefulness of recreation in repairing the wear and tear inflicted by the ordinary routine of life. Recreation renews our energies, revives our wilted spirits, and sends us back to our usual occupations refreshed and strengthened in mind and

body. According to the second interpretation, the primary value of leisure pursuits is in the experience they contribute to our lives that the ordinary round of existence does not afford. They perform a *creative* function.

There seems to be no reason why these two theories of the functions of recreation should be regarded as in conflict with each other. Either is incomplete by itself. Each must take into account elements of the other. The relaxation theory embodies the older and more generally recognized interpretation of recreation, and the experience of everyone witnesses that to some extent it is certainly true. It is more satisfactory as an explanation of the appeal of social activities and of pastimes having a large element of physical exertion than when applied to other types of recreation. But it does not wholly account for the pleasure to be derived even from these two leisure interests. Social activities play an important role in the development of personality, particularly where young people are concerned. And, under modern conditions of work and living, activities that are primarily physical may have definite creative values. So much of our time is spent indoors, and so much of our labor has been taken over by machines, that the physical benefit of games, sports, and other strenuous forms of recreation is often likely to lie less in renewing energies that work has consumed than in building for the first time fitness which there has been no other opportunity to develop. Pastimes that may be either primarily social or physical have also a recognized value in preserving mental health, as indeed all forms of recreation do.

We see, therefore, that the relaxation theory does not fully account for the benefits obtained even from those forms of recreation in which relaxation appears to be most prominent. If we further consider the great variety of the activities that people carry on during their leisure hours and the energy and tenacity with which these are often pursued, we are likely to conclude that the relaxation theory of recreation will hold only up to a certain point. It is difficult to avoid the belief that in many instances people engage in recreational pursuits not to forget their work but mainly, if not wholly, because they find these things pleasurable

in themselves. Thus the creative theory of recreation appears essential. It interprets recreation as supplying values in people's lives that otherwise would be missing.

## IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVE RECREATION

Inevitably the development of recreation in the modern world will tend more and more to be along creative lines. It is well recognized that modern inventions and modern business practices have taken hold of a great deal of work that used to afford opportunity for the exercise of skill or ingenuity and have broken it down into relatively simple jobs like pulling levers or punching keys or thumbing file indexes. However useful the end product of such work may be, it usually affords the individual worker little satisfaction. His contribution to the final result is often so small that it must appear insignificant to him.

It is true that a few fortunate people find their work so absorbing that they are not conscious of a need for outside interests. It is also true that the creative element in work is not restricted to manipulative occupations, where the effect of technological change has been most severe. For instance, there is something creative in the planned modification of behavior through group experience which is so considerable a part of modern social work. However, notwithstanding these reservations, it can be said of a large and increasing proportion of workers that if they are ever to experience the feeling of creating or achieving something interesting and worth while in itself, it must be outside their work.

The objection may be raised that work never has afforded the majority of people the satisfaction of accomplishing anything significant in itself. This is very likely true. Except for a favored minority it is probable that the work of civilized nations always contained a large element of routine and made limited use of the potentialities of the worker. It has also been pointed out that many people seem well content to earn their living by routine, monotonous tasks and are happier in work that does not require initiative or the exercise of responsibility. This, too, is undoubtedly a fact. But these circumstances do not lessen the desirability of encouraging leisure pursuits of a creative nature.

The need for such activities rests upon broader grounds than the limited range of modern work experience.

Human beings cannot be adequately described or evaluated in terms of their work. Although we are to a certain extent what our employment makes us, practically all persons have latent talents and the capacity for developing themselves in directions not required by their usual work. They may have within them the ability to act, or sing, or paint, or dance, or write, or make music. It may be only the germ of an ability, and they may not even be conscious of it. But often they can be helped to discover and nourish a rudimentary talent. Though the results may add little to the world's notable achievement in these fields, they can do much to enrich the lives of the individuals concerned.

The experiences life affords can in general be classified as active (including creative) and passive. The line between them is often difficult to draw, and certainly both are valuable. But it is a matter of common observation that the most pleasurable experiences are those in which one takes an active part. It seems to be especially satisfying to create something through one's own efforts, even if it is only a pleasing noise, a good impression, or a birdhouse knocked together out of cigar boxes.

There are other experiences besides strictly creative ones that in the past have been foreign to the lives of most people but which it now seems reasonable to expect them to share. These include the interpretation and appreciation of subjects of a higher cultural level. Within recent years the cost of becoming acquainted with the finer achievements of civilization—philosophy, science, art, music, literature, and so on—has been greatly reduced. This has come about through the spread of public libraries, inexpensive editions of good books, the mechanical reproduction of music and art, and other means of adult education. As long as the appreciation of these subjects was so expensive that it was automatically restricted to persons of wealth, the great majority of people could not hope to enjoy them. But now that the cost has become moderate the public is entitled to look for an early solution of the problems of distribution, that these good things may become generally available.

The case for encouraging and assisting the individual to develop creative and cultural leisure-time interests need not be left to rest simply on the pleasure these produce or even on the obvious value to society of having its citizens happy and contented. Human beings, whatever we may sometimes think of their actions, are the highest form of life of which we have direct knowledge. To develop their personalities, enrich their lives, and in any way to help them realize the full extent of what they are capable of being and doing must be considered one of the most commendable uses to which human endeavor can be put. This recreation can accomplish.

In our leisure time we may enter a new world, a world from which the hindrances and limitations that ordinarily surround us have largely vanished, a world in which our individuality expands and in which we feel freer and easier. Of course we must inevitably come back to our ordinary routine existence, but to be out of it for a while, to feel ourselves something like the free agents that human beings were intended to be, is an experience worth having. We have caught a glimpse of the dimly seen pattern of ideal human existence. Whether we consider that pattern divinely established or primarily of aesthetic value, or interpret it in some other way, we can probably agree that any effort which brings us closer to it is worth making.

## BENEFITS OF RECREATION

We are now in a position to summarize what recreation offers. From the point of view of the individual, recreation is a thing to be regarded as good in itself and worthy of being sought for its own sake. Those who find it difficult to think of any experience as being self-justifying may substitute here, "for Man's sake." The primary virtue of recreation is not any of its various utilitarian values but its direct and immediate effect of increasing the stature of human life. Beyond this, recreation performs a number of useful services to the individual, depending upon the character of the activities selected. It may be the means of acquiring physical fitness and preserving mental balance. It can offer opportunities for developing social graces, for learning how to

make oneself more agreeable to other people and how to bring out the best in them. It can provide cultural and creative experiences which make life fuller and more interesting and help to round out personality.

To society, the benefits of recreation are likewise numerous. In the first place there is the cumulative effect of the services to individuals, already discussed. The welfare of society is simply the sum total of the welfare of its members, and any kind of activity that benefits a large proportion of them has contributed something to the whole. However, there are certain benefits of recreation that may be regarded as rendered to people collectively because their effect is to make easier the operation of functions essential to the continuation of the structure of society.

Perhaps the most continuously necessary of these, and one that particularly concerns young people, is the promotion of marriage. All young men and women need opportunities to meet young people of the opposite sex in circumstances that will allow the easy formation of friendships. Such opportunities are offered them by the many social varieties of recreation. Since many marriages result from the social contacts afforded by recreation, it is in the country's interest to provide as many opportunities for recreational activities as possible. With our declining birth rate and the rising age structure of our society, the mere maintenance of the population will presently require that no young person remain single for lack of an opportunity to find a suitable mate.

Another social effect of recreation primarily evident among youth is the reduction of delinquency. In the past much has been made of this as an argument for the provision of public recreational facilities. It is possible that on the whole the emphasis upon this secondary advantage of recreation has done more harm than good. The really important argument for making adequate recreation available to young people has been obscured by it. As long as we deny the youth of America the opportunity to develop into healthy, useful citizens we shall be depriving society of something of far greater value than material or human losses caused by ill-adjusted youngsters. Still, the delinquency



prevention function of recreation is a real service to society, and for what it is worth it deserves to be cited from time to time.

A third social use to which recreation can and should be put is the mitigation of the effects of unemployment. Recreation is no substitute for a job. But people who are obliged to remain jobless for an indefinite period have a serious problem in maintaining their morale. Recreation can be of great assistance to them in doing this, and it may even be possible through intelligent use of leisure time for them to improve their employability. Though in such instances the primary benefits are to the unemployed individuals, the relief that recreation is capable of affording the general problem of unemployment is of much importance to society.

### RECREATION AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

Finally, there is for the nation as a whole the "preparedness" value of recreation. To many it may seem that a healthy, contented, and informed population is so clearly desirable in itself that as a national goal it can gain little in importance from the reappearance of armed force as a major factor in international relations. Though this may well be true, we can also recognize that the danger of our country's becoming involved in war does offer an additional reason why we should try in every way to make more useful citizens of our young people.

It is not simply recreation's function of promoting physical fitness that is important. Any use of leisure time that stimulates the mind and adds to our knowledge of the world in which we live is likely to increase the efficiency of our youth for whatever emergency service their country may require of them. Any creative or cultural values we can add to their lives should give youth a bigger stake in American civilization and leave them the more anxious to defend it from all enemies, within or without. Recreation has a real contribution to make to national preparedness. It can increase the physical, mental, and spiritual fitness of the people upon whom the defense of our country rests. No element is more important in national defense than the quality of the individuals who bear the responsibility for that defense.



## RECREATION NEEDS OF YOUTH

PETER HILL was a boy who graduated from high school in a village 130 miles from a large eastern city and went to that city to look for work. After a discouraging period of making the rounds he was hired as an order clerk in a large wholesale house. There, from eight-thirty in the morning until five in the afternoon he checked order slips. It wasn't interesting work, but Peter considered himself fortunate to have a job at all. He had found it only through the friendship of a businessman he had met the previous summer. This man acted as a sponsor for Peter when he came to the city.

During the six weeks of uncertainty and discouragement in looking for work Peter had felt that the world would be a fine place to live in if only he could get a job. Now, after two years at seventeen, eighteen, and finally twenty dollars a week, Peter wasn't so sure that life was satisfactory. In high school he had taken part in many interesting activities, but all that had stopped short when he came to the city. His business sponsor had been helpful in employment matters, but as a man thirty years Peter's senior he knew little of how to help him spend his time outside working hours.

Twenty dollars a week enabled Peter to be self-supporting and even to send a little money home occasionally, but it did not leave much for social life or other recreation. He couldn't afford "dates"—even if he had known how to meet the kind of girl he might have been interested in. He went to the movies more often than he could afford—it was the easiest way out of a dreary evening. But after two years Peter had become pretty dissatis-

fied with the pictures he saw. Pulp magazines were a plentiful and cheap means of spending time, but he could predict the outcome of almost any story after reading the first page. The public library was a long way from where he lived and seemed a pretty stuffy sort of place.

Neither movies nor reading afforded him *action*, and Peter wanted something to *do*. He would have liked to play pool or bowl, but those things ate up money. His job certainly didn't call for much imagination or thought—indeed he sometimes wondered whether he was worth twenty dollars a week. If only he had some pastime that would give him a feeling of amounting to something. If only he knew some lively and interesting young people about his own age. The satisfaction he had thought he would get out of his job hadn't lasted, and Peter was restless and discontented. Sometimes he thought he ought to give the job up and look for one that paid more and had more responsibility. He didn't know.

## THE NEED TO "DO SOMETHING" IN LEISURE TIME

Peter is a reasonably typical young fellow. There are thousands like him in our towns and cities and thousands facing comparable difficulties in country and village. The business of living each day in an adult world is perplexing to youth. They don't understand or approve of all that makes up that world. At the same time, each twenty-four hours must somehow be spent. Everywhere today in our cities, towns, villages, and on farms young people face the difficulty of what to do with their spare time. They haven't jobs, or they have jobs that take up only a few hours a day. Home is usually little help. Too often it is not even a place of refuge. Home is run by adults for adults, and youth like the companionship of their own kind. With little money to spend, "What to do?" becomes a very real problem. It is almost as puzzling as how to get a job. In one study, made in a Wisconsin rural community, youth ranked the need for more recreation above even the need for more employment.

Before the days of high-priced water frontage, barbed wire, and

ARTERIAL  
STOP  
HIGHWAY





"No Trespassing" signs, city youth could turn for recreation to the swimming hole and the baseball sand lot. Before automobiles came, streets made fair playgrounds. On special occasions there were family picnics or hikes in the country. Now city youth read and go to the movies. They frequent parks when they can find them, loaf or play about in congested, dangerous streets when they cannot. Country youth used to be content to seek social recreation at a box supper, square dance, or Sunday school. For more strenuous pastimes there were hunting and fishing, barn-raisings, cornhuskings, and contests of skill and strength. That was in the days when the radio, the motion picture, and the automobile had not arrived to vary their interests and broaden their horizon. Now they read and take part in such sports as they can organize. They go to community centers and clubs—if any exist. They would engage in hobbies and handicrafts if encouraged and shown how. They would arrange their own group recreation if they had places to come together.

The survey of the youth of New York City conducted in 1935 by the Welfare Council of New York concluded that only one boy in five and one girl in ten had a satisfactory leisure life, "measured from the point of view of a balanced ration." The poverty of the leisure of many young people is indicated by the responses to the question of what they did with their spare time given interviewers in a study conducted in Maryland by the American Youth Commission. Among the answers were:

"Just walk around like the other girls do." (A single girl, 21 years old, who left school at the completion of the third grade.)

"Read, movies, and dance. We sled-ride down the main street in the winter, if they don't catch us." (A railroad crosses the main street.)

"Go around and gossip."

"Ride on the beer truck, ride in a car, loaf."

"I think."

"Walk around and walk around and go home and go to bed . . . all my time is spare." (A Negro boy, 21 years old.)

"Gamble, shoot craps, read, and play pool." (A 17-year-old white boy, out of school and unemployed.)

"See what devilment we can get into. We generally get a bottle of whiskey and all get canned."

"Lay under a shade tree in the summer. Nothing in the winter."

Young people would rather participate in organized play than hang around the pool hall; they would rather get into clubs than into trouble with their elders; they would rather do *something* than nothing. What they want is not so much to have things done for them as to have direction and the means of doing something for themselves.

What can we do for and with youth so that they can do more for themselves? In the American Youth Commission's largest field study this question was asked of 13,000 Maryland youth. Their answers were specific. They wanted more parks and playgrounds; meeting places where they could have group games, music, handicrafts, dramatics, and discussion groups; swimming pools; and organized sports. They would *prefer* these active and creative outlets for their energies to a restricted diet of reading, motion pictures, radio, automobile riding, and other equally passive diversions. When asked what could be done to help young people get together they suggested community centers, social clubs, and dances. Asked what the community could do to keep young people out of trouble, three-fifths of them said "provide more recreation facilities and leadership." Seven out of every ten thought the recreational opportunities of their communities were inadequate. Among village and town youth, four out of five were of this opinion.

If we consider the wants expressed by youth against the background of the fundamental social changes of the present century and in the light of known psychological and physiological facts about young people, we can arrive at a kind of inventory of the unmet recreational needs of youth. These needs fall into three main classes. In the first place, nearly all youth need more opportunities for certain essential types of leisure activities. Then the problem of providing leisure-time activities for a number of groups of youth who are especially underprivileged in recreation demands particular attention. Finally, there is need for guidance in the use of opportunities for cultural recreation. We shall consider the first two of these categories in the present chapter, and the third in the following chapter.



## LEISURE ACTIVITIES THAT ARE INADEQUATE FOR NEARLY ALL YOUTH

There are four kinds of recreational opportunities that nearly all youth should have in greater degree. These are: (1) opportunities to participate in games, sports, and other outdoor activities; (2) opportunities for creative experiences; (3) opportunities for fuller social life; (4) opportunities for recreation at home. These categories are not mutually exclusive. Activities that are primarily physical in nature may have distinct social and intellectual values. Likewise, social recreation may involve considerable physical activity. Nevertheless, in most instances an emphasis in one direction or another will be evident.

### PHYSICAL RECREATION

No kind of recreation is less in need of justification than outdoor games, sports, and similar pastimes. Its benefits are understood by the public. It is the type of recreation youth want most and the kind that they engage in most frequently. Indeed there are people, both young and old, to whom any pastime not involving a considerable degree of physical exertion is hardly recreation.

We are a nation of sport lovers. The past several decades have seen a remarkable expansion in the opportunities of ordinary people to take part in games that originally were available only to the favored few—tennis and golf, for example. Nevertheless, in spite of the great and increasing popularity of active forms of recreation, there are many American youth to whom they are not sufficiently available. In a study conducted by the American Youth Commission in Dallas, Texas, the following groups of youth were found to lack regular physical recreation: 20 per cent of single boys and young men, 50 per cent of married boys and young men, 62 per cent of single girls, and 76 per cent of married girls. These percentages accounted for half of all young people between 16 and 24 included in the study.

If the effort that has gone into popularizing athletic spectacles had been used to encourage and enable more people to participate

Young people would rather participate in organized play than hang around the pool hall; they would rather get into clubs than into trouble with their elders; they would rather do *something* than nothing. What they want is not so much to have things done for them as to have direction and the means of doing something for themselves.

What can we do for and with youth so that they can do more for themselves? In the American Youth Commission's largest field study this question was asked of 13,000 Maryland youth. Their answers were specific. They wanted more parks and playgrounds; meeting places where they could have group games, music, handicrafts, dramatics, and discussion groups; swimming pools; and organized sports. They would *prefer* these active and creative outlets for their energies to a restricted diet of reading, motion pictures, radio, automobile riding, and other equally passive diversions. When asked what could be done to help young people get together they suggested community centers, social clubs, and dances. Asked what the community could do to keep young people out of trouble, three-fifths of them said "provide more recreation facilities and leadership." Seven out of every ten thought the recreational opportunities of their communities were inadequate. Among village and town youth, four out of five were of this opinion.

If we consider the wants expressed by youth against the background of the fundamental social changes of the present century and in the light of known psychological and physiological facts about young people, we can arrive at a kind of inventory of the unmet recreational needs of youth. These needs fall into three main classes. In the first place, nearly all youth need more opportunities for certain essential types of leisure activities. Then the problem of providing leisure-time activities for a number of groups of youth who are especially underprivileged in recreation demands particular attention. Finally, there is need for guidance in the use of opportunities for cultural recreation. We shall consider the first two of these categories in the present chapter, and the third in the following chapter.

## LEISURE ACTIVITIES THAT ARE INADEQUATE FOR NEARLY ALL YOUTH

There are four kinds of recreational opportunities that nearly all youth should have in greater degree. These are: (1) opportunities to participate in games, sports, and other outdoor activities; (2) opportunities for creative experiences; (3) opportunities for fuller social life; (4) opportunities for recreation at home. These categories are not mutually exclusive. Activities that are primarily physical in nature may have distinct social and intellectual values. Likewise, social recreation may involve considerable physical activity. Nevertheless, in most instances an emphasis in one direction or another will be evident.

### PHYSICAL RECREATION

No kind of recreation is less in need of justification than outdoor games, sports, and similar pastimes. Its benefits are understood by the public. It is the type of recreation youth want most and the kind that they engage in most frequently. Indeed there are people, both young and old, to whom any pastime not involving a considerable degree of physical exertion is hardly recreation.

We are a nation of sport lovers. The past several decades have seen a remarkable expansion in the opportunities of ordinary people to take part in games that originally were available only to the favored few—tennis and golf, for example. Nevertheless, in spite of the great and increasing popularity of active forms of recreation, there are many American youth to whom they are not sufficiently available. In a study conducted by the American Youth Commission in Dallas, Texas, the following groups of youth were found to lack regular physical recreation: 20 per cent of single boys and young men, 50 per cent of married boys and young men, 62 per cent of single girls, and 76 per cent of married girls. These percentages accounted for half of all young people between 16 and 24 included in the study.

If the effort that has gone into popularizing athletic spectacles had been used to encourage and enable more people to participate

in games and sports, there would be a different story to tell. As matters now stand, however, the active, outdoor life of great numbers of young people is on a catch-as-catch-can basis. Far too often this means that the only outlet their natural interest in physical activity can find is to follow the fortunes of professional athletes—from the sidelines if they can afford it, otherwise through the newspapers and radio.

The opportunity for athletic participation that school offers the average young person has been comparatively small. If a boy has a natural aptitude for some sport, he can develop it through the school team. But such a lad has relatively little need of organized physical recreation. On the other hand, the youngster who would benefit most from practice in games and sports is not likely to add to the school's prestige in this field, and he has consequently been neglected. There has been some improvement in recent years, but we are still far from the point where schools will accept the responsibility of seeing that all their students have an equal opportunity to take part in the more physically beneficial forms of recreation.

Out-of-school youth have even less chance of filling any substantial portion of their leisure with sports and outdoor activities. For the most part, such pastimes require facilities they do not have, and there is no agency or combination of agencies that has yet been able to make them generally available. Commercial interests offer poolrooms and bowling alleys, less frequently skating rinks and swimming pools. The former are often undesirable places for young people to congregate, and all cost money. In the larger cities there are public playgrounds and sometimes facilities for swimming, tennis, and other sports. So far as these go, they are very valuable. But hardly any community offers sufficient opportunities for public recreation to meet the need, and the great majority of communities make little or no provision for this function. There are private agencies, such as the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., that offer indoor athletic facilities. There are others, such as the Scouting organizations, that promote outdoor life among young people. Still other groups are aware of the need and do what they can to meet it

with very limited means. However, no organization working in this field reaches more than a small percentage of the youth who would benefit from its services, and their combined efforts still leave the great majority of youth to work out their own plan of physical activities as best they can.

The result is that children and adolescent youth play on sidewalks, in streets, and in vacant lots. As they grow older, they simply stand around street corners or get together in poolrooms and bowling alleys. Lacking the means of doing things that would release their physical energy, they gradually accustom themselves to doing nothing. The sporting pages of the daily paper become their substitute for activity. How keen the urge for normal, active recreation can be is shown by the case of a young man reported in the newspapers. He had recently been discharged from prison and shortly afterwards held up a policeman at the point of a pistol. His explanation was: "I want to go back to Sing Sing. Down here I'm just a bum, but up there I was on the ball team."

Rural youth are scarcely better off in this respect than youth in towns and cities. True, they have sufficient open space, but they lack direction and leadership that would assist them to find satisfaction in the simple facilities available to them. A recent study of young people 16 to 29 years old in forty villages throughout the country showed that only one-half of the boys or young men and only one-third of the girls or young women took part in outdoor sports, even in summer.

We should not make the mistake of thinking of physical recreation exclusively in terms of games and sports. We may well believe that as long as these activities occupy so prominent a place in our national life everyone ought to have an opportunity of participating in them. There will also be no difficulty in agreeing that it is better for youth to play games than simply to sit and watch them. But competitive games tend to produce attitudes not wholly desirable in a complex civilization such as ours. Young people need to learn habits of cooperation as well as of competition. There are forms of outdoor activity, such as hiking and camping, that have a natural appeal to most youth

and are well suited to developing desirable traits of character. They are especially valuable in widening the experiences of urban youth, who generally have had little contact with nature. Indeed, to make the country accessible to youth from the cities would be one of the greatest recreational advances that could be achieved.

The primary social end which justifies us in asking that all young people be given opportunities for active types of recreation is the physical fitness of our population. Recreation is one avenue to normal physical growth and development. The contribution it can make should not be withheld from any of our citizens.

### (CREATIVE RECREATION)

All students of mental hygiene recognize that youth need creative activities. To produce, with one's own hands or mind, things or ideas or lovely tones or dramatic effects is an experience particularly valuable to young people. Youth is a transition period, and the psychological goal toward which boys and girls who pass through it are groping is the feeling that they *are* someone, that they have become unique personalities in the world of adults and have a distinctive contribution to make. For most youth a sense of uncertainty develops at about this time of life. It occurs whether they are in school or at work, and it is doubly likely to come if they happen to be unemployed for any length of time. These facts present a problem for both educational and recreational agencies, but recreation is better able to stress creativeness because it is the freer from tradition.

To youth in school, recreation should offer creative activities in order that they may have valuable experiences not provided by the conventional school program. Most psychologists agree that a feeling of success and achievement in one thing provides overtones of well-being stimulating to other kinds of endeavor. May teachers and parents soon learn the lesson that encouragement and success are keys to good behavior and rapid progress!

To employed youth, creative recreation affords a means of escaping from the monotony of the dull, routine work by which

so many young people today must earn their living. We shall consider this function of recreation in the next chapter.

To unemployed youth, creative recreation has a special value. Probably no one but a young person long without work can appreciate the weariness and loss of confidence that comes from being told day after day, "Nothing for you just now." He grows to feel that he is lacking in something or that the world has no place for him. He needs to regain a sense of uniqueness, of being a distinct "I." He also needs to acquire a sense of worth, to be able to say to himself, "I can do something." Creative forms of recreation help him gain this confidence.

The need for creating is thus psychologically a national necessity. It is fully as real as, for example, the social need that all youth be provided with equal educational opportunity or the economic need to conserve our natural resources.

The forms of creative recreation are many. To paint, to make things with clay or wood, to play an instrument, to sing, to act in a play or pageant, to build and operate puppets, to develop strategy in games—all of these require skilled teaching and more or less equipment, but they pay dividends to the individual and to society. In a county survey of rural youth, "playing a musical instrument" was tenth on the list of things that youth actually did but first on the list of those they wanted to do. One state survey of youth revealed the following preferences for activities, in the order given: glee club, orchestra, dramatic club, young people's forum. Surely youth with such creative ambitions as these deserve to be helped to realize them.

Unfortunately, from half to three-fourths of our young people appear to have no hobbies or other forms of creative recreation. The Regents' Inquiry in New York State reported that 45 per cent of the high school graduates were without hobbies. In the American Youth Commission's Dallas study only 9 per cent of the youth mentioned hobbies or cultural activities as among their three principal leisure-time activities. Frequently young people are found unable to mention as many as three leisure interests. In a survey of youth in a rural county of New York, 19 per cent reported no second-choice recreational activity and 64 per cent

gave no third choice. We must face the inescapable fact that an education-recreation program will have to assume the burden of introducing creative experiences into the daily lives of youth.

(SOCIAL RECREATION)

Young people need social recreation just as certainly as they need creative recreation. It can be equally helpful in overcoming the sense of personal inadequacy that so often troubles the adolescent. Probably more feelings of inferiority arise from uncertainty in social relations than from any other cause. We rub elbows with so many people and are able to carry on an intelligent conversation with so few of them. Merely "getting along" with others gives us a feeling of having achieved something.

One striking inference to be drawn from the Maryland study of the American Youth Commission is that young people engage so extensively in solitary recreational activities because there is little else available. The principal recreation of from two-thirds to three-fourths of the groups studied was individual in character. Yet the majority wanted more group activity. Seventy-two per cent of the white youth and 86 per cent of Negro youth in Maryland did not belong to clubs of any sort. In a survey of 8,000 girls in California it was reported that only 15 per cent were members of clubs.

It is easier to leave youth to find their own solitary recreation than to plan a balanced program of activities involving creative, social, and physical values. Because our vision has been limited, we have allowed our youth to depend too largely upon spectator sports, reading, movies, and the radio for their recreation. These are all worth-while activities in reasonable amounts, but when taken as a steady diet they can bring on recreational malnutrition.

Once boys and girls leave school they have less and less chance of belonging to a club or other social organization. On the other hand, the longer they stay in school the more likely they are to keep up their membership in such groups after leaving school. In the Maryland study, one-half of the out-of-school youth who had continued their education until the sophomore year of college



belonged to one or more clubs, while only one-sixth of those who had dropped out at the end of the eighth grade were members of any organization.

Youth need help in getting out of the social "back pockets" into which so many of them have slipped. They need community centers, clubs, forums, and the opportunity of meeting young people of the opposite sex under wholesome conditions. Moreover, these organizations should be adapted to the interests of youth. One 18-year-old girl complained that the community center of her town might better be called a "reducing center." "Who wants to go up to the gym and see a lot of fat old married women doing calisthenics!" This was not a complaint about active, physical forms of recreation. Indeed these must be the core of almost any leisure-time program that is to hold the interest of young people. It was a heart-felt protest against a formalized program centered about the needs and desires of adults rather than youth. A community center fills needs so varied and vital that its success ought not to be endangered by unimaginative organization.

In a rural community of the Midwest, 60 per cent of the youth said they would like to meet other young people of both sexes at some central spot for recreation and discussion. This is one function of a wide-awake community center. Can we expect normal relationships between the sexes so long as boys and girls can meet each other only in movies, automobiles, dance halls, or beer parlors?

Social recreation ministers to a psychological need in providing a means of developing social competence; it helps to give youth a feeling of "belonging"; and it promotes healthy relationships between the sexes. These are important functions in our impersonal society. In performing them recreation advances democratic culture and encourages intelligent citizenship.

#### HOME RECREATION

The emphasis upon public recreation has obscured the need for restoring leisure activities to something like the place they once held in family life. We have been so preoccupied with the neces-

sity for improving our public social and educational services that we sometimes appear to overlook the fact that many of the conditions these agencies are intended to correct arise from deficiencies in the home which receive scant attention.

The home used to be the center of most of the recreational life of all members of the family. It is still through the home that the recreational interests and activities of youth receive their early direction. The home has youth longer each day than any other agency has; and despite the growth of professional services in the care and education of young people, parents are still very influential individuals in the lives of their children. If youth are to learn how to spend their leisure wisely when they become adults, there can hardly be a stronger influence in shaping the pattern of their life-time recreational interests than memories of pleasant hours at home. We should begin at the "source" of youth's daily life and give encouragement and direction to family leisure-time activities.

Recreation in the home can also be used as a bond to deepen the companionship between young people and their parents. No need is more urgent, more frequently talked about, less acted upon. Parents may feel uncertain in the child's educational world. They may have forgotten their algebra and their history. But if the occasion offers they can still recapture that state of mind known as "youthful enthusiasm." If we wish to keep the home a vigorous social influence, there is hardly a better way than to strengthen it as a center for the worth-while use of leisure.

Forms of recreation that parents and youth can "do together" include hobbies such as model building, stamp collecting, or photography. Nature study can be equally engrossing to father and son. The entire family can engage in prize contests, participate in folk dances at the community center, or cultivate a home garden. Games and group music can bridge the gap between the two generations, as can many other forms of activity. The *New York Times* for January 22, 1939, carried an article on the possibilities of puppets in the home:

One of the most important characteristics of the Ideal Family is that they are supposed to have interests in common. This sounds a lot easier than it works out. It's pretty hard to organize a family group

when Johnny wants to carve wood, Mary Jane wants to make doll clothes, Willie is unhappy if he's separated from his paint box, and Father and Mother have their own ideas of entertainment too. The current puppet exhibition ought to suggest a solution to all this. . . . It is obvious that there never was anything so clearly designed to unite a disjointed family as a puppet theater.

At present family recreation is mostly passive and casual. One study of two small towns in Minnesota described it as "limited mainly to such activities as going to the movies, listening to the radio, and automobile riding." A study in a rural county of New York State reported that the proportion of youth whose "families do not provide facilities or consciously try to carry on 'sociability' activities for the family as a group" was 87 per cent. The home cannot be preserved as an important agency in the recreational life of youth without more imagination and planning than is revealed by studies such as these.

It is true that the small amount of spare room in many homes is a serious hindrance to their use for recreational purposes. In planning new homes we must be careful to keep leisure needs in mind. Meanwhile, we should do all that we can with the means already available in order to strengthen the part the home can play in the recreational lives of our young people.

### YOUTH GROUPS THAT ARE ESPECIALLY LACKING IN RECREATIONAL ADVANTAGES

Certain classes of young people are especially lacking in recreational advantages; among them are rural youth, youth of low-income families in general, Negro youth, girls, and the older adolescents. These young persons should be helped to obtain more recreational opportunities of all kinds. In particular they need opportunities that will suit their environment and that will counteract the disadvantages under which they live.

#### RURAL YOUTH

What happens to rural youth is of national importance. Not only do half of our youth live in rural areas, but the cities depend upon the country for a considerable share of their young adults.

It has been estimated that the rural parts of the nation spent \$14,000,000,000 on rearing and educating the youth who were absorbed by the cities in the ten years between 1920 and 1930.

The greatest leisure-time need of rural youth, whether in small town or village or on the farm, is for social recreation. They have ample space for physical activities and sports, though these often need to be developed and adapted to rural situations. They may already have a fair number of hobbies and collecting interests. But what they want above all else is social groups and community centers.

It has been pointed out earlier that this need is especially acute among village youth. There is no section of our population that lacks more of the elements of a recreation program than youth in villages and small towns. They have all the disadvantages and dangers of fairly close human contacts while enjoying none of the advantages either of the large open spaces of the farm or of the cultural facilities in cities. It is in these small rural communities that gangs and other undesirable social patterns will form quickly among young people—possibly even more readily than in cities—unless opportunities for wholesome recreation are available.

In one large rural survey, including 11,000 unmarried youth, the only agencies found to be offering young people any considerable opportunity for social recreation were the 4-H clubs and the Grange. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and the Christian Endeavor each reached about one-sixth of the total group. Due recognition must also be given the rural church for its influence in the social life of young people. In general, however, the efforts of all agencies concerned have so far done relatively little to eliminate the disadvantages that beset our 10,000,000 rural young people in their use of leisure.

It is clear that to remove the recreational handicaps under which rural youth live will require energetic and sustained action from two sources. On the one hand, the agricultural interest groups and the national agencies working for youth must give more attention to the need of rural young people for social activities. On the other hand, we must not lose sight of the fact

that the local community has the strongest obligation to do all in its power to solve the problems of its youth. It is true that many rural areas are impoverished and suffer the additional handicap of having lost much of their potential leadership through migration. However, what the local community can do it should do. There are many leisure activities suitable for local development in rural areas. Amateur orchestras, group singing, handicraft classes, dramatic clubs, motion pictures, circulating libraries, dances, forum discussions, and a community center to house such activities—these are examples of what a community can accomplish if it is awake to the needs of its young people. Local initiative, together with joint action by all interested bodies, will be found the key to the situation.

#### YOUTH IN LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

One of the factors complicating the recreational problems of rural youth is that they have so little money to spend. But lack of money is characteristic of many youth everywhere, in the city as well as in the country. The recreational handicaps that young people suffer because of this circumstance are so serious and so widespread that youth in low-income families stand out distinctly as a group with special problems in their use of leisure time.

In recreation, as in nearly every other field, the youth whose family is on a low economic level is at a marked disadvantage. His participation in any activity for which money is essential is narrowly restricted. Often he cannot accompany his friends to places of commercial amusement or attend social events where his clothing would make him conspicuous. He may not even be able to afford transportation to the open country, where he could pass the day cheaply and profitably.

It is a significant characteristic of the great expansion of recreation which has taken place in this country over the past half century that it is the relatively expensive ways of passing leisure time that have become most sought after. In many instances this has led to a reduction in their expense, but the cost of some of our most popular amusements still places them beyond the reach of great numbers of youth. It is hardly surprising that

which to pass leisure time. This is particularly true for youth who must live in city slums.

The means best adapted to overcome these disadvantages is a development of public recreational resources and facilities. Youth from poor families must be enabled to find wholesome recreation outside of the home until their parents can be helped out of their economic rut. An even better and more direct way of assisting them would be to see that they get work. If these youth could earn their own pocket money they would be able to participate on more nearly equal terms in the recreational life of other young people of their age. They would have less need of measures especially designed to benefit them.

An opportunity to improve the leisure surroundings of youth in low-income families arises when housing projects are being planned. Though public housing does not yet reach many families on the very lowest economic level, it serves a class whose home recreational facilities are wholly inadequate. If sufficient room for family leisure enterprises is included in the individual dwelling units, and suitable space—outdoors and indoors—is set aside for public recreation in connection with each building or group of buildings, a beginning will have been made for a wholesome development of leisure activities.

The United States Housing Authority has set up detailed standards and requirements governing the provision of recreational facilities and programs in local housing projects in over 200 cities. Residents of housing developments are not the only ones who will benefit by the observance of these standards. It has been found that the programs function best when thrown open to all members of the community in which the housing project is situated. These persons are frequently as much in need of recreational assistance as the more direct beneficiaries of the project. When the leisure program is operated in this fashion, assistance can often be obtained from the municipal recreation department, which may undertake to supply leaders.

Despite the obvious need for planning for leisure in connection with housing developments, there are instances where this factor has been neglected. It will be advisable for those interested in



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the matter to keep constantly in touch with the public housing authorities of their city in order to ensure that recreational needs receive due attention in their projects.

#### NEGRO YOUTH

One out of every ten young persons in America is a Negro. The Negro youth belongs to a group that suffers from the double handicap of extremely low average incomes and being a racial minority. In every field of human welfare this circumstance operates to his disadvantage. In recreation its effects are painfully apparent.

The young Negro is usually a slum dweller, whether he happens to live in the city or country. His use of leisure time is accordingly subject to all the limitations that an inadequate environment imposes. Wholesome recreation is often an impossibility for him at home, and when he turns to public playgrounds or community centers in certain states he will find them closed to him. If he attends school in these states the recreational service and equipment available will usually be of the most meager sort, and even these he will lose sooner than a white person would, because of the early age at which he drops out. If he is lucky enough to get a job, living expenses will probably absorb all his small pay. He can seldom afford commercial amusements. He is reduced to playing in the streets or loafing about on corners or running with gangs. Small wonder that his chance of falling into antisocial ways of employing his leisure is relatively great.

A young person in a Negro family that has achieved middle-class status is hardly less beset with recreational handicaps. Social pressure will not allow him to descend to irresponsible street play and rowdyism. Yet he finds that most opportunities to use his leisure in ways that have the approval of his group are closed to him. He cannot go to the downtown motion picture theaters unless his skin is fair enough to enable him to pass for white, and then if he does he will lose the respect of his fellows. He is barred from the best restaurants and roadhouses. There will be few tennis courts or swimming pools open to him.

The impact of these discriminations upon sensitive middle-

class Negro youth is likely to be even greater than upon those of lower social strata. Youth in the lowest income families, whatever their race, are constantly discriminated against because of their inferior economic status. The disadvantages are hardly greater for Negroes than for whites. But young Negroes whose families have risen some distance on the economic scale see themselves denied the social advantages of the dominant race and realize that the cause is not economic status—which they might conceivably be able to better—but the accident of race, before which they are powerless.

Given anything approaching decent conditions of life, Negroes are folk with a talent for sociability and group forms of recreation. They have a genius for some forms of artistic expression, as shown in their folk songs. It is a great pity that people naturally inclined toward the wholesome use of leisure should be so limited and confined in their recreational life by artificial restrictions and community prejudice.

Negro youth have a special, psychological need for recreation, in addition to the desirability of bringing out their natural aptitudes. The many handicaps—social, economic, and political—imposed upon their race make Negro youth particularly likely to develop attitudes unfavorable to their own welfare and to the welfare of society. Feelings of inferiority, resentment, and aggression will often arise inevitably in Negro adolescents as they become aware of what it means to be Negroes in a white man's world. There is nothing like wholesome recreational activity to work these attitudes out of the system. Recreation has for Negro youth in our society a potential healing and corrective power similar to that which it affords unemployed youth of all races. It is, however, a power that can only be exercised through social planning. Up to the present it has remained largely undeveloped.

Public recreational facilities for Negroes have been expanded during the past decade but are still very inadequate. We need more of them—many more, and better. At the same time we must realize that the provision of special facilities on a racial basis, often impractical and always expensive, cannot be a

complete solution to the recreational difficulties of Negro youth. These difficulties will never be wholly overcome so long as Negroes are regarded and treated as people for whom the leftovers and the second-bests of everything are sufficient. We must banish from our social thinking the attitude that any class of our youth is less worthy or less deserving of the benefits of our civilization than another.

#### GIRLS

Girls are our largest group of recreationally underprivileged youth. There are 11,000,000 girls between the ages of 16 and 24, but of these only about 2,000,000 are touched by any agency serving adolescents, other than the church or school. True, youth-serving organizations have not been vastly more successful in reaching boys, but the special restrictions that hedge the recreational life of girls and young women make it particularly necessary that they receive assistance in employing their leisure wisely.

Girls have hardly less need than boys for physically active forms of recreation, but aside from public school programs they encounter more difficulty in obtaining them. It is only in comparatively recent years that girls and young women have won the right to develop their bodies through games and sports. In many communities they still lack much of the freedom young men enjoy. Girls are more dependent upon organized recreation and special facilities. If there is not a Y.W.C.A. available with its gymnasium and other athletic equipment, and if there are no public tennis courts or swimming pools, out-of-school girls are almost reduced to walking for exercise. They cannot very well play on vacant lots. They have less opportunity for camping than boys.

Girls have a special need for social recreation. They need it to counteract the tendency to seclusion that has still not wholly vanished from the feminine upbringing. Even more they need it because it is the most important way of meeting young men and forming friendships that eventually will result in marriage. Yet girls can seldom take the initiative in seeking social recrea-

tion. If they are to go out with boys, they must wait to be asked. If they go out with other girls, they damage their chances of pairing off with boys. There are few places where they can go alone and meet young men.

The creative and cultural life of girls has also suffered in some ways from modern trends. Girls used to spend much of their time learning household arts, but today small families and apartment living have lessened the opportunity for practicing these skills. Many young women grow up without knowing how to cook or sew. The social pressure upon girls to be able to exhibit some artistic accomplishment has also slackened. It is no longer necessary for them to spend tedious hours learning to play the piano or to do embroidery. It is undoubtedly a gain to be relieved of the necessity of doing these things. But a girl needs creative interests and hobbies as keenly as a boy does, and she should now learn to pursue them because they can be interesting in themselves.

What girls can do with their leisure in view of the many restrictions upon their activities has become a real problem. To a greater extent even than boys they have cultivated the art of just sitting around and waiting for something to happen. In one survey of girls' interests, dancing, letter writing, and shopping ranked first among the things they liked to do. They make liberal use of the radio and go to the movies as often as they are able. In the latter pastime, however, they are often handicapped by lack of pocket money, since they usually cannot obtain odd jobs as readily as boys. The recreational life of all young people needs to be improved in many respects, but the half of our youth who are girls or young women deserve particular consideration.

#### THE OLDER ADOLESCENT

Youth from 16 to 21 are stranded between the recreation programs of school and community. In the American Youth Commission's Maryland study it was found that participation in organized recreation drops sharply after 16, the most frequent school-leaving age. This is an indication of the loss in recreational opportunity that must be felt by the out-of-school-but-not-yet-

adult young person. Delinquency rates and what we know of the psychology of the individual both show the period from 16 on to adulthood to be a most critical one.

There is an urgent need for more educational and recreational programs designed for the older adolescent. He is neither fish nor fowl so far as the community is concerned. Schools and nonschool community organizations are each likely to think the other responsible for the youth of this age. Not even the private agencies are very successful with youth above 16. Only a relatively small part of the membership of most national organizations for young people is made up of persons between 16 and 21.

Several recent surveys of social agencies have criticized the public recreation authorities for aiming their programs at the adult (taxpayer) level and have at the same time criticized the schools for not giving attention to the recreation needs of youth beyond the compulsory school age. Nothing can possibly be said against having well-developed leisure-time programs for adults; these programs should not, however, be permitted to operate to the exclusion of programs for youth, who will soon be adults and taxpayers.

Youth of the late teens are the forgotten youth of the country. Yet it is especially at this period that the kinds of recreation contributing most to the development of individuality assume their maximum importance. Youth of this age have a keen need for social recreation and wholesome opportunities to mix with members of the opposite sex. They need discussion groups and youth forums. They need to develop hobbies that will last throughout adulthood. When youth leave school there is generally an abrupt stop to many of the recreational activities involving the use of expensive equipment and careful organization. They are thrown back upon a leisure life of reading, attending movies, listening to the radio, and being spectators at athletic events. They need to learn new types of sports that require few participants and only simple equipment, such as badminton, skating, and volleyball. They need to learn other satisfying ways of passing leisure time, not involving strenuous physical exertion.

When a list of the activities youth want is compared with a list of those they engage in, it is nearly always found that such things as playing a musical instrument, working at handicrafts, and playing "quiet" games all move up five to ten places in rank. These are activities that have a high carry-over value. The school may well assume a major responsibility for making young people familiar with them. If Elbert Hubbard's statement, "Boys are the only things in the world out of which men are made," ever needed quoting it is with reference to late adolescence. A young person is here at the transition stage where he is neither child nor man but will revert to one or grow into the other.

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## CHAPTER II

# THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE IN CULTURAL RECREATION

In addition to opportunities that are not now sufficiently available to them, youth need guidance in using some of the opportunities they do have. It is particularly important that they be assisted to make satisfactory use of the three great recreational media that occupy so much of their leisure time—motion pictures, the radio, and reading.

## THE MOVIES

There are approximately 20,000 motion picture theaters in the United States, and the influence they exert upon the mental habits of a large part of our population is probably immense. Upwards of 60,000,000 people attend motion pictures each week, and sample studies suggest that nearly a fourth of them may be between the ages of 16 and 24. This means that youth average about one attendance at a motion picture weekly. From surveys we know that the majority of city youth go twice a week. Movies are undoubtedly one of the most popular forms of recreation with youth.

The problems raised by the attraction motion pictures have for young people are exceptionally difficult. The least that can be said against frequent attendance is that it uses up time and money which might usually be made to earn greater recreational dividends if spent in other ways. Merely on a basis of leisure hours consumed, the movies are expensive; and too often the quality of the recreation they offer does not justify this expense.

Entertainment has its uses, and no one would wish to deny it a reasonable place in the leisure of all persons. However, young people probably have less need for entertainment pure and simple

than adults do. It is particularly desirable that they should engage in leisure-time pursuits that will expand their interests and develop their personalities. There is little to be gained in these directions from the average motion picture. One young man in the American Youth Commission's Maryland study said to the interviewer: "A movie is something to get your mind off things . . . something you don't have to think about and which you don't think much about afterward."

The criticism is frequently made of motion pictures that they fail to do a good job even within the restricted field of their specialty—entertainment. The results of the Motion Picture Research Council's study of 1938 indicate that only slightly better than one out of five films is suitable for children. It may be supposed that youth do not need to be so carefully shielded as children. Yet the adolescent and even the young person of a more advanced age is still very impressionable. He is not attracted by what interests a child most keenly, but in the things that are uppermost in his own mind he is hardly less readily influenced.

Statements from youth themselves suggest that films may easily have an unfavorable effect. One young person is reported as saying: "The movies have made me dislike restraint of any kind. They have also made me dislike work." Another youth is more explicit about the reasons for his discontent. "Fine clothes, cars. Poor people want these things too and they ain't got them. Then it's soon over and you come out on the street and it's the same old thing for you." Such comments suggest that even quite unobjectionable topics may be presented in ways that will raise unexpected problems for young people.

It is probably in the love-story type of film that the movies appear at their worst. We are all familiar with the modest superlatives in which each season's crop of romantic films is advertised as more breath-taking, heart-rending, and soul-searching than the last. If these pictures came anywhere near their descriptions, young people ought not to be allowed to see them. The effect of the promised emotional debauches could not fail to be harmful. But in fact we know that they turn out to be a great deal less exceptional than the claims made for them.



The real danger in motion pictures is not that they will lead a young person into immorality or crime but that they may give him warped values and false impressions of life. Moviegoers are encouraged to form naïve conceptions of love and exaggerated notions of the place of romance in the lives of ordinary people. They are shown how to think and express themselves in stereotyped phrases, to reduce human relationships to a few stock patterns to which they can respond along predetermined lines. They are in danger of attaching excessive importance to the trivial things in life and of never learning how to deal with or even recognize the really important things. In a word, they run the risk of coming to interpret life in terms of the movies.

It is difficult to say how far young people yield to these influences. There is evidence that they are well aware of the make-believe nature of the ordinary Hollywood feature. Indeed the skepticism they seem to have built up toward the commercial film is a drawback to the use of the movies for educational purposes. But constant repetition can hardly fail to have an effect, and it is not likely that youth can avoid being unconsciously influenced by movies simply through being aware of the unreal character of much that the movies show them. There is abundant evidence that motion pictures do have a great influence both on youth and on other persons.

What can we do to shield youth from the effect that indiscriminating attendance at motion pictures may have upon them? We shall not accomplish much simply by telling them to go less frequently. Neither can we expect producers to make better films simply because the shortcomings of those they now prepare may have been pointed out to them. It is true that recent years have seen a small but significant increase in films which contrive entertainment of the first rank out of nothing more promising than the imparting of information (the "documentary" film) and also a few films having what is termed "social significance." But these developments have been long overdue, and we can hardly expect them to become permanent and substantial characteristics of the film world while it remains profitable to fob off the public with cheap excitement and gaudy spectacles.

If a community feels that its young people spend too much time

at the movies, the obvious remedy is to provide other forms of recreation that have equal or greater attraction and are better suited to the leisure needs of youth. This, however, is no full or final solution to the problem. Motion pictures are with us to stay, and they are likely always to be among the principal recreational interests of youth. Moreover, the movies are not inherently bad. Particular films may be judged to be unsatisfactory as a way of spending time, and the proportion of such films offered for exhibition may seem high. But it need not remain so. The community must accept the fact that its young people will continue to see movies and turn its attention to improving that influential part of their environment provided by films.

There are several lines along which progress can be made. One is to organize community support for "good movies" for youth. It rather frequently occurs that films of acknowledged cultural merit turn out to be box-office failures. This fact naturally tends to make producers reluctant to depart from the tested and proved formulas for money-making films. Nothing would be more likely to encourage an experimental attitude on their part than knowledge that local communities are prepared to give active support to films that deserve encouragement.

Local endorsement of good movies, as they are produced and as they are exhibited in local theaters, can be arranged through all sorts of community agencies. The church, the library, the school, welfare agencies, young people's organizations, and other youth-serving groups can all join in common action. In many communities, neighborhood theaters have set aside Friday and Saturday for children and youth. Programs on such days vary considerably but frequently do not rise above the "western" film. This type, though probably harmless, has little of value to offer youngsters. With cooperation between community organizations and theater managers it should be possible to work out a movie diet for "youth days" in which the kinds of films the community believes good for its young people would be given in increasing doses. Youth do not like preaching, and programs intended to appeal to them must be kept at a high entertainment level. But

some films have filled the double requirement of popularity and inherent value. If difficulty is found in keeping supplied from current productions, there could be a revival of older classics that youth have not seen.

A second course of action is to increase the opportunities for seeing noncommercial films. Over 10,000 schools have sound projectors, and there are 15,000 silent projectors in the classrooms of the country. Combined, these are more than equal to the number of commercial theaters. Many private organizations concerned with the leisure of youth are also equipped to show films. If all these agencies were willing and able to make full use of their motion picture equipment there would be created a powerful means of turning youth's enormous interest in the movies into more wholesome paths. Such noncommercial activity would not usually compete with the established picture theaters in the nature of the films exhibited, but it would be in direct competition with them for the leisure time of the young person—and very properly.

There is now a larger accumulation of acceptable motion picture material for educational purposes than is realized by many who might wish to use it. The Motion Picture Project of the American Council on Education reports that at least 3,500 films of good caliber are available for use in 16-mm. projectors and that at least 500 are excellent both in technical quality and educational character. Over 100 different agencies distribute these films to schools, colleges, and community groups. Some 500 short commercial films of educational value have been made available by Hollywood producers for showing in schools. Interesting work is being done by the Commission on Human Relations of the Progressive Education Association in editing commercial feature pictures for school use.

The use of selected films in schools is not only a good educational technique, it also serves the valuable purpose of accustoming young people to good films in other than entertainment forms. Indeed, there are experimental data to indicate that the wise use of educational films in school tends to produce discrimination toward movies shown in the theater. In the development of an

educational film service the aims and methods of education and recreation draw so closely together that they practically merge.

While we are making films of educational and cultural value more easily available to young people we might also try to bring them an occasional flesh-and-blood theatrical performance. There are many boys and girls who have never seen a play put on with professional actors. Most young people have never been to an opera. If every now and then they could have the experience of attending firsthand productions of worth-while works competently performed it might take the edge off their appetite for movies. It would certainly give them a better background for their movie going. The commercial road show, for what it was worth, has almost vanished from the American scene. The cost of nonprofit professional performances is usually prohibitive. Nevertheless, promising experiments have been undertaken in this direction.

The accomplishments of the nonprofit organization known as Junior Programs, Inc., are particularly worthy of study. This institution is bringing annually to half a million school children in a hundred towns throughout the nation the chance of seeing real plays and real operas, performed by professional actors, at an admission fee of ten to twenty-five cents. It began with a group of mothers who wanted to provide their children with better cultural opportunities than the movies or the radio offered. It has developed into a booking and producing agency that signs up opera singers, ballet dancers, and actors. It books and endorses marionette shows, scientific lectures, educational films, and symphony orchestras. These it will send into local communities at the cost of production.

The performances arranged by Junior Programs are usually given in the school auditorium and sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Association, the college women's club, the Junior League, or any of some fifty other community and civic organizations. An unusual feature is that school correlation work is supplied with all productions. This is incorporated into the school curriculum and has distinct educational value. The cost of performances runs from \$150 to \$300 for an opera, play, or ballet,

and considerably less for other attractions. Children and young people seem to derive intense satisfaction from the performances. If more communities would avail themselves of services of this kind, a real step would be taken toward overcoming the cultural poverty that drives young people to the motion picture theater as their chief form of amusement.

A third line that the community may profitably follow to encourage youth to turn their interest in movies to advantage is to develop in them the ability to make well-informed judgments on the pictures they see. There is reason to believe that considerable latent dissatisfaction exists among youth with the fare they ordinarily receive in the motion picture theater. But they have not the critical equipment to focus their discontent and use it to guide their movie going. The teaching of motion picture discrimination should be recognized as an important need of youth, and specific provision should be made for it in every secondary school.

By analysis and class discussion it is possible to put young people beyond the influence of the Hollywood publicity agent. They can be brought to understand that the least important things about a picture are the amount it cost and the number of big-name actors who appear in it. They can learn to judge a film on its merits—according to its story, its acting, and especially its direction. They can be taught to compare it with life when it invites comparison and to decide whether they ought to accept it at face value. When they have learned these things they will be able to enjoy the good parts of any picture and ignore its mediocre aspects. The danger of uncritical movie viewing will then have been largely overcome. There is no reason why this process should impair the spontaneous enjoyment which is a characteristic of recreation.

In recent years motion picture appreciation has become a fairly common subject of instruction in high schools, where it is often introduced informally in the classes on literature. It is the opinion of those who have studied this movement that there is need for a reconsideration of its aims and a revision of the ways and means by which motion picture appreciation is to be devel-

oped. Instruction of the type so far given seems to have succeeded in getting young people to use the movie reviews in newspapers and magazines as guides for their selection of movies, but it does not appear to have succeeded in developing a set of criteria by which youth can satisfactorily appraise movies for themselves. This is probably because such standards have not yet been clearly formulated either by the movie producers or by the critics.

The motion picture appreciation movement, left to steer its own course in uncharted waters, has developed two undesirable tendencies. One is a type of criticism that may be characterized as propaganda analysis applied to movies. Its disadvantage is that it is likely to descend to callous skepticism and produce social allergies rather than social sensitivity. The other tendency is to use the course to advertise the local movie theater. This is done by supplying schools with "study guides" on films currently showing or about to be shown. They are furnished at little or no cost and are generally worth no more than is asked for them. There is a real need for a re-examination of the processes by which the schools can best encourage in young people a healthy taste for good motion pictures.

## THE RADIO

Few ways of spending time occupy more of young people's leisure than the radio. In the average home the radio is turned on five hours daily. The Regents' Inquiry reported that high school youth in New York State listen to it nearly two hours a day, and other studies agree with this finding. They let the radio run while they get their lessons; they play it when they have their "dates"; it stays on during mealtime; there is a radio in the family car; there is one in the corner drugstore. There are more radios than telephones: 30,000,000 homes have them. Few places where young people spend their leisure are beyond reach of the loudspeaker.

The radio affords numerous ways of increasing the satisfaction a young person can get from his spare time. As a means of keeping abreast of current events it offers up-to-the-minute news and—

at least in the foreign field—more intelligent commentary than many daily papers provide. Through forums, addresses, and interviews it presents all (or nearly all) sides of public questions and endows them with the listener-attracting power of prominent names. By means of special features it encourages an interest in and understanding of the work of the world, bringing before the microphone persons engaged in supplying services about which the public would otherwise seldom obtain firsthand information.

There is much good music to be heard over the radio, some of it by the best artists. Radio plays are frequent, and when cast and produced with care they can provide as genuine a dramatic experience as could be desired. The radio performs a legitimate amusement function through its variety shows, the best of which are done with high competence. Various other amusement techniques bring pleasure to many people, particularly the amateur hours and "quiz" programs currently so much in favor. The popular music that floods the air channels is much appreciated by young people because they can use it for dancing. Some of it may be considered to deserve a sympathetic hearing in its own right, and most of it is acceptable for purposes of relaxation or as a background for social activities or other domestic pursuits.

Although radio thus contributes in many ways to the enjoyment of leisure, one cannot say that its leisure possibilities have been adequately developed or even that its present offerings are fully utilized. No particular broadcasting policy or set of policies could satisfy everyone. But there are aspects of the radio that repel many people accustomed to exercise discrimination in occupying their leisure hours. Perhaps the most general complaint is against the triviality of so much of what is sent out over the air. It is true that programs must be very largely conditioned by the interests and tastes of the public. But radio has tremendous potentialities for diversifying interests and raising tastes. It must be a source of keen regret that these potentialities have not been realized to a greater degree.

If the radio is used discriminatingly, the more trivial programs can be avoided. But it is a matter of common observation that many people, and particularly young people, do not resort to the

radio to hear preselected programs but turn it on at random and passively accept what it brings them. It thus comes about that day by day the radio contributes an element to the environment of youth that may well be having the effect of dulling their appetite for better things.

There are many who believe that the public in general, and youth in particular, have a greater capacity for appreciation than they are credited with by the persons who prepare radio programs. They believe it to have been demonstrated that the public will recognize intelligently presented programs of superior merit if they are given sufficient opportunity. The real danger is probably not that programs will go over the heads of listeners but that they will perpetuate in adults the mental immaturity characteristic of the 13-year-olds at whom they so often seem to aim.

There are people who believe that the commercial sponsorship of broadcasting is a serious obstacle to exploiting the educational and cultural possibilities of radio. Programs that would be enjoyed by many are often given at inconvenient hours simply because they cannot obtain a commercial sponsor. Ours is the only great nation in the world that allows the best listening hours of the day to be occupied by private agencies seeking to sell things to the public. Among unsponsored programs of cultural value, the few that are allotted good listening time tend to emphasize big-name artists. It is fairly clear that when such programs are presented by the broadcasting companies it is less from a wish to provide the public with good music or drama than from a desire to gain a reputation as patrons of the arts. The amount sometimes spent on a single concert by a top-rank orchestra and conductor would provide several broadcasts by less widely publicized performers so little inferior that not one listener in a hundred could tell the difference.

Commercially sponsored programs in general are distasteful to many people because of the excessive advertising matter they contain. And as applied to such things as music and drama, commercial sponsorship has an added objection. It invites the the public to acquiesce in what many feel to be a degrading con-



ception of the place of culture. It might be supposed that in a rich and enlightened country such as ours the aesthetic experiences that the radio can bring would be provided as the privilege of free citizens. Instead, they come most often as favors from commercial interests, given in advance for the good will expected in return. They are reduced to the status of window-dressing. This hardly seems the best training in values for young people of a democratic society.

It is desirable that the defects of radio should be known and discussed. Some part of them, at least, can be attributed to the fact that the broadcasting industry has grown rapidly and is still relatively new. However, it would be unrealistic to suppose that we are likely soon to see basic changes of a degree and extent that would remove the handicaps now limiting the usefulness of radio for the enrichment of leisure. The problem facing persons concerned with the welfare of youth, therefore, is this: Given a vast and powerful instrument for occupying leisure, and realizing that it does not always operate in the best interests of youth, what is it practical to do to improve the situation? The answer that will be suggested is: Teach youth to make better use of what good programs the radio does afford. Some programs can be recommended with little reservation, and even among those that are mediocre or worse, good features can often be found.

The process of helping young people discover what an intelligent listener should expect of his radio and where to look for worth-while programs is an activity appropriate to the school. More than 300 colleges and universities are now giving courses in the preparation of radio programs, and at least one instructor who conducts such a course has said that its chief value is in teaching his students how to judge the programs they hear. There seems to be no reason (aside from the already crowded curriculum) why instruction in how to be a good radio listener should not be widely offered in high schools, either alone or in connection with other subjects. A combination course in radio and motion picture discrimination might be an ideal arrangement. The school has always recognized its responsibility for advising young people on their reading. Why should it not accept a

similar responsibility for the time they spend within earshot of the loudspeaker? There are few matters in which guidance would be of more practical value.

It is worth while to distinguish between radio programs. The broadest useful distinction that can be made is between those classified by the broadcasters as "educational and cultural" and the rest. Admitting that great strides can be made in improving the quality of educational broadcasts, it is still true that the programs which set out to be educational or cultural should be a larger element in a wholesome radio diet than any of the other varieties. They are often not so palatable, but some are on subjects of such intrinsic interest that any intelligent youth would find it hard to be bored by them.

The proportion of educational programs is small, but the number is probably larger than is generally realized. A considerable variety of public and semipublic organizations present educational programs more or less regularly over the commercial broadcasting stations. Universities, museums, libraries, women's clubs, parent-teacher associations, health agencies—all have messages for the public. Moreover, educational broadcasting is not wholly dependent on commercial facilities. Many universities have their own stations, and some stations belong to states or municipalities. In all, there are thirty-eight publicly owned stations. Twenty-six of these broadcast no programs of a commercial nature, and the rest carry only a small amount of advertising. The extension activities conducted over the radio stations of state universities are likely to be particularly valuable, and young people will be well advised to make the most of these programs when they are available. Broadcasts by schools and colleges are increasing rapidly, even among institutions that do not have their own stations. Several years ago the United States Office of Education reported that more than 700 local groups in schools and colleges were producing educational programs.

Recent developments in radio have brought with them the likelihood that the number of noncommercial stations will soon be greatly increased. Frequency modulation broadcasting, now apparently on the verge of rapid expansion, has a limited range—

usually no more than seventy-five to a hundred miles. To obtain adequate coverage, broadcasting stations will have to be multiplied many times. The Federal Communications Commission has lately set aside for educational broadcasting "FM" bands that will, it is estimated, enable 3,000 local stations to be established. The cost of erecting and operating one of these stations is reported to be moderate in comparison with present facilities. Estimates are in some instances lower than \$5,000. Although the noncommercial development of these new air channels may not rapidly increase the amount of educational broadcasting available to the listener—because of the limited carrying power of the new stations—it would greatly increase the production of educational programs. This should provide a much needed stimulus to the whole field of noncommercial broadcasting.

There are said to be 17,000 different programs on the air each day in the United States. If, as is estimated, 22 per cent are educational, there would be 3,740 such programs broadcast somewhere, sometime, every day. Naturally the majority of these could not be received from any one particular location with the average set, and many would be given at times when young people are in school, at work, or otherwise engaged. But if only one-half of one per cent were available to a young person, he would have fifteen or twenty programs from which to select his day's listening. This is not a bad working basis.

An analysis of the radio programs during one recent week shows that there were to be heard on the air:

James Rowland Angell	Robert M. Hutchins
Nicholas Murray Butler	Thomas Mann
Stuart Chase	Robert A. Millikan
John Dewey	Franklin D. Roosevelt
Livingston Farrand	Ray Lyman Wilbur
William Hard	Matthew Woll

A broadcasting system that makes it possible to hear so many distinguished persons in so brief a period is not wholly lacking in opportunities for the discriminating use of leisure. If there has

been awakened in young people a desire to get the best out of the radio, they will discover that the available resources are appreciable.

Youth will not find it as easy to hear about educational programs as about commercial ones. The space given to radio news by nearly all papers is absurdly small considering the important place this service has come to occupy in our national life. Usually only the names of programs are printed, and it is often impossible to form any adequate idea of the content merely from the name. Even this information is ordinarily available only on the day of the broadcast. The more popular commercial programs have built up substantial audiences, and this is also true of a few recurrent educational programs. But the great majority of educational broadcasts occur at irregular intervals and lack the attracting power of big names. The consequence is that many excellent programs are missed because information about them is released too late to be widely disseminated or is buried in an obscure announcement.

The broadcasting companies themselves must share with the newspapers the responsibility for continuing this unfortunate situation. If the press has been inclined to minimize the importance of what it regards as a competing medium, the broadcasters for their part have been reluctant to take the time and trouble necessary to provide detailed, informative programs far enough in advance to be really useful. The absence of such a service handicaps millions of individual listeners. It also prevents the schools from using the educational offerings of radio to the extent that they should. Unless they are informed of the content of programs well ahead of time, it is usually impossible for them to fit broadcasts in with schoolwork. There can be little doubt that providing adequate advance information of programs is essential to the operation of radio broadcasting in the "public interest, convenience, and necessity"—the condition under which the broadcasting companies hold the use of the air channels.

One device that might be more widely employed to offset inadequate radio publicity, as well as to enhance in other ways the educational values to be obtained from broadcasting, is the listening group. The urge to organize for mutual benefit is a

prominent feature of present-day life, and it has not passed the radio listener by. Recently it has manifested itself in the formation of "I-am-not-listening" clubs. These consist of persons dissatisfied with the quality of many radio programs and particularly with the admittedly puerile "family" serials designed to hold the housewife's attention during the afternoon hours. These people associated themselves for the purpose of not listening to bad programs. There are also advantages to be gained through forming associations for the purpose of listening to good programs.

A listening group will be likely to identify more worth-while broadcasts than one person acting only on his own information. The enthusiasm of a common enterprise should stimulate effort and heighten enjoyment. Many educational programs are of a kind that readily give rise to discussion; a listening group will be able to exploit this characteristic to the benefit of its members. Furthermore, the knowledge that a regular clientele for good programs is being built up should be an incentive to the broadcasters to provide more of the kind of programs this audience desires. They should also be more readily disposed to issue program guides, reading lists, and other supplementary matters that will assist in developing interests the broadcasts may have aroused.

Listening groups are already fairly numerous and seem to be increasing rapidly. A recent study by the American Association of Adult Education estimated that there are approximately 15,000 formally organized radio listening groups in the United States and that their total membership is between 300,000 and 450,000. Their preference appears to be for programs dealing with public questions or family problems. These are fields in which young people have a developing interest, and they might well be encouraged to come together for the purpose of cultivating this interest with such assistance as the radio provides.

The problem that the radio poses for youth resembles many of the other problems they face. Large parts of it are beyond the control of young people themselves, but there are things they can do to make the best of a bad situation, and they deserve to be helped to do what they can.

## RECREATIONAL READING

Young people, those out of school as well as those in school, spend a large part of their leisure in reading. This fact offers an exceptional opportunity for encouraging a valuable form of recreation. Though reading resembles the motion picture and the radio in its solitary nature, its substance can be controlled by the individual to a much greater extent. And though solitary, it need not be passive; indeed intelligent reading never is.

A great deal of what youth read is fiction. In St. Louis, a record kept of the books borrowed by young people in their twenties from public libraries and from friends showed two out of three to be fiction. In the American Youth Commission's Dallas study three-fifths of the library books borrowed by youth were found to be fiction. In the study conducted by the Commission in Muncie, Indiana, the proportion of fiction books among all the books read by the groups of youth surveyed varied from 65 to 80 per cent. Because youth show such a preference for fiction, especially fiction in which adventure or romance is the chief attraction, their recreational reading is frequently condemned. It is said to be a flight from reality, a means of temporary escape from the unpalatable facts of everyday living.

Undoubtedly young people are attracted by reading that takes them out of themselves, and it is clear that overindulgence in this, as in any other form of activity, may have undesirable effects. However, it can be argued that most adolescents have a real need for "escape." They need to escape from the inadequacy of their restricted environments. In spite of the fact that there has grown up an unfavorable implication around this word, everyone at some period of life needs an escape of some sort. Hobbies are often escapes. The adolescent feels a natural urge to expand the horizon of his experience. It is not more knowledge that he wants so much as more and different sensations. Reading gives him these vicariously and gives them to him more quickly and in a more concentrated form than he could come by them in actual life.

What really is wrong with the greater part of the fiction youth read is not that it provides an escape, but that it provides a poor

quality of escape. There can, of course, be no objection to fiction as such. Good fiction besides being a pleasure to read enlarges one's mental horizon and affords insight into human nature; instead of weakening the ability to face reality, it is an aid to acquiring a broader and quicker acquaintance with reality than most youth could get in any other way. However, it is well recognized that much of the great volume of fiction published today has slight value and serves principally to while away time. An analysis of the fiction books borrowed by young people of St. Louis from public libraries and friends reports only one in three as "good." In the American Youth Commission's Muncie study only 7 per cent of the fiction books read by youth were rated as "superior"; 48 per cent were described as "medium" and 45 per cent as of inferior quality. The Regents' Inquiry in New York State estimated that nearly half of the fiction read by recent high school graduates, and a larger portion of that read by nongraduates, "was to be classified as inferior and most of the rest as only mediocre."

A further indication that young people's recreational reading is not as profitable as it might be is the fact that they read relatively few books. In 1935 an inquiry among the students of the seventy-two emergency junior colleges in Ohio showed that they had read an average of two and a half books during the previous year. In Houston a fourth of the out-of-school youth had read no books during the previous year, and an additional fifth were unable to give any answer to the question as to which were the most interesting books they had read in that time. Over two-fifths of out-of-school rural youth in an Iowa study had read no book during the previous year.

Much the greater part of youth's reading matter consists of periodicals. In a large study of high school graduates it was found that over four-fifths read magazines regularly. The St. Louis investigation of the reading of young adults found that more than three-fourths of all their reading matter from any source was magazines. Though from time to time a considerable amount of worth-while material appears in periodical form, magazines also offer unequaled opportunities for useless reading. An interest

in the better class of periodical literature is seldom kept alive apart from an even greater interest in good books. We should hardly expect to find that young people who have slight interest in books make intelligent use of periodicals.

The kinds of magazines most popular among youth are known from numerous studies. They belong almost entirely to the class that may be described as "home" magazines. These include the half-dozen organs with the largest national circulation, whose contents are principally short stories, success articles, partisan polemics, flippant commentaries on current events, and pictures. It is some comfort to learn that the "pulp" periodical—the film star, snappy story, thriller type of magazine—seems to have less following among youth than is often pessimistically suggested. But that the staple brain food of high school graduates should be provided by our mass circulation magazines is a sad reflection on the standards of taste and the critical faculties with which these young people are turned out into the world. The status of the recreational reading of youth can be summed up by the assertion that three-fourths of their reading matter is magazines and three-fourths of what they read in magazines serves only to kill time.

The hopeful element in this situation is that young people themselves are not satisfied with their reading. Studies comparing the things youth do in their leisure with the things they would like to do always show that they read more than they want to. In one survey of rural youth, reading dropped from first place among things actually done to fifth place among activities desired. What these particular young people wanted to do more than anything else was to learn to play some musical instrument. In another rural survey the number of youth who checked reading as a hobby was barely half the number who checked it as a means of spending time.

The problem of too much reading being done from simple boredom can partly be met by providing forms of recreation that will be more interesting to youth not studiously inclined. However, almost any young person who reads at all is capable of having his tastes developed and turned to advantage. Young



people are willing to read, and this is an asset that should be exploited to the full. With a little encouragement and assistance, curiosity can be aroused in many subjects. Youth would be glad to learn about the books written in the fields of their own half-awakened interests and hobbies—books they would find fascinating if only they were introduced to them. The need for guidance of this kind is tremendous. In a survey of 10,000 New Jersey youth between 16 and 24 an attempt was made to discover their intellectual interests by asking the question, "What would you like to study if you had an opportunity?" The answers were very revealing, but in a different way from what had been expected. Most of the young people either made no response or else told what occupation they would like to prepare to enter. Very few of them seemed ever to have thought of studying anything simply for the pleasure to be had from learning.

Young people ought also to be assisted to become better acquainted with good literature. If more schools taught literary courses for the enjoyment they can give, rather than as plots to be dissected and authors' lives to be memorized, the problem of time wasted on third- and fourth-rate fiction would almost solve itself. The school should do a better job of habituating youth to using the library for pleasure. They must be helped to discover that books can be fun and the library something more than a source of instruction.

## CONCLUSIONS

Youth have a vital need for recreation. It is a need that for the most part is still unmet. The problem of how to bring a satisfactory leisure life to young people is so complex that no single approach can be expected to succeed. It must be attacked from many angles. The most important of these have been reviewed in the last two chapters: more adequate opportunity for essential types of leisure needed by all youth, guidance in cultural recreation, and provision of leisure opportunities of types suited to overcome the particular handicaps of certain youth groups who are notably lacking in recreational advantages.

If we are to assist young people to overcome the difficulties that stand in the way of worth-while use of leisure, these specific recreational needs must be kept clearly in mind. Organized activity sometimes has a tendency to become a goal in itself. We can ill afford to waste effort through allowing our objectives to become obscured. The task before us will require great energy and continuous attention. Though we must not expect to make progress in all directions at once, one or more avenues will always be open, even if others appear temporarily blocked. Eventually all can be made to yield.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. *Libraries and Adult Education*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1926. 284 pp.

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## RECREATION IN THE MODERN WORLD

ALTHOUGH at all periods of history there have been persons who appreciated the true value of recreation, popular opinion has frequently been lacking in sympathy toward those who employ leisure for other than strictly utilitarian purposes. This has been true of our own country as well as of others. It has not always been considered respectable for American youth to have spare time or to use it as they please. The *Methodist Discipline* of 1792, outlining the policy of Cokesbury College toward leisure, says:

We prohibit play in the strongest terms. . . . The students shall rise at five o'clock . . . summer and winter. . . . Their recreation shall be gardening, walking, riding, and bathing without doors, and the carpenter's, joiner's, and cabinet-maker's bench within doors. . . . A person skilled in gardening shall be appointed to overlook the students . . . in this recreation. . . . A master shall always be present at the time of bathing. Only one shall bathe at a time and no one shall remain in the water above a minute. No student shall be allowed to bathe in the river. . . . The students shall be indulged nothing that the world calls play. Let this rule be observed with the strictest nicety; for those who play when they are young will play when they are old.<sup>1</sup>

If the elders who imposed these Spartan regulations could survey the present-day scene, they would be astonished at the extent to which play is tolerated and actually encouraged. They

<sup>1</sup> *Youth Leaders Digest*, I (December 1938), p. 195.

would find the idea generally accepted that it is normal for people to wish to relax from their usual labors and to pursue various activities for which their ordinary occupations offer no scope. They would discover, no doubt with dismay, that the cultivation of leisure interests is not only looked upon as harmless but is considered to have definite values to the individual and to society. They would find these values so highly esteemed that supplying the means of recreation and guidance in their use has become an accepted function of all levels of government. It is also undertaken by a great variety of private agencies, such as churches, as well as by commercial enterprise. In 1930 the people of this nation spent \$10,000,000,000, or one-eighth of their income, for recreation. In short, the whole public attitude toward the use of leisure is no longer what it used to be, and the new attitude has fostered a large and constantly increasing volume of activities, both public and private. We may survey briefly the extent and character of these activities.

## THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN RECREATION

Provision at public expense of municipal recreation facilities is a modern development which at first centered around parks and playgrounds. Boston is credited with beginning the public recreation movement about fifty-five years ago, although New York City had purchased the now famous Central Park for public purposes as early as 1853. In the intervening half to three-quarters of a century municipal recreation has grown to large proportions. The provision of facilities has gone far beyond playgrounds for children and parks to be quietly enjoyed by adults. A well-developed municipal recreation program now offers to persons of all ages the principal means of taking part in a variety of games, sports, and other more or less strenuous pastimes, as well as facilities for social intercourse and for acquiring and practicing skills in the arts and crafts. Tennis courts, swimming pools, beaches, golf links, ski runs, tobogganing slides, bowling greens, and community centers with gymnasiums, social halls, and craft rooms are all now frequently provided by

urban communities of some size. Such cities are making a real effort to encourage a better use of leisure time among their citizens.

There are now approximately 1,300 communities having public recreation programs conducted by agencies that report to the National Recreation Association.<sup>2</sup> Few as these are in relation to the need, they have resulted in a substantial increase within recent years in the resources available to the public. The number of municipal recreation buildings quadrupled in the period 1925-35. In addition to emergency recreation workers, there were 24,000 municipally paid part- and full-time recreation workers in 1938, an increase of more than 25 per cent since 1935. In a number of instances budgets for recreation amount to several hundred thousand dollars a year. Minneapolis, a medium-sized city of half a million population, had, for example, a public recreation budget of \$310,669 in 1938 and more than 6,000,000 participations in municipal recreation activities. Large cities, such as Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York, have park and recreation budgets (combined) of several million dollars each. In 1938 a total of over \$60,000,000 in local and federal funds was spent for recreation in communities having municipally supported programs.

Among local government agencies not primarily concerned with the use of leisure, the public schools have made an appreciable contribution to the development of public recreation. Although most educators have been so occupied with the other problems of their own rapidly growing profession that they have not fully realized the extent to which recreation and education serve the same end, there have been notable exceptions. Certain school leaders hold a position of considerable historical importance in the expansion of public recreation, and in some places the schools have accepted and are discharging a large measure of

<sup>2</sup> Although for simplicity these programs are here referred to as municipally conducted, actually 14 per cent are conducted by private agencies. A further 18 per cent are conducted by the public schools. The reader should also note that communities reporting to the National Recreation Association do not include those in which only WPA recreation programs are in operation. The WPA conducts recreation programs in some 7,000 communities; less than 1,000 of these have programs of public recreation maintained wholly by local support.

responsibility for the development of a community recreation program. As a whole, the educational profession is beginning to throw off its shackles of isolation and formalism and is becoming an important factor in encouraging better and more extensive use of leisure time both among young people and among adults. Schools must assume a fundamental responsibility for the recreation of the future.

At the state level of organization we find that since 1933 twenty-four states have established agencies to acquire and administer public parks, bringing the total number of states having such agencies to forty-seven. The combined operating budgets of these new state parks amounted to almost a million dollars in 1937-38. Nearly all of the states have created state planning boards, and at least half of these bodies are giving consideration to recreation needs. Over half of the states have passed enabling acts to encourage cities, counties, or school units to use public money for recreation purposes.

During the five years from 1932 to 1937 the federal government is estimated to have spent in the neighborhood of \$1,500,000,000 in constructing and improving permanent recreation facilities. One federal agency alone, the Work Projects Administration, in the last two years of this period built 10,000 new recreation units in rural and urban areas, improved 9,000 existing units, and supplied 35,000 recreation workers annually to local communities. The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration have also carried out numerous work projects involving the construction of recreational facilities. In 1938 the federal government spent \$31,000,000 from emergency funds to supplement recreation services and facilities in municipalities having their own programs.

The oldest and best established recreational function performed by the federal government—the acquisition and preservation of lands having present or potential recreational value—has progressed over half a century to the point where 15,000,000 acres of park land and ten times that area of forests have been acquired. Within quite recent years the task of securing maximum recreational use of these lands has come to be accepted as an objective

paralleling their conservation. The federal government is now undertaking, through its National Park Service, an extensive survey of the means to be utilized in making both state and national recreation areas available to a larger part of the public.

Paralleling, and indeed preceding, the development of recreation through public agencies has been the equally significant activity of private organizations. The various networks of community agencies designed to further the welfare of young people by cultivating moral and spiritual values—the Scouting organizations, the young people's Christian associations, the boys' clubs, and so on—have all leaned strongly upon recreational activities to hold the interest of young people and develop in them the qualities they wish to promote. These social, religious, and educational agencies, supported by private contributions, have pioneered in many phases of recreation. They have also made the public more aware of recreation needs and have given thousands of individuals the opportunity to participate in the work being done to meet these needs. "Vacation schools" for informal summer study and play were begun by churches and welfare agencies some time before public recreation got under way. The camping movement, which now enrolls hundreds of thousands of children and youth each summer in public and private camps, originated in the early interest of private agencies in the underprivileged city child. Settlement houses have long provided playgrounds and indoor programs.

Among private agencies of more than local scope that have been active in forwarding the cause of recreation, the most prominent is the National Recreation Association. Founded some thirty years ago, this organization has been the principal coordinating influence in the development at the community level of nonprofit activities for guiding and satisfying leisure interests. The association is supported by private contributions. It has a large field staff that devotes its efforts to assisting all agencies working in the field. The American Camping Association performs similar functions for a specialized and increasingly popular branch of recreation. The American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation is concerned with

promoting certain leisure activities in the school, particularly those connected with sport and physical education. The American Youth Commission's handbook of youth-serving agencies<sup>3</sup> lists thirty-seven national, nongovernmental organizations as having a substantial interest in promoting recreation for youth.

Discussion of recreation has kept pace with expanding facilities. Increased attention is devoted to it by newspapers, magazines, and the radio. Hundreds of pamphlets and books on particular recreational skills or activities have appeared, and there has been a thin but vigorous stream of critical comment endeavoring to interpret the place of recreation in our national life.<sup>4</sup> Among such commentaries, special mention should be made of Eduard C. Lindeman's *Leisure—A National Issue: Planning for the Leisure of a Democratic People*,<sup>5</sup> which may be regarded as the epitome, if not the culmination, of a decade of social thinking in this field. Colleges and universities not only continue to train students for service in recreation work but are also beginning to give attention to the social significance of leisure. There is a growing body of private research concerned with recreational matters. A recently published and highly condensed summary of such research runs to forty-six pages and covers more than 300 items.<sup>6</sup>

## THE PLACE OF COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE IN THE RECREATIONAL SCENE

To complete this brief view of the extent and character of the resources that now exist for ministering to the leisure needs of the population, a word must be said about commercial recreation. Paralleling the growth of public recreation there has been an enormous expansion of recreational services developed by private

<sup>3</sup> M. M. Chambers, *Youth-Serving Organizations: National Nongovernmental Associations* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1941).

<sup>4</sup> Annotated references to 200 recreation publications appearing largely between 1933 and 1938 are included in: Louise Arnold Menefee and M. M. Chambers, *American Youth: An Annotated Bibliography* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1938).

<sup>5</sup> New York: Association Press, 1939.

<sup>6</sup> *Recreational Research*, by G. M. Gloss, of Louisiana State University. Baton Rouge, privately printed [1940].



enterprise and offered to the public for profit. Indeed, the acquiring of respectability by recreation may be said to have coincided roughly with the discovery that there was a great deal of money to be made in stimulating and catering to leisure interests. Commercial amusement has grown to tremendous size and its influence permeates our lives. Motion pictures, the radio, pulp magazines, public dance halls, professional athletics, poolrooms, and amusement parks engage the interest of millions of young people weekly. Only a small proportion of youth in the United States reach maturity without coming in contact with these agencies not once but countless times.

Since so large a part of the leisure activities of youth is accounted for by commercial diversions, it might be thought that any discussion of constructive recreation would be largely concerned with commercial interests. The present work recognizes the great influence of commercial recreation upon young people. It has already discussed the problems raised by the three media of commercial recreation bulking largest in their use of leisure—the radio, the motion picture, and reading—and has recommended educational measures that will enable youth to make intelligent use of these attractions. Later in this chapter the modern expansion of commercial recreation is considered as one of the principal social trends affecting the leisure needs of youth. Further than this, commercial recreation will not be emphasized in the present volume.

Our concern here is with what can be done as a matter of public policy to ensure opportunities for worth-while recreation for all youth. Commercial recreation cannot be directly controlled by the public except to the limited extent involved in the exercise of the police power. It does tend over a period of time, however, to accommodate itself to public opinion. We may hope and indeed expect that as the public becomes more fully aware of what constitutes desirable recreation, and of the value that leisure can be made to yield, it will exert a steady and beneficial pressure upon the commercial interests that seek to occupy its leisure.

It is well recognized that the nature of commercial recreation places upon it certain handicaps that interfere with its being a

satisfactory medium for supplying the recreational needs of young persons. These may be described briefly as follows.

1. Commercial recreation does not and cannot reach all youth. Since forms of recreation costing money are usually regarded by the individual as a luxury, the proportion of young people whose financial resources will not enable them to purchase any substantial amount of the recreation commercially available to them must be even greater than the third of the population commonly said to be ill-fed, ill-housed, and ill-clothed.

2. Commercial recreation is characterized by a one-sided development, with emphasis on passive entertainments of the spectator type. It is unlikely that commercial interests will ever be able to offer a well-rounded recreational program. Because of their very nature they can supply only those goods and services that it is practicable to offer at a profit, and many of the most valuable recreational activities are not capable of being made widely available on this basis.

3. Since its motive is profit, commercial recreation has little internal resistance to the multiplication of leisure activities of slight genuine recreational value. There is even a tendency, not always successfully resisted, to furnish amusements that may actually be harmful to young persons.

Much can be done to increase the contribution that commercial recreation makes to the constructive use of young people's leisure time. As costs are lowered, a larger proportion of youth will be able to take advantage of the worth-while forms of commercial recreation. As knowledge of the better uses of leisure time becomes more widespread, a greater demand for the more desirable kinds of recreation should develop, and it may become easier to supply them on a commercial basis. Questionable forms of commercial recreation must always be the object of community concern. But in general such activities, as well as the greater number that are merely time-wasting, can most effectively be eliminated by providing something better to take their place. A positive and constructive attitude toward the opportunities afforded by leisure time is bound to be more successful than an attitude which is negative and repressive.

As recreation comes to occupy a larger place in our national life, the functions of supplementing commercial recreation and counteracting its undesirable effects are bound to become increasingly important, whether they are promoted by public or private agencies. There is also useful work to be done in training young people to make intelligent use of the variety of commercial facilities competing for their leisure time. When we add to these tasks the opportunity for pioneering in the development of new techniques, it is evident that there is room for much activity through other than commercial channels to promote a wholesome recreational life among young people. Public authorities and private nonprofit-seeking organizations have a distinctive contribution to make. Although their field is small in relation to the whole volume of recreational enterprise, it has an importance far beyond its size.

Although profit-seeking and nonprofit-seeking recreation have fundamentally different aims, their methods need not be so dissimilar as is sometimes supposed. Indeed, public and private nonprofit recreation have much to learn from the commercial agencies. It is possible to discover certain constructive principles in the operation of these agencies which contribute not a little to their appeal. For example, there is the opportunity given young people to meet members of the opposite sex on social occasions, such as dances. There is also the freedom to just "hang around" and be active or not as one wishes. Noncommercial recreation would do well to consider the techniques of agencies that succeed well enough to cause people to spend their money freely.

The really unsatisfactory feature of the present relationship of commercial recreation to noncommercial, organized recreation is the disproportion in the amount of support they receive. If we take the estimate for 1930 made by the President's Research Committee on Social Trends and disregard the very large amounts represented by goods and services produced commercially but put to recreational use by the individual (over \$7,000,000,000, without counting books, magazines, or newspapers), we are still left with more than \$2,000,000,000 as the cost of the commonly

recognized forms of commercial amusement—motion pictures, radio, athletic exhibitions, night clubs, cabarets, and other entertainments of various kinds. To compare with this, we have as the total cost of recreation under public auspices in 1930 less than \$200,000,000, and as the cost of recreation provided by private nonprofit-seeking organizations less than \$400,000,000. Commercial recreation, even when narrowly defined, appears to have received over ten times the sum spent for public recreation and nearly four times the amount that went to all organized forms of noncommercial recreation. It is true that the schools should be credited with the money they spend in teaching recreational skills. However, this factor, though it cannot be closely estimated, is certainly small. The whole annual cost of maintaining public education in this country is equaled or exceeded by the sums spent on the commercial recreations just mentioned.

There need be no serious objection to the magnitude of commercial recreation, though there is no doubt that much of the money it commands could be spent to better purpose through other recreational channels. The real grievance is that there should be so little available for nonprofit-seeking forms of recreation, whether under public or private auspices. In view of the genuine need for expanding services of this type, it can be only a cause for wonder that as a nation we see fit to allot to them only a fourth of our expenditure for organized recreation or a mere 6 per cent of the amount we pay for all kinds of recreational services and goods.

One way or another recreation has come to occupy a place of major importance in the lives of great numbers of our people. It is being promoted through sizable expenditure of public funds at all levels of government. An intricate and extensive network of private nonprofit agencies endeavors to make it more widely available, particularly to young people. A vast assortment of commercial interests has capitalized upon the widespread desire for recreation. The social problem created by this interplay of forces is how to use the immense but largely uncoordinated resources they represent to bring to the average citizen—especially

to the average young person—opportunity for a full, satisfying, and constructive use of leisure. It is a formidable task, but it should not prove beyond our collective ingenuity.

## SOCIAL TRENDS AND RECREATION

In beginning this chapter we noted that a new attitude toward play and the pursuit of recreation has grown up in this country. We have now briefly considered the vast development of organized recreational activity that this new attitude has permitted. In order fully to appreciate how recreation has become so deeply rooted in our national life and why it presents such problems for the well-being of our young people we need to consider some of the social changes of modern times that have made recreation more important than it ever was before.

Among the important social changes that have altered forms of recreation and recreational needs are: technological developments, the growth of commercial recreation, the accessibility of urban amusements to village and rural youth, and the prolonged economic dependency of young people. Improved transportation, besides making city pastimes closer to the country, has brought other recreational changes. In addition, recreational opportunities and desires have been influenced by changes in religious views regarding the use of leisure, by changes in conceptions of activities suitable for women, and by changes in standards of living.

### TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND LEISURE TIME

One of the most far-reaching of social changes affecting leisure has been technological advance. The continual improvement of production processes is a striking characteristic of our civilization. For many decades it has proceeded rapidly both in industry and in agriculture. This development has had several implications for the recreational life of the nation. It has reduced the costs of production and made it unnecessary for the worker to put in as long hours as he formerly did in order to turn out a given amount of goods. Consequently, most people now have more

time to spend outside their work than people used to have. It is said that over the past half century the average worker has gained twenty hours of leisure a week. Another effect has been to create a considerable amount of involuntary leisure through unemployment. Though it can be argued that in the long run technological improvement may create more employment than it displaces, yet it is certain that many individual workers are rendered at least temporarily unemployed by its advance and find that all their time is spare time.

Another important effect of technological advance upon recreation is that for many people it has altered the emphasis that needs to be given the use of leisure. If a person's work involves considerable physical exertion like the day laborer's, or sustained mental effort like the professional worker's, or some combination of the two like the skilled craftsman's, he may be content to spend most of his spare time in mere relaxation. But with the simplification of industrial processes there has come an enormous increase in the number of machine tenders. Very many people, and especially young people, are now employed in factories where they engage in routine, monotonous tasks often requiring little physical exertion or skill and almost no mental effort. Much the same is true of many office workers and store clerks, whose numbers have also increased greatly in recent years. In their leisure time these people wish to escape from their work, but their work has not taken enough from them to leave them satisfied simply with relaxation. Neither has it given them the social, cultural, or creative experiences without which most people feel their lives to be incomplete. It is during their leisure that people like these must now look for satisfactions that in other days they would have found in their work or else would have had no time for. Their leisure problem is not how to rebuild what work tears down but how to obtain what work does not afford.

#### GROWTH OF COMMERCIAL RECREATION

A second major social change that has increased the difficulty youth have in obtaining a satisfactory recreational life is the enormous development of commercial recreation during the last few

decades. Young people naturally tend to patronize the kinds of recreation most accessible to them and seldom worry about whether their recreational "diet" is well balanced. But, although it may not bother them at the time, much of the recreation they obtain from commercial sources is of little real value and indeed belongs to the very type for which people now have least need. Social contacts, cultural experiences, and creative activities have become especially necessary to supplement the limited opportunities for mental and spiritual growth that the daily work of many people now offers. But these are just the kinds of opportunity that commercial recreation presents least often or does least well.

Consider the limited opportunity for social activities that commercial recreation affords young people. There is, of course, a social element in cabarets, roadhouses, and even soda fountains. Movies, skating rinks, and sometimes bowling alleys and swimming pools are also places to which young people of both sexes may resort. But as a rule boys and girls who associate in these places have paired off beforehand. What young people need and what they really want is some place where they can go to make the acquaintance of other young people of the opposite sex.

The cultural opportunities that commercial recreation affords are also limited. Hardly anywhere in the country can there be found an orchestra, art gallery, or museum that supports itself from admission charges. The books stocked by rental libraries appeal mainly to the reader in search of relaxation. There is little regular theater outside New York. Motion pictures do have an enormous influence upon the cultural tone of the population, but for the most part it is indirectly exerted, and certainly it is not in all respects for the best. The radio offers numerous opportunities for self-improvement; however, a variety of factors, mentioned in the previous chapter, often combine to render them relatively ineffective.

As for opportunities for creative experiences, commercial recreation is almost wholly devoid of them. Amateur hours on the radio offer a few gifted individuals a chance to exhibit talents that are already well developed. But to the average young person who would find it interesting to acquire an elementary

form of some skill, organized commercial recreation offers very little.

In short, by far the most prominent element in commercial recreation is passive amusement. Though few people nowadays object to amusement in itself, its recreational value lies almost entirely in the relaxation it affords. However, as we have seen, the average worker's need for relaxation pure and simple grows constantly less as machines take over more and more of the physical or mental effort of his employment. We therefore have a situation in which the changed conditions of modern life call for a new emphasis upon certain kinds of recreation that we know to be particularly valuable to young people and of which they have too little. Instead of offering these activities, commercial recreation, for the most part, devises new and ingenious ways of supplying more and more of its usual types of recreation, and for these types young people have less and less need.

It is possible that commercial recreation can be expected to do no more than it does. The new kinds of opportunities that need to be developed may not offer much prospect of rapid financial return. But if commercial recreation cannot organize itself to supply services more in line with what young people need, is it not clear that the problem of an adequate solution—a problem intensified by the tremendous increase in opportunities for commercial recreation—becomes more pressing than ever?

#### GROWTH OF CITIES

A third line of social change making it urgent that we take special steps to ensure every young person in the United States a chance to obtain adequate recreation is the increasing proportion of our population living in towns and cities. A half century ago nearly two-thirds of the people lived in the open country or in villages. In 1940, 57 per cent of the population was urban. This change has brought recreational problems to youth in all types of communities.

In cities overcrowding has resulted and with it a tendency to eliminate forms of recreation requiring any considerable space.



This is true not only for the numerous youth who live in slums but also for apartment dwellers and indeed for all youth except the favored ones whose families can afford detached houses with space about them. In theory, outdoor recreational activities can be transferred to public playgrounds; but in practice these are everywhere inadequate, especially for older youth, who are usually left to stand about street corners hoping that something interesting will "turn up."

Another recreational hazard that city youth are particularly likely to encounter is overexposure to commercial recreation. The one-sided development of commercial recreation has already been mentioned, and in cities it is found in its most severe form. A further disadvantage of living in a city is that there are special difficulties in the way of organizing any group activity that might supply the opportunities neglected by commercial recreation. The very number of competing commercial attractions, for example, is a handicap. Another is often the problem of getting acquainted. In the country one at least knows his neighbors. But in the middle-class residential areas of large cities the neighborhood spirit has often declined so greatly that a young person may well find his friends and acquaintances limited to those he has made in high school or at work. Frequently they live in such inconvenient places that much of the time that might be used in social activity is spent simply in coming together. Of course transportation difficulties are not peculiar to urban youth. Rural young people have them too. But their problems are not so complicated by the difficulty of getting to know their neighbors or by heavy competition from commercial amusements.

Rural youth do, however, live under severe recreational handicaps arising out of the drift to urban centers. The lack of economic opportunity in rural areas makes it necessary for many rural youth to seek their fortune in town or city. We do not know that these young people are any abler or more energetic than those who stay; but when they leave, the country undoubtedly loses much native talent and ability for leadership that it could well have used.

The pull of the city also makes itself felt upon those rural

youth who never leave their homes. Town and city people are much the most articulate part of our population. They write the newspapers and magazines, direct the motion pictures, produce the radio programs, and compile the mail order catalogues. Even before a majority of our population was urban, city ways of life and thought had become the characteristic patterns of our civilization. Country people look toward the city and feel that they have enriched their lives to the extent that they adopt urban manners and acquire urban conveniences. This is natural. It is understandable that rural folk should wish to share in the material benefits of a civilization to which they make so large a contribution. However, the rapid growth of the city and the hold it takes upon the imagination of country people and especially country youth has brought to a state of serious decay a native rural culture that once flourished in this land.

There used to be many characteristic forms of rural recreation that had grown up naturally and were well adapted to country life. In large part these are no longer practiced, and the main reason for their disappearance is the growth of urban-mindedness among rural people. Many farm and village youth now find it easy to drive to the city and seek out some form of commercial recreation. Or, if they spend their leisure time at home, it is likely to be occupied with city-made recreations like the radio or motion pictures.

The urbanization of our population has made the recreational plight of village youth even worse than that of youth on farms. It is possible to discover fairly prosperous farming areas, but almost everywhere throughout the country the economic resources of villages are approaching the vanishing point. Towns and cities can now be easily reached by so large a portion of farm people that the economic basis of village life has in great part been removed. The village has become a place where the farmer stops to fill his gas tank on his way to town. Often he does not even do that. Village youth are still less likely to have money to spend on commercial recreation than the farm youth, but a position midway between open country and the town makes them feel the pull of the city even more keenly. This stronger attrac-

tive force places great difficulties in the way of organizing any sort of cooperative local recreational enterprise that might help them overcome the barrenness of their environment. Villages, in fact, are facing the decay of the small rural unit of population and the consequent stagnation of all forms of social activity.

It is possible to rebuild a satisfying life for rural America. It is possible to develop among rural young people forms of recreation which they themselves can provide and which will give them more genuine satisfaction than they find in the citified amusements available to them. This is now being successfully done in certain places, and there is every reason why rural communities generally should follow suit. But the task is not an easy one, and we cannot afford to lose time in undertaking it.

#### PROLONGATION OF ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY

A fourth major social change that has helped to make recreation a more pressing problem for young people is the lengthening of what may be described as the period of "economic infancy." In the days when youth left school at 14 or 15 and went to work, they began to earn their pocket money at a fairly early age, and within limits they could buy the kinds of recreation that appealed to them. Moreover, as soon as they started to work their leisure time was considerably shortened, so that the problem of filling it satisfactorily was reduced at least quantitatively. Today, with nearly half our young people staying in school until 18 and hundreds of thousands each year going on to college, the day when a young person becomes self-supporting or even when he can afford to pay the costs of his own recreation has been considerably postponed. This circumstance results in more young people having more leisure hours and less money to use during them.

Though lack of money to spend on commercial amusements may to some extent be a blessing in disguise, young people themselves regard it as a real hardship. If the alternative is just loafing around, as too often it is, perhaps they are right. Moreover, even noncommercial recreation often involves some personal expense. Games require equipment. Dates have to be financed.

One way or another the pocket-money needs of boys and girls undergo a considerable expansion about high school age, and the fact that for some years yet parents must be relied upon to meet these needs further complicates the difficulties which young people face in putting their spare time to good use. Desirable as the extension of education is, we must recognize that the continuation for several additional years of the long hours of after-school leisure, together with the prolongation of financial dependence upon parents, tends to make the need acute for more leisure-time planning on behalf of youth.

The lengthening of "economic infancy" is by no means wholly the result of the rise in the school-leaving age. A very important factor is the exceptional difficulty in finding work that young people have experienced during the past decade. There are now 2,500,000 more youth in high school and college than ten years ago. But until quite recently there were more than twice as many out of school and unemployed as there were in 1930—or some 4,000,000 youth 16 to 24. Even now the number undoubtedly remains high. The large volume of unemployment among youth is partly owing to the fact that under conditions prevailing in recent years there do not seem to be enough jobs to go around. But youth have been at a particular disadvantage in having to compete with large numbers of unemployed adults, whose skills and experience tend to make them more efficient. It is true that young people will frequently work for less money, but there are increasing indications that many large employers of labor have little use for youth under 18 and prefer not to hire them under 20.

Clearly, young people who leave school and cannot find work within a reasonable period have special and particularly difficult recreational problems. Technically, all their time is leisure, and although no one would suggest that they ought to devote it all to recreation, yet even allowing for time spent in job hunting and in doing what they can to preserve their skills and prepare themselves for employment these youth have a good deal of spare time left. It is especially important that this time be put to good use in order that morale may not degenerate and employability be impaired. But it is just the youth in this unfortunate position

who are least able to employ their leisure satisfactorily. They lack money, and they are so occupied with their own immediate worries that they are unlikely to take the initiative in working out inexpensive recreational activities. There are many youth such as these, and they are a standing challenge to us to solve the serious problems that have been created by the prolongation of the period of economic dependency.

#### OTHER SOCIAL FACTORS

There are a variety of other social factors that combine with the four already discussed to lend a new importance to recreation. In the main their effect on young people's use of leisure is so plain that they call for little discussion.

*Improved transportation.* The geographical area in which recreation may be sought has been greatly extended by modern means of travel. We have already remarked how comparatively easy it has become for rural youth to seek out the commercial recreation establishments of towns and cities. It is also easier than it used to be for city people to get to the country. As better roads are built and more and more automobiles are bought, the volume of recreational touring steadily increases. The attendance at national and state parks continues to mount. Perhaps young people do not engage in long-distance motoring as much as their elders do, but everyone knows how useful boys and girls find the family automobile. There have also been new developments in recreational travel by other means. The skiing excursions the railroads find it profitable to organize draw their patronage very largely from among youth.

*Declining religious opposition.* The growth of recreation has been made considerably easier by a relaxing of the strict opposition to worldly pleasures that has been an historical characteristic of certain faiths. Not only have many people gained, in Sunday, the better part of a day to follow recreational pursuits, but most churches sponsor some leisure-time activity and lend their premises to young people's groups throughout the week.

*Recreation for women.* The social emancipation of women is

another factor that has had a great influence upon the expansion of recreation. It has vastly increased the number of people who are able and willing to take part in recreational activities. It has also helped to bring about a change in the kinds of recreation that people wish to have. Now that it has become respectable for girls and women to engage in vigorous outdoor pastimes, there is a greater demand for things which boys and girls can do together. Tennis, badminton, golf, swimming, riding, and hiking have increased in popularity. Indeed all but the most strenuous kinds of pastime have benefited from the growth of corecreation, for in addition to the intrinsic appeal they already had there is now the attraction of doing something in company with members of the opposite sex. The advent of women upon the recreational scene has also increased the popularity of quieter forms of activity, particularly those that employ leisure time for purposes of self-improvement. Young women are perhaps the most numerous participants in all kinds of adult education.

*Higher standards of living.* Finally, there may be mentioned another factor of social change—the gradual improvement of standards of living. As long as the greater part of our recreation involves some expense, the more prosperous our population becomes, the better able people will be (within limits) to provide a useful recreational life for themselves. We should not feel, however, that we can afford to sit back and wait for further improvement in standards of living to solve the recreational problems of our youth. Too many factors are involved to make this possible, even if there were no large-scale program of national defense diverting attention and resources into other channels. Any additional rise in standards of living that may be possible under conditions now facing us will further emphasize the role of recreation in our national life. But we cannot expect this event alone to overcome the many difficulties that prevent American youth from enjoying a full and satisfying recreational experience.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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## RECREATION THROUGH PUBLICLY SUPPORTED COMMUNITY AGENCIES

A VARIETY of public agencies are employed by local communities to help their young people make better use of spare time. Most metropolitan areas, many towns, and some rural districts have departments of recreation. These promote outdoor and indoor programs for persons of all ages. Many more communities have public libraries, which offer assistance in cultivating the numerous leisure interests that depend upon books and magazines or that can be enriched through their use. Less frequent but in the same category of semieducational institutions competing for the free time of all sections of the population are museums, art galleries, zoos, aquariums, and botanical gardens. Finally, there are the public schools.

The schools occupy a unique position in the recreational life of youth. Though they are neither voluntary agencies nor mainly concerned with recreation they probably contribute more to the wholesome use of leisure by young people than any other institution. There is a school in every community. In many places it is the only agency devoted wholly to the service of young people. Few of the 7,000,000 high school youth pass through school without studying some subject that can be made to increase the enjoyment they obtain from their spare time. Few do not have an opportunity to cultivate some desirable extracurricular



interest. Although these school services are by no means as fully developed as they might be, in the bulk they are already impressive. The extension of school recreational facilities and services to out-of-school youth is a field of usefulness that has barely been explored. Another is the developing among students of discrimination in recreation and an appetite for the uses of leisure that will bring satisfaction throughout life.

The schools, then, are an important factor in recreation for youth both because of what they do and of what they might do. It should not be taken to imply lack of appreciation of the recreational accomplishments of other public agencies of the community that the major emphasis of the present chapter is upon the role of the public schools. The great numerical superiority of schools among youth-serving agencies, their special concern for young people, and their exceptional opportunities for permanently influencing the individual's use of leisure combine to place them in a strategic position for developing recreational services to youth. This fact warrants the fullest possible consideration of their recreational functions.

## THE SCHOOLS

All evidence points to a broadening of the concept of education until it ultimately includes recreation as a normal function of the public schools. Only educators who take a very narrow view of their profession and people who do not understand that all uses of leisure have an educational effect, for better or for worse, will deny the responsibility of the school to help young people employ their spare time profitably. Yet, while we may be quite sure of the truth of this statement, it would be unrealistic not to recognize that there are a number of circumstances that hinder the schools from fully accepting and discharging their responsibility for recreation.

### MAKING RECREATION A NORMAL FUNCTION OF EDUCATION

Although many school authorities are aware of the leisure needs of youth, there are serious difficulties to be faced in making recreation a normal function of education. The first of these is

an outworn notion of what education and recreation really are. The traditional view of education has long been that it is preparation for life—"life" being interpreted to mean something that a youth plunges into when he leaves school. The traditional view of recreation has been that it consists of having a good time—now. This notion that education is concerned exclusively with getting ready for experiences to come and recreation wholly with present experiences has been a powerful influence in keeping the two apart. Many educators still look upon recreation as an after-school and vacation appendage to education, useful in preserving youngsters from mischief but not to be compared in importance with what goes on in the classroom. They are willing to help community recreation agencies by allowing them to use school buildings for a few hours at certain times, but they do not feel that the schools should accept any fuller responsibility for leisure activities, even though the beneficiaries are young people of school age.

This attitude, unfortunately still widespread, is an indication of how far behind the times many school administrators are. The purpose of public education for youth is no longer to prepare them for college. It is not even primarily to prepare them for jobs—important as that has become. It is to prepare them for living, and living is the sum of what is happening to youth every day and every hour. Leisure is a part of life, and learning how to put it to the most satisfying use is part of learning how to live. The more education concentrates upon preparing young people to live successfully, the more it will resemble an intelligent recreation program. As recreation builds more solidly upon the psychological and social needs of youth, it in turn will take on the appearance of a good educational program. The aim of both services is the same, and their methods are coming more and more to overlap.

Already most schools sponsor a variety of extraclassroom activities for their students. Although in some places these are still looked upon as educational "frills" and merely tolerated, it is becoming generally recognized that they do contribute not only to the physical growth of young people but also to their

mental and spiritual growth. If classroom work and intellectual exercises were really the only respectable activities for schools to promote, then the distinction between education and recreation ought to be made even sharper than it now is in practice. These two areas of human experience should then abandon their hesitant courtship and reconcile themselves to paying the bachelor and old-maid taxes that society will demand of them. It is clear, however, that events are moving in just the opposite direction.

The wall between curricular and extracurricular work is breaking down. We are coming to see that the only curriculum worth talking about is the sum of the young person's experiences in his school environment. The more closely related these experiences are to his life outside school and to the life he will have to lead in the years ahead of him, the more realistic and useful will the curriculum be. The distinction between formal education (classroom experiences) and informal education (all other experiences and influences to which the young person is subject) is at bottom quite artificial.

A second hindrance to the effective union of recreation with education is the great difference in the present stage of the historical and administrative development of these two services. Public schools have existed much longer than public recreational agencies, and to a considerable degree their functions have become crystallized. Schools are "accepted," while recreation is a recent upstart among public responsibilities.

Furthermore, states are to an increasing extent taking measures to ensure that the quality and quantity of the public education offered by their local communities is kept up to acceptable standards. All states contribute to the cost of general education in at least some localities, and there are eleven state governments that provide for more than half of all the expenditures of the local school boards within their borders. Community recreation, on the other hand, is still almost entirely a responsibility of local government. Such outside aid as it has received has consisted mostly of federal subsidies, granted for the emergency employment of individuals and subject to being withdrawn at any time.

The financial status of public recreation is in process of change, but it is likely that for a long while the great difference in the age of the two functions will oblige recreation to subsist on a different and more precarious basis than if it had grown up parallel with public education.

A third difficulty tending to keep education from giving adequate attention to the leisure-time needs of young people is that many schools are not yet alert enough to plan and direct a useful recreation program. Recreation has its handicaps, too; but in spite of inadequate financing, a limited variety of activities, and the lack of trained leaders, it is probable that the average recreation program is still operating closer to the known needs of its constituents than are most schools.

There is no inherent reason why the school should not be able to conduct satisfactory recreation programs. There is no flaw in the philosophy that recreation is one means through which modern education achieves its ends. There is no administrative obstacle to incorporating recreation into the school program that cannot be overcome. However, if a working union is to be achieved it is absolutely essential that the schools be able to assume responsibility for recreation without formalizing its activities. They must not read "academic respectability" into the functions to be performed. The motto of far too many schools is still "to teach" or "to tell." In recreation the core of the program is "to practice," "to do." This gap must be bridged. Perhaps both institutions should move somewhat away from their present practices—the schools from "telling" and recreation from mere "re-creating." More unified and satisfying daily living should be the goal of each.

In many school systems the obstacles to a complete understanding between education and recreation are by no means so serious as the above analysis may seem to imply. There is no question but that the leaders of public education deeply desire to meet the contemporary needs of children, youth, and adults. Many of the recreational needs of young people discussed in the last chapter have repeatedly been pointed out by educators. Many leaders in physical education are planning broadly con-

ceived recreational programs instead of remaining content simply with moving people about.

An early and representative example of what realistic school authorities have thought on this subject is the following statement by a man who was the administrator of public instruction in the largest city of the nation. In 1903 Superintendent William Maxwell of New York City said of community centers:

The word "recreation" as applied to this activity means far more than amusement. While the play spirit is prominent in every center, fun is only a segment of the circle. To give occupation to the idle, entertainment to the weary, and training for future citizenship by developing the body, the mind, and the heart, is really creating a new life, and this is the aim and purpose of the recreation center.

This statement might have been made in 1941 and by a recreation official. Educators, at least the leaders among them, are aware that youth have leisure needs, and they are far from antagonistic to recreation agencies. The trouble is often in the time lag that exists between the educator's understanding of needs and his taking the steps necessary to meet them. This is characteristic, of course, of all social institutions. It can be seen in recreation agencies as well as schools.

#### COMMON RECREATION SERVICES OF SCHOOLS

Most secondary schools are already contributing in various ways to the recreational life of their students and in some degree to that of the community at large. The ways in which they most frequently do this are:

1. By teaching curriculum subjects having recreational value and by encouraging extraclassroom activities.
2. By making school recreational facilities available to the community.

Certain subjects of instruction that have long formed part of the school curriculum are plainly capable of having a beneficial influence upon the students' use of leisure time. Ten years ago the National Survey of Secondary Education found that physical education was required during some high school year in approxi-

mately three-fourths of secondary schools. The most common period was twice a week. This does not approach very closely the standard set by the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation—a class period in physical education each day for each pupil. Manual training is widely taught in secondary schools. Many youth who take this work must later find that it has a distinct recreational value. From a recreational point of view it is regrettable that more youth who do not expect to earn their living at a manual trade do not take advantage in high school of the opportunity to learn how to shape materials with their hands. Courses in art are sometimes available in high school, and simple instruction in music is frequently required. Some effort is always made to teach the appreciation of drama and other forms of literature.

The extraclass activities most often sponsored by secondary schools and having perhaps the most obvious recreational implications are athletic games and sports. Here, however, we at once encounter the twofold difficulty that a very large proportion of students have no opportunity to participate in school sports, and that most of those who do are cultivating an activity which experience shows will soon drop out of their lives.

The interest in team games begins to fade in the junior high school, the decline becoming more noticeable at the senior high school level. It is about this time of life that young people become increasingly interested in outdoor sports that can be engaged in by one person alone, or by two, or at most without the necessity of assembling any fixed number of participants. Swimming, archery, golf, tennis, boating, riding, and hiking are activities in which older adolescents would like to engage in if they had more opportunity. They also have greater carry-over value, since they are things in which adults remain interested for many years. In one survey of recent high school graduates nearly 70 per cent said they thought that more students should be given an opportunity to participate in sports, and that instead of concentrating on football and basketball it would be better to stress the kinds of physical activity that students would find of recreational value after leaving school.

The director of physical education in the schools of New York State has estimated that about 70 per cent of city high school boys and 47 per cent of those in central rural schools "have no chance to participate in interschool sports." The situation in colleges is much the same, although quite recently some improvement has been reported. In the American Youth Commission's study of the health of college students it was found that of a thousand students who in 1935 were freshmen in fifteen colleges and universities nearly half had little or no athletic activity.

The variety of nonathletic activities permitted and often encouraged by secondary school authorities is considerable. In 1930 the National Survey of Secondary Education studied two dozen high schools where such activities were well developed and found an average of twenty-five organized groups in each. Of the total of 606 organizations, 30 per cent could be described as hobby clubs, one-fourth as departmental clubs, one-fourth as affording opportunity for the practice of writing, acting, public speaking, or music, and one-fifth as devoted to the personal improvement of the student through encouraging leadership, school service, or the development of desirable moral traits, social manners, and so on. All of the four categories in this classification obviously have recreational value in varying degrees.

A second way in which schools frequently help young people to spend their leisure profitably is by allowing community organizations to use school buildings for meetings and leisure activities of various kinds. There has been a steady growth in the use of schools for civic purposes since the experiment of Rochester, New York, in 1907, where funds were appropriated to permit several schools to act as civic centers for a trial period of three years.

The number of schools taking advantage of their facilities and their local prestige to serve their communities as widely as possible is still very small indeed. However, a great many schools have made some tentative steps in this direction. An inquiry by the National Recreation Association in 1937 found that four-fifths of 135 community recreation agencies used indoor school properties and that slightly more used outdoor school properties. New York City has been an outstanding example of a school

system that has developed community use of its facilities. In 1939 the public school buildings of New York were used by 2,300,000 persons after school hours. This represents more than 100,000 sessions. It is unfortunate that schools often find it necessary to charge for the extra custodial service required to keep their buildings open evenings. Even the small expense which this involves is beyond the means of many groups that could make worth-while use of school property.

Everything possible should be done to increase the value the community gets from its school buildings and equipment. According to an authoritative estimate, the high schools of one of our most progressive states are using their facilities for physical activities during only 10 per cent of the sixteen waking hours of each day. A board of education jealously guarding its facilities for "school" purposes would be taking a very narrow view of its functions. As a West Coast supervisor of physical education has written to the American Youth Commission, "The school is an agency of society, and society should be permitted to use its facilities to the maximum, not about 40 per cent as at present. Nearly all schools should remain open from eight in the morning until ten at night."

Friction between school boards and other community organizations, public or private, is one of the most harmful results of "agency-mindedness." No attitude of superior aloofness to community recreation needs or the efforts being made to meet them can be justified. It should be accepted as a working principle that the community getting the best return on its school investment is the community that uses its school buildings the most hours of the day. As has been well said by the director of recreational and community activities for the New York City public schools, "It is just as much a symbol of patriotism to have the nation's schools lighted at night as to have flags flying over them in daytime."

#### LESS FREQUENT RECREATION SERVICES OF SCHOOLS

There are several other means of promoting recreation among youth, less commonly adopted by school systems. One is to open the playgrounds for use, under supervision, at other than



regular school hours. Such an opportunity is particularly valuable to school youth in summer, when their spare time is greatly increased and they are left to fill it up as best they can. The fact is, however, that the proportion of schools making any effort in this direction has been quite small. In 1930 the National Survey of Secondary Education found that only 18 per cent of the high schools it studied provided playground supervisors during the summer. Only a fourth of them provided playground supervisors for after-school hours and a mere 5 per cent for Saturdays. An educator relates that one Saturday as he happened to be passing a school playground in one of our largest cities his attention was attracted by noise from inside. Looking through an opening in the fence he saw a group of boys that he estimated at 250 engaged in unsupervised play. The gates were locked, and they had all got in by climbing over!

A study made in 1932 reported that in only half of 416 communities of more than 5,000 population for which information was secured were summer playgrounds being conducted under any auspices whatever. Doubtless the situation was even worse in smaller towns and rural districts. In recent years the Work Projects Administration has put many hundreds more playgrounds into summer use, and it is earnestly to be hoped that we are well on the way to a reasonably full utilization of school outdoor recreational facilities.

A second type of arrangement that results in more intensive community use of school recreational facilities is the conducting of a recreational program on school playgrounds and in school buildings by a public authority other than the schools. It sometimes happens that in a community where there is an active public recreation authority other than the board of education, that authority will arrange with the schools to carry on a recreational program on school property during the summer vacation. Occasionally the arrangement will be extended to include use of school facilities after hours and on Saturdays during the regular term. The following example of apparently successful cooperation of this type has been sent to the American Youth Commission from a western city:

In brief, the agreement has been that the board of education equips the school grounds, keeps them in repair, furnishes the necessary supplies to operate the physical education and school playground program on school days and to pay the salaries of the playground supervisors on these days. The board of playground directors is to pay the salaries and furnish the supplies necessary to operate these school grounds on nonschool days. This includes Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, and vacation periods. . . . Evening gymnasiums are turned over to the recreation department to issue the permits. All light, heat, water, and custodian service are taken care of by the school department, while the recreation department supplies the supervision. Baseball diamonds are handled in the same manner.

Another example shows that when responsibility for program and facilities is divided, harmony does not always result:

Occasionally we provide buildings or grounds for the use of the recreation department, but our experiences have not been too satisfactory. For example, the recreation department had the use of one of our school grounds in a slum area and nearly \$300 worth of windowpanes were smashed that summer compared to a normal breakage of \$25. Where recreation is under the board of education or where recreation and education have been deliberately planned to function together there is no reason why school buildings and grounds should not be used in the afternoons and evenings.

The opportunities for administrative friction in situations such as these are obvious. Wherever the desired result can be gained by a school's accepting responsibility for developing the maximum recreational use of its own equipment, this simpler plan should be preferred. Nevertheless, any arrangement that increases the recreational opportunities available to young people is better than nothing.

In a few instances school systems have undertaken the task of organizing and operating a recreational program for the whole community. A sixth of the thousand municipal recreation agencies reporting to the National Recreation Association in 1938 were educational authorities. The public schools in the communities served by these authorities controlled more than two-fifths of the playgrounds and athletic fields operated under leadership in the whole nation during 1938, more than two-thirds

of all indoor recreation centers, and more than four-fifths of indoor swimming pools.

Milwaukee, known as "The City of Lighted School Houses," has a department of recreation and adult education, headed by an assistant superintendent of schools. It employs almost a thousand full-time and seasonal recreation workers, has a budget of over half a million dollars, and draws a yearly attendance of more than 7,000,000 at playgrounds and indoor centers. In Newark, New Jersey, a city three-quarters the size of Milwaukee, the recreation department of the board of education employed in 1938 more full-time recreation workers than did Milwaukee and had a budget of over a quarter of a million dollars.

In St. Louis County, Minnesota, the board of education has a leisure education department that provides an extensive recreation program for over a hundred rural communities, using the public schools in each case as a focal point. These programs grow naturally out of rural interests and surroundings. They consist of folk dancing, group athletics, Pioneer's Day, potato blossom festival, music week, traveling art gallery, rural flower show, and scores of similar events, together drawing in nearly a third of the rural population of the county. Situations such as these prove that "it can happen here."

#### WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO ABOUT RECREATION IN THEIR PROGRAMS

Regardless of what degree of responsibility the schools eventually accept for community recreation they should do more than they usually do to meet the leisure-time needs of the youth they enroll. A necessary first step is to complete the breaking down of the barrier between classroom and extraclassroom activities. This will publicly acknowledge the educational value of leisure-time interests and clear the way for guidance in their development. The kindergarten and the elementary school have already gone far in demonstrating how valuable extracurricular activities can be. It is possible to unify the whole school program effectively. Progressive schools at elementary, secondary, and college

levels are showing daily that formal and informal education can become almost indistinguishable.

Only a comparatively few schools organize the nonathletic, nonscholastic activities of students as part of the curriculum, requiring participation in a certain number. It is doubtful that such activities should be placed on a compulsory basis, but clearly more young people ought to participate in them than now do. In the Muncie study of the American Youth Commission 85 per cent of the out-of-school youth who had taken part in some extra-curricular school activity thought they had benefited from the experience, but less than half of all the out-of-school youth had ever participated in such activities.

That more young people do not receive the benefit of the informal educational activities conducted in high schools is largely the result of the unimaginative attitude toward these activities of faculty members who are assigned to sponsor them. The study of nonathletic extracurricular activities made in 1930 by the National Survey of Secondary Education uncovered a number of significant facts illustrating the small extent to which the usefulness of these organizations had been developed. It found that instead of welcoming the opportunity to guide young people's interests and assist them informally to develop their abilities, "a large number of sponsors feel that they are hindered in their work by the provision of too many extracurricular activities." It found that although "the developing of skills and abilities" was an acknowledged aim of over three-fourths of a group of 221 clubs studied, four sponsors in five indicated that they made no attempt to secure as members pupils who had little or no ability in performing the activities of their clubs. Similarly, although as many as one sponsor in three said that the clubs aimed at "arousing interest on the part of high school pupils in specific fields of activities," not one in five indicated that any attempt was made to induce pupils to join who had little or no interest in the activities and purposes of the clubs.

In the important work of developing leadership, which extracurricular activities are supposed to perform, not two sponsors in five indicated that they attempted "to secure as officers those

pupils who would undoubtedly benefit by contact with the responsibilities of office holding." It is clear that valuable as extracurricular activities undoubtedly are to the young people who take part in them, the youth who join and the youth who are elevated to positions of leadership are in general not the youth who have the greatest need for these experiences. If informal methods of education are recognized as having possibilities equal to the traditional classroom practices, we must find means of bringing these advantages to all youth in school.

In defense of the teachers charged with guiding the leisure activities of pupils, it must be said that a teacher can hardly be expected to remain permanently enthusiastic about extraclassroom work when it must be carried on after teaching six hours a day. A well-rounded and well-conducted school recreation program will require more teachers. This fact cannot be too strongly emphasized, for it is perhaps the chief factor in the present unsatisfactory state of recreational work in the schools.

Nevertheless, simply providing additional teachers will not in itself solve the difficulty. There is also needed a new attitude on the part of teachers. This problem must be attacked at its source, in the teacher training institutions. We should have a different type of preparation for teachers who are expected to help pupils improve their leisure opportunities—and this is a function for which every teacher should be qualified. The beginning teacher must enter upon his or her profession prepared to regard extracurricular work not as a bothersome chore but as one of the principal means of achieving the ends toward which all school effort is directed. We cannot, of course, afford to neglect measures to strengthen this point of view among teachers already in service. But until teacher training institutions realize the importance of initial preparation for recreational leadership, the schools will fall short of the full contribution they can make to the worth-while use of leisure by young people.

When the barriers between classroom and extraclassroom activities have been removed, the next step for the schools will be to develop among their pupils a well-rounded recreational program. This program should consist of physical activities for all pupils;

social activities for all pupils; guidance for all pupils in the wise use of leisure; arts and crafts, nature study, music, dramatics, and other special subjects for pupils who are sufficiently interested or can be made sufficiently interested to devote part of their leisure to these things. The program should be carefully designed to meet the recreational needs of the disadvantaged young people described in the second chapter, in so far as these needs can be met through school endeavor for school youth.

The physical education activities ought not to emphasize skill in sports or the glory of being on a winning team, but physical fitness, healthful, outdoor living, and the fun and comradeship that active games can afford. They should make the young people familiar with a variety of sports that need little equipment or organization and that will hold their appeal well into adult life. The social activities ought to be the kind youth really want, not just the kind school teachers and administrators think they ought to want. The activities should come often enough to be effective, and they should be run with sufficient imagination to enable them to compete successfully with commercial amusements. They need to be supplemented by opportunities for obtaining tactful advice on the various aspects of personal improvement—things that young people are often outwardly scornful of but inwardly eager to learn, such as how to show good manners, how to dress well, how to make the most of one's looks.

Guidance in the use of leisure should teach youth how to place a proper value upon the entertainment offered them by the motion pictures and the radio as well as how to make intelligent use of reading. The various hobbies, creative activities, and special interests of pupils ought to receive encouragement and full support from school authorities rather than mere toleration. Teachers should recognize them as an educational influence equal and often superior to classroom instruction. Special consideration will be necessary for the student who does not readily develop extra-curricular interests. The cause of his backwardness must be discovered, and he should be helped to overcome it. Apparent absence of abilities and skills ought not be accepted as conclusive.

The emphasis should be upon discovering and encouraging tal-

ents the young person himself does not realize he possesses rather than upon forcing aptitudes that are already maturing satisfactorily. In this area, as with physical activities, there ought to be a special effort to develop interests and skills that will carry over into later life. Finally, the whole program should be made to dovetail with the recreation opportunities afforded by the community and the home.

#### WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO DURING VACATION

There is a third step that the schools need to take in order to do what can reasonably be expected of them to ensure an adequate recreational life for their pupils. They should help young people spend vacation time to good purpose. A vacation program for school youth is a necessity, especially since young people are now to a large extent denied the opportunity of working during vacations. Summer offers exceptional opportunities for outdoor activities, and these require guidance and direction if they are to be as beneficial as they can be. In part the situation can be met by keeping the school playgrounds open for the summer, with supervision. As was noted earlier this is done by only a small fraction of high schools. It is, however, one of the simplest measures which can be taken. Every board of education should earnestly consider whether it can afford to close its facilities for promoting physical activity during the very months when the pupils need them most.

Another means of contributing to the recreational value of the summer vacation, and one that schools cannot be too strongly urged to adopt, is the summer camp. To the educators of the future a major mystery of the development of their profession in the first half of the twentieth century will surely be the slowness with which camping was adopted as a functional part of the school system. The values of camping have long been recognized by leading educators. Charles W. Eliot described organized summer camping as "the most significant contribution to education that America has given the world." The present United States Commissioner of Education has said, "The summer camp is,

or should be, an adjunct to the public or private school." Objectives of camping, listed by the American Camping Association, are:

1. Having a good time while getting certain new and adventurous experiences.
2. Adjusting to groups and social situations, including sharing and planning with others.
3. Developing and understanding social objectives in terms that the children can appreciate.

The educational value of each of these goals is obvious. Learning about nature from firsthand contact would be a new experience to millions of our city youth. Vigorous outdoor activity and practice in living with other young people can certainly help in developing the "whole youth" which schools rightly profess as their aim.

There are more than 5,000 organized camps in America. Some city school systems have established summer camps, and some camps are operated by private schools. However, the total number of camps conducted by or in connection with schools is very small. There is no doubt about the interest of young people in camping. A survey of one midwestern city reported that 87 per cent of 9,000 school children desired to go to a summer camp. Only 13 per cent had attended one. There is an acute need for publicly owned sites and facilities for organized camping. The recreation demonstration projects of the National Park Service are showing how these facilities can best be planned and how eager the public is to use them. A few public school systems have achieved notable results. The schools of Atlanta, Georgia, operate a camping program using facilities constructed by the federal government, and the superintendent has announced that his objective is "a camping experience for every school child." The board of education of New York City recently appointed a commission to study camping opportunities for school children.

At present the cost of camping is a formidable obstacle to developing large-scale projects. As permanent camp sites are established and equipped for public use by the local, state, and federal governments this hindrance will tend to be overcome.



The rental of nonprofit camps can be set at quite a low figure, and the cost of maintaining young people in camp compares favorably with what it costs to maintain them at home. Camps operated by such organizations as the Y.M.C.A., the 4-H clubs, and the Boy Scouts ordinarily charge in the neighborhood of a dollar a day. However, in a number of forest camps in Florida for underprivileged children the cost of food has at times been reduced to \$2.50 a week by purchasing a large part of the supplies through the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation.

Many parents would be able and glad to meet the expense of sending their children to a school-conducted summer camp for a fortnight. The cost for those children whose parents could not afford to give them this experience should not be beyond the means of the community. Day camps can offer nearly as effective an educational experience as resident camps and are rapidly growing in popularity. When suitable locations are available it is possible to effect a considerable saving by setting up this type of camp.

There is little question but that school boards have the power to conduct programs of recreational activities for their pupils during the summer, including playground and camp programs. The courts recognize that our conception of what constitutes a good education has expanded and must continue to expand. They have upheld the right of school authorities to conduct extra-classroom activities having educational value. There is no activity of this nature for which a better case can be made out than the school camp.

#### WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO ABOUT COMMUNITY RECREATION

We have been discussing what may be regarded as the minimum defensible program that the schools may undertake to better the recreational life of youth. It is the least that we can reasonably expect of the schools because it is confined to the youth who are in school. Considered only in relation to these young people, the measures suggested are intended to represent a fairly adequate program. It is, however, very doubtful that a program which stops short with youth who are in school can be justified.

The school has an educational responsibility toward all the youth of the community. The fact that it is able to discharge this obligation, so far as formal education at the high school level goes, in only one case out of every two does not release it from the obligation to reach as many as possible of the remaining 50 per cent of young people who do not graduate from high school. Informal education is the only means of doing this, and community recreational activities are one of the best kinds of informal education. Need for education does not stop at any point in the individual's life. The community is entitled to expect its schools to concern themselves with all its young people, indeed with all its members, young or old.

In some communities, as has already been mentioned, the schools are the sole public recreation authority and are responsible for whatever leisure-time program is conducted under public auspices. The circumstances of communities and the location of potential leadership vary so greatly that it is not practical to advocate any one plan of organizing and administering public recreation. However, it can be safely asserted that there are certain things every school system should do to make itself more useful to its community generally and especially to the young people it has failed to hold.

One of the most obvious needs is that schools should maintain an interest in the welfare of their former students, whether graduates or not. There is every reason why young people should not be "dropped cold" when they leave school. Their recent association with the school should make it easier to draw them into a school recreational program, and it is only economy to take advantage of this circumstance. During their first few years out of school, while they are hesitatingly adjusting themselves to the responsibilities of adult life and finding their place in the community, they have a greater need for recreational opportunities—particularly for social recreation—than at any other time in their lives. An extension program of afternoon and evening activities would save many an unemployed, partially employed, or newly employed young person from a life almost destitute of wholesome recreation. It would be especially valuable to young married

couples, whom numerous studies have shown to be one of the most recreationally impoverished groups of all young people. Moreover, the schools themselves could hardly fail to benefit through re-establishing a contact with their former students. It should quickly become apparent what things the schools are not doing that the contemporary needs of youth require.

The logical next step for the schools to take in extending recreational services to all youth and the whole community is to interest themselves in the development of the family as a recreational unit. Youth in school and youth who have recently left school are the natural link by which the adult portion of the community can be drawn within the orbit of the schools' recreation programs. This can be accomplished in two ways. The schools should become community centers, whether or not they develop accompanying programs of supervised recreation. They should be places where young and old may come together and take part in activities that interest them both but require more space than the ordinary home affords. Classrooms should be available for meetings of special interest groups; workshops should be open to hobby clubs; auditoriums and gymnasiums should be used by the community for games, dances, dramatics, and forums.

In the second place, the schools should teach both youth and adults recreational skills that can be practiced in the home. Not all leisure activities the family may engage in as a unit demand extensive space. There are still simple forms of recreation that can have much appeal to young and old but that are often neglected because of the competition of other interests. The schools should lead the way in reviving these. Through the recreation program for their own pupils they can introduce knowledge of family recreation activities into many homes. Adults and out-of-school youth can be reached as they respond to the schools' offer to make facilities available for after-school use. One way or another the schools should be able to do much to restore the recreational functions of the family. Few of the services they can perform for their constituents will be more useful.

Finally, the schools should adopt a benevolently aggressive

attitude in cooperating with other community agencies concerned with the leisure time of young people. They should take particular pains to see that maximum use of school facilities is obtained. In 1939 only 1,500 school buildings were being used for the recreation projects conducted by local sponsors with assistance from the Work Projects Administration. Yet there are more than 25,000 high schools in the United States and a far greater number of elementary schools. Boards of education should offer school premises freely for legitimate leisure uses; they should not wait to be argued into cooperation. Even though they do not assume primary responsibility for community recreation they should actively assist in the preparation of programs, in working out administrative details, and if possible in financing activities.

When new school buildings are planned they should be designed to meet community recreational and educational needs in addition to ordinary classroom requirements. Indeed a primary reason why we must continue to erect new school buildings though the population of school age is decreasing is that schools need to equip themselves to serve the whole community. We should have many buildings of the E type, with the middle wing containing auditorium, gymnasium, and music and shop rooms that are accessible to the community and can be shut off from the classrooms. The troublesome problem of carelessness with instructional materials and damage unintentionally done to school property during recreational use can partly be met by designing school buildings with their recreational functions in view.

Schools are agencies of the community and of the state, established to promote the well-being of the people. They should not assume that the contribution they can make toward this general end has been exhausted when they have arranged to discharge their responsibilities for the formal education of young people. The schools should bear in mind that they are only one of many community agencies interested in youth and that the broad purpose for which they exist can also be effectively served by contributing to the success of other organizations working for the welfare of young people. Schools must not only accept but invite the assistance of every agency that can help increase their effectiveness.

## THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Next to the schools the community agencies that have most to do with the leisure time of youth are the libraries. There are 6,000 public libraries in the United States, and, though this is only one-fourth the number of high schools, no other public agency with a major interest in recreation comes closer to the coverage achieved by the schools. Only forty towns or cities of over 10,000 population lack public libraries. To a large extent the libraries are educational institutions, but unlike the schools they must depend entirely upon informal methods. They cannot function without the good will and cooperation of the persons they seek to educate. This fact makes their necessary connection with recreation closer than that of the schools, some of which have been slow to exploit fully the educational values in voluntary learning. If it would not be accurate to say that the whole concern of the public libraries is with recreation, it is certainly true that the community libraries are mainly concerned with leisure.

The kinds of leisure activity that libraries promote are restricted to those in which reading is a major element or that can be usefully supplemented by reading. This area, however, is large enough to take in many of the interests that fill young people's spare time. It covers reading for self-improvement as well as for simple pleasure. It spreads over nearly the whole of cultural and creative experiences. Many libraries, for instance, organize art exhibits and have lending collections of phonograph records. Indeed when we consider that there is hardly any activity known to man about which someone has not written a book telling how to do it better, it is apparent that no limits can be set to the contribution reading can make to the worth-while use of leisure.

### USE MADE OF LIBRARIES BY YOUTH

Youth have a special stake in the public libraries. They are the principal users. An extensive study of reading in St. Louis showed that over two-thirds of the reading matter obtained from public libraries was borrowed by persons under 30. In a similar

study in South Chicago the proportion was over three-fourths. The public libraries are often the only source of reading materials varied enough to attract and hold young people's interest. Certainly the average American home is poorly equipped to provide suitable and sufficient reading for boys and girls. Of 18,000 Pennsylvania youth investigated in one of the American Youth Commission's early studies, two in five were found to be in homes having no more than fifty books—if so many. One knows the contents of most collections such as these. A mail order encyclopedia and a set of the *World's Classics*, unopened, would account for forty volumes. The remainder would be fifteen-year-old fiction. School libraries are improving, but the great majority are pitifully small. Their limitations can be inferred from the fact that though they are five times as numerous as public libraries the number of books contained in all of them together is only one-fourth the total in public libraries.

A study of the reading habits of 40,000 representative adults in Chicago, New York, St. Louis, and other communities showed that the public libraries were the most important single source of books. Forty-three per cent of all books read by these people came from public libraries, which was more than half again as large as the proportion obtained anywhere else. And this was in metropolitan areas, where the competition among agencies of book distribution is keen. In many smaller places the public library accounts for an even greater proportion of the reading people do. The Lynds, in *Middletown*, found that "book reading . . . means overwhelmingly the reading of public library books."

#### SHORTCOMINGS IN SERVING YOUTH

Despite these signs of popularity, public libraries are not nearly the effective influence in young people's use of leisure that they should be. The libraries have two principal shortcomings. There are not enough of them, and those we have do not make themselves sufficiently attractive to youth. Forty million people, or nearly a third of our population, have no library service at all. In twenty states, libraries are not accessible to over half the

people. Of the 3,100 counties in the United States, more than 1,000 have no town, city, or county library within their borders. Among people who live in the country, three out of four are beyond reach of a library. This is true of less than one in twelve of the urban population. It has been aptly said that we have many libraries but no library system.

The scarcity of library service in rural areas is being gradually relieved. Where people cannot come to the library, the library is being taken to them. In the last five years the Work Projects Administration has made library service available to 10,000,000 persons who never had it before. In the mountains of Kentucky it has 350 pack-horse library carriers, who stuff their saddlebags with books and magazines and ride trails and creek bottoms, bringing the library to the mountaineer's door. More prosperous areas are able to extend library service throughout their rural parts by means of the book-automobile.

Progress, however, is slow. What has been done is merely enough to demonstrate how the problem can be solved when we decide to solve it. Nearly everywhere the city or town, rather than the country, is still the basis for library service. The third of the nation that does not have access to a public library contains well over a third of our young people. If we believe that library service is an important means of public enlightenment and a standing encouragement to the worth-while use of leisure we should act upon our faith. We must bring this advantage within reach of all our youth and all our citizens.

The American Library Association has proposed a plan for a national system of library service, based upon the development of state services that will make libraries available to all parts of each state and all classes of the people. The federal government would assure the adequacy of the plan by furnishing leadership and such financial aid as might be necessary. Some measure embodying these general features will be found essential to remove the glaring inequalities in our library service.

Good libraries must be made available to youth, but that in itself is not sufficient. They must be the kind of libraries that young people will use. A defect in much of present library service

is that not nearly enough youth are attracted by it. In the American Youth Commission's Maryland study it was found that half the young people having libraries available to them did not use these libraries. In the Commission's Dallas study 78 per cent of the white youth had not used a public library in the month preceding the interview. Similar findings have been reported by other studies. In Detroit, a youth survey showed that 40 per cent of young people 16 to 24 did not make even occasional use of a public library.

If there were any large proportion of youth genuinely incapable of taking an interest in reading, these findings might not reflect on the libraries. But there are few youth who do not read, though there are many who read little that is worth while because they seldom come into contact with books that are both good in themselves and suited to their tastes. When young people do not come to the libraries it may be taken for granted that they are getting their reading matter elsewhere, generally from sources where the chances of becoming acquainted with things 'worth reading are small. In a Chicago study the public libraries were found to be furnishing less than 6 per cent of the reading matter of young adults in their twenties.

#### HOW CAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES SERVE YOUTH BETTER?

The cooperation of the schools has proved to be invaluable in getting young people to form the "library habit." Classes are taken to visit the nearest branch. There they learn that the library is a friendly place and are assisted to join with a minimum of red tape. After such an introduction many of the youth will return voluntarily.

It is not enough to bring the young person to the library. He must be made to feel that he will find there the kinds of books he wants. Otherwise he will not make a habit of coming back. The kinds he wants may not be what the library is accustomed to regard as very good kinds, but unless it is willing to supply them it may lose the opportunity of introducing him to something better. Librarians must not only know what young people



like to read, but also what boys and girls can learn to like and how the transition in their tastes can be effected. They must know how to advise a young person without seeming to want to "improve" his reading habits.

Most libraries do not display the books they have to best advantage. Young people can quickly develop a taste for reading about hobbies and wild life. An interest in adventure tales comes naturally to them, and biographies easily hold their attention if properly selected. Libraries need to advertise their wares. One of the large public libraries that is most successful in serving its community has a dozen show windows fronting on the sidewalk and dresses them with book displays that compare favorably with the downtown shops in ability to attract the attention of passers-by. The library is in legitimate competition with commercial forms of recreation and it ought to employ every suitable means of advertising the services it offers the public.

In a score or more of our larger cities the public libraries have established a separate department for youth, in charge of a special young people's librarian. Other libraries that cannot yet arrange for a separate department have a young people's collection in a corner of the adult department or perhaps in the browsing room. These collections are built up from annual lists of the books that have proved most popular with boys and girls. The library that has a young people's librarian and a young people's book collection is well on the way to serving the youth of its community.

To a considerable extent the failure of libraries to attract more young people may be laid to the niggardly fashion in which they are commonly supported. Librarians know the measures they can take to make their collections appear more desirable to youth, but a certain amount of extra expense is usually unavoidable and the budget is almost certain to be strained already. The American Library Association estimates that the average minimum annual income upon which reasonably adequate library service can be maintained is equivalent to one dollar per capita. In towns and smaller cities the figure will be higher. The present amount spent for public library service for the entire country is

thirty-seven cents per capita. It is fifty-nine cents for those portions of the country that actually have library service. In number of books, the association recommends standards of from one and one-half to three books per capita, depending upon the size of the community. In practice, the median in cities of over 200,000 population is less than one volume per capita.

We are not getting full benefit from the libraries we now have through failure to keep them open sufficiently. A public library should no more be regarded as a part-time institution than a public school. Yet in many a community whose resources would allow it to maintain a full-time staff the library is open only a few hours a day, a few days a week. The public may reasonably expect to use the library every day, including Sundays. Whenever possible the library should remain open all evening. It is often the only place where a young person can go in the evening for free entertainment, yet the common closing hour of nine o'clock is too early to solve the youth's problem of how to spend his time. Libraries deserve financial support that will enable them to be open whenever there is a substantial demand for their services.

Another way in which libraries can be more valuable to young patrons is to increase the number of outlets through which books are distributed. Here the pioneer work of the librarians of the Tennessee Valley Authority deserves to be widely imitated. Too many libraries are primarily places to store books against the possibility that someone may want to look at them. But in the Tennessee Valley the library leaves its books all over the community, wherever people are likely to see them. It places book boxes in schools, in barber shops, in construction camps, in all manner of places where people are employed or where they congregate during their leisure time. There is no reason why taking the library to the reader should be confined to rural areas or to libraries that can afford a book-automobile. This is a service that every library could perform, and nothing would go farther toward increasing its usefulness to its constituency.

The fact that half of our youth read but do not make use of the means the public libraries offer to increase the pleasure and profit

that leisure can be made to yield is a standing challenge that the libraries cannot afford to ignore.

## COMMUNITY RECREATION AUTHORITIES

There is a third means by which society attempts to influence the use young people make of their spare time. In many communities a special agency of local government has been created to promote recreation among the public in general and its younger members in particular. This local recreation authority takes various forms. It may be a recreation commission or board, elected by the people and supported by the proceeds of a special recreation tax. It may be a committee or council with the members appointed by and representative of various existing government agencies, such as the school board, the park commission, and the mayor's office, but exercising independent authority. Or it may be a recreation department forming part of the municipal administration and responsible solely to the mayor and city council. Sometimes the job is turned over to an already existing agency. Frequently this is the authority administering the public parks, though as we have already mentioned the schools conduct a small share of public recreation programs.

### SERVICES RENDERED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Local recreation authorities differ greatly with regard to the responsibilities they undertake. Some do little more than equip a few playgrounds and provide custodial service for them. Others conduct an elaborate program with a variety of supervised activities for all members of the community. The majority fall somewhere between these two extremes, as local resources and initiative determine.

It used to be thought that a community which provided a public park where people could take their ease amid the peaceful surroundings of nature had done all that might reasonably be expected of it to help its citizens spend their leisure agreeably and profitably. Then, in 1872, Brookline, Massachusetts, passed

the first legislative measure establishing public playgrounds. Other cities adopted this innovation, and eventually playgrounds, more or less fully equipped and operated either in connection with the park system or separately, became a standard part of any large city's provision for the welfare of its young people.

In 1906 the movement received an impetus from the organization of the Playground Association of America, now known as the National Recreation Association. Little by little progressive communities added facilities for outdoor sport and physical activity. The conception of public recreation expanded to include the interests of older youth and of adults. A temporary setback was caused by the depression, but in recent years the provision of recreational facilities and services has resumed its steady advance. It has been particularly aided by the stimulus of federal emergency employment measures, to which must be attributed the fact that many communities were able to keep a program going at all.

Recreation buildings have more than tripled since 1930, and there are now 1,500. In addition, there are 4,000 indoor recreation centers (buildings not used exclusively for recreation but in which a recreation program is carried on under leadership for community groups). By 1938 the public recreation movement had reached a point where 24,000 recreation workers were being paid from municipal funds—3,200 of them on a full-time basis. In addition, there were 40,000 WPA workers, paid from federal funds, conducting community programs. There were also nearly 10,000 volunteer workers. Total expenditures for municipal recreation were in excess of \$60,000,000, and total participations were in the hundreds of millions. Public recreation gives the impression of assuming sizable proportions.

It is difficult to suggest the nature and extent of the activities carried on by a typical recreation department because local circumstances vary greatly and the field to be exploited is much broader than any single program yet developed. However, a large city with an aggressive, well-supported recreation department is now likely to offer services along most of the following lines.

The core of the program will usually be the city's playground facilities. These may include the school playgrounds, operated under leadership by the recreation department after school hours and over week ends. They will also include municipal playgrounds, situated in the public parks or elsewhere. Such playgrounds are likely to be larger than school grounds, to be open all day, and to offer a fuller program of activities. A considerable variety of play apparatus will be provided and there will be all the usual games and sports. In addition, the leaders will organize groups in storytelling, dramatics, nature lore, handicrafts, and other pastimes adapted to children's interests and the playground's resources. There will be special events such as kite-flying tournaments, treasure hunts, and excursions.

For use by youth and adults, a few larger areas designated as playing fields will be maintained. These are suited for outdoor team games requiring considerable space. Football fields, baseball diamonds, running tracks, areas for hockey, soccer, lacrosse, and archery will be provided, as well as numerous tennis courts, bowling greens, handball courts, horseshoe pitches, and the like. There will be a field house with showers and perhaps game rooms to which activities can be transferred in wet weather. There may be a pavilion for open-air dances.

During the winter the emphasis will be shifted to community centers, which may or may not be operated in connection with playgrounds. In any case, if they are well equipped they will be provided with gymnasiums and swimming pools so that a minimum program of physical recreation can be carried on indoors. They will also have numerous rooms where special interest groups can meet, shops with machinery for working in wood, metal, and so on, and perhaps an auditorium with stage and motion picture apparatus.

These centers will serve as focal points for a host of activities. Every member of the community, young and old, can find here opportunity for developing some interest that will appeal to him. Music groups will gather for informal singing, or to make simple instruments, or merely to listen to records. Arts and crafts groups can explore an almost limitless range of fascinating hob-

bies, from block printing through quilting and model making to snow sculpture. Persons with a taste for drama can experiment with marionettes or work up impersonations, minstrel shows, or even full-length plays. The center can be used as a base for nature expeditions and a repository for collections of flowers, fossils, and minerals. Astronomy and microscope study are hobbies that can be developed on the premises. Book clubs, debates, forums, spelling bees, and similar activities can be organized.

In addition to the routine function of conducting play activities during the summer and community centers during the winter, recreation departments characteristically provide a number of special facilities and guidance in their use, varying according to local conditions and resources. If the climate is suitable, winter sports are likely to be developed. Playing fields may be flooded for skating, or indoor rinks may be provided. A toboggan run, coasting hill, or ski jump may be built and snowshoeing expeditions organized. Iceboating can be developed if a frozen lake or river is near by.

The proximity of natural bodies of water affords opportunity for maintaining swimming facilities for summer use. Beaches will be improved, or in some instances created, bathhouses will be erected, and supervision provided. If boating is practicable, a clubhouse may be built and craft rented. Other special facilities that recreation departments sometimes find it possible to furnish are: municipal golf courses, bandstands and orchestra shells, outdoor theaters, rollerskating rinks, and stadiums.

Besides supplying special facilities, recreation departments often organize or contribute to special events, these occasions marking high spots in the year's program. Historical pageants, folk dance festivals, and winter sports carnivals are typical of such enterprises. Less spectacular but equally popular are the Christmas carolling services conducted in many cities. Summer camps, both for families and for boys and girls, are maintained by dozens of recreation departments, and organized camps in the city parks for day or week-end use are more and more frequently promoted. Some departments are active in encouraging industrial recreation

and in sponsoring leisure associations among employees of business firms. These associations are often particularly interested in athletics and hold annual sport events with parades, exhibits, and contests. A further special service offered by some recreation departments consists of maintaining contact with old people, invalids, and physically handicapped persons, conducting programs in institutions, and in other ways aiding shut-ins to cultivate leisure interests.

The more elaborate programs of public recreation are naturally found in the larger cities, where material resources are greater and civic-mindedness is likely to be more prevalent. This does not mean that effective and diversified programs for youth or for all citizens can be developed only in large urban centers. Among the communities reporting to the National Recreation Association are numerous towns and even villages and rural areas. The programs they conduct are often as remarkable, considering their size, as any to be found in the larger cities.

Crawfordsville, Indiana, a town of 10,000 inhabitants, supports a symphony orchestra of fifty-five or sixty. The players range in age from 15 to 61 and are nearly all recruited locally. Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, a town of 7,500 inhabitants, conducts a year-round recreation service on a budget of less than \$6,000. In 1937 its total attendance at activities during the year was nearly ten times the population of the town.<sup>1</sup> It is true, however, that the greater the size of a community the more likely it is that some public effort will have been made to promote recreation. Of the municipal recreation authorities known to exist in 1938, nearly a fourth were in city or county areas of over 50,000, though only 6 per cent of all urban communities are of this size.

#### THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Perhaps the most important fact about public recreation programs is that there are so few of them. Numerically they are a poor third among the means employed by society in its effort to

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed description of the Hastings-on-Hudson program, see George D. Butler, *Introduction to Community Recreation* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1940).

guide the uses to which people put their leisure. We have 25,000 public high schools and 6,000 public libraries, but the number of communities reporting public recreation service is barely 1,300. Nearly all communities of more than 50,000 population have taken some step to make available to their members activities of the kind usually promoted by a public recreation authority. Among communities of smaller size, however, many have not yet recognized their responsibility in this direction.

Consider, for example, the population range from 10,000 to 50,000. It contains a large and important group of American cities—nearly 800 in number. Almost any community within these limits should be able to discover among its citizens the leadership necessary to bring about community acceptance of and support for a program of public recreation. Yet in 1938 approximately half of these cities were not known to have any local authority—public or private—conducting a recreation program for the community, with the exception of emergency activities undertaken with the aid of the WPA. Of communities from 5,000 to 10,000 population, less than one in four had its own program of public recreation.

The Work Projects Administration has made it possible for locally sponsored recreation programs to be conducted in many communities that would not otherwise have had them. Hundreds of additional small communities receive recreation services from county authorities. However, the overwhelming majority of towns and small cities have no program of public recreation, and this situation is practically universal in rural areas. Yet there are self-supported programs functioning usefully in communities of only a few hundred. The smallest area can demonstrate a sense of civic responsibility.

It is impossible to say how large a community may grow before a public recreation program becomes a necessity. Any community will be the better for helping its members to use their leisure wisely, and experience shows that enterprise and resourcefulness can accomplish remarkable results wherever they are applied. The only certain thing is that three decades of growth have left the public recreation movement still small in relation



to the need. The facts available to the National Recreation Association indicate that less than one-half of the population of the United States is served by any form of public recreation program, exclusive of emergency services.

#### INADEQUACIES IN EXISTING PROGRAMS

It is a further defect of municipal and county recreation authorities that even where they do exist they have generally been able to satisfy the needs of their communities only very incompletely. They suffer heavily from the financial undernourishment which afflicts all social services. The National Recreation Association suggests that any American city should spend annually at least \$1.50 per capita for the services ordinarily provided by a municipal recreation department and an equal sum for such leisure services as the maintenance of general park areas, operation of museums, and provision of special events. In 1937 the suggested standard of \$3.00 was reached by only two of our ninety-four cities of 100,000 or more. The average per capita expenditure of this whole group of cities was \$1.54. Other standards exist by which the adequacy of such facilities as parks and playgrounds can be estimated, but it is the exception rather than the rule for them to be met.

The National Resources Planning Board has recommended that municipalities of more than 10,000 population provide a minimum of one acre of park space for each 100 inhabitants. Yet throughout the country in 1930 there was an average of 208 persons to each acre of park space—in communities having parks. That the recommended standard is not unreasonable is shown by the fact that 268 selected cities have an average of only sixty-four persons to each acre of parks.

It is conservatively estimated that our municipal park acreage will have to be doubled to meet the requirements of the present urban population. Moreover, many of our present city parks are not readily accessible to the people who need them most. Areas beyond the city limits now comprise one-third of all municipal park lands. In 1930 a study by the National Recreation

Association found that over three-fourths of the total park area in cities of 5,000 and over was in large parks and outlying reservations or forest parks. Local communities now own and manage more than 1,500 forest areas, containing approximately 3,000,000 acres. Such recreational lands have definite uses, but they are not a substitute for smaller areas more conveniently located. Lack of balance and adequate planning characterizes far too many of our city park systems. There should be a recreation park in every major section of a large city and a neighborhood park of from a few to twenty-five acres for at least each square mile.

There is a particular need for children's playgrounds and playfields, and little progress has been made toward providing them. According to the National Recreation Association there should be a supervised playground within easy walking distance of every child (a half mile at most and the way not barred by arterial streets). Single playgrounds should be from three to seven acres, and one acre to every 1,000 of the population is a reasonable standard. There should be supervised neighborhood playfields of from ten to twenty acres within a mile of every home, and one acre to every 800 of the population is regarded as a reasonable allowance. We have only to look about our cities to see how far they fall short of such standards as these.

Leadership in connection with municipal recreation facilities of all kinds is another pressing need. It is a remarkable fact that cities that have been willing to invest heavily in recreation areas often begrudge a small additional expenditure for trained personnel to stimulate the use of these areas. Nothing will contribute more to the pleasure and profit the public obtains from its recreational facilities than guidance in their use. In Fairmont Park, Philadelphia, the introduction of leadership activities increased attendance twelvefold the first year.

The various deficiencies of public provision for recreation are reflected in a study the National Recreation Association has made of twenty communities that do have public recreation authorities. It was concluded that on the whole the efforts of these authorities are no more than 60 per cent adequate. Coupling this fact with

the high proportion of communities that do not even make an effort in this direction, the association estimates that communities where reasonably adequate programs of public recreation are in operation probably contain well under a fifth of our people.

### WHO SHOULD ADMINISTER A PUBLIC RECREATION PROGRAM?

We have seen that there are three principal agencies through which progressive communities attempt to direct the leisure activity of youth into useful channels. There is first the school. This institution has the advantage of being the most widespread of the three. It is found in nearly every community of the land. Often it is the only nucleus around which any recreation program can be built. It is not primarily a recreational agency, but its potential interest in the leisure of young people is very great. Though it is true that in many places this interest is little developed, the trend of the times is unmistakable. Schools will inevitably assume a role of major importance in the work of bringing to youth opportunity for a satisfying leisure life.

Then there is the library. This institution, while not so widely distributed as the school, is found in most urban districts of any size, and there are signs that it will not be long delayed in achieving a fairly complete coverage of rural areas. Like the school, it is not wholly concerned with recreation, perhaps not even primarily. But the informal conditions under which it operates oblige it to accommodate itself more closely to the interests and needs of the individuals with whom it works than many schools yet do. And while the scope of the interests it cultivates is somewhat restricted compared with the concern for all aspects of young people's leisure that may be expected of schools, there is no doubt that it often exerts a greater influence upon the leisure of the youth who come in contact with it than do many schools.

Finally, there is the municipal or county recreation authority—which in a few cases may actually be the school board—whose function is to provide facilities for public recreation and guidance in using them. It has the advantage that it is the only one of the

three agencies to be wholly concerned with recreation. Its efforts, however, have not been equally distributed among all leisure interests but have tended to be concentrated upon outdoor activities and sports. As a potentially dominating influence in the field of leisure it suffers from the further disadvantage of having arrived late and achieved only a moderate development to date.

Where these three agencies exist in the same community they are usually independent of one another. Occasionally they cooperate to some extent, but each is ordinarily responsible only for its own program. No one agency has the duty of seeing that all the leisure needs of youth and of the community are well met. The question inevitably arises whether it would not be good policy to have a single agency charged with this function.

The point at issue can be narrowed by assuming that there would be no great obstacle to placing the school and the library under a unified control. They are both educational institutions, and they both achieve their ends largely through teaching young people good reading habits and the intelligent use of books. Tradition, inertia, and the technical difficulties of administration keep them apart, and with good will these hindrances can be overcome. In several important cities the school and library services have long been administered by a single agency. This arrangement may also be observed in the communities that have grown up around the projects of the Tennessee Valley Authority. It appears to work well.

The point over which there is likely to be a real difference of opinion is whether the functions now exercised by schools and departments of public recreation should be administered by the same authority. There are things to be said on both sides of this question. The advantages of uniting the functions of public education and public recreation may be summarized as follows.

1. It is usually less difficult to secure public acceptance of responsibility for some new function if the administration of it is assigned to an existing agency. The relation of recreation to education is close enough to justify such a step. The school is already accepted by the community as a tax-supported agency, and the public is more or less reconciled to education's being interpreted in increasingly broad terms.

2. In a school board we have a body of laymen who should be able to take a broad social point of view and who have had experience in promoting community welfare through public action. It is only administrative expediency to utilize the talents of this group in establishing a new community service so closely related to the field of their competence.

3. The most effective use of school property for community recreation is likely to result only if education and recreation are administered by a single authority.

4. The school buildings tend to be strategically located with respect to the distribution of the population. But new recreation sites, such as an independent recreation authority might be obliged to acquire, can often be found only in inconveniently situated places.

On the other hand, there are considerations that can be advanced against extending the school's duties to include conducting a public recreation program. Though in theory recreation should not and indeed cannot be sharply distinguished from education, there are practical difficulties to uniting administrative responsibility for the two services. Some of these were discussed earlier in this chapter as obstacles that hinder schools from giving adequate attention to the recreational needs of their pupils. The points which seem to weigh most heavily against the school's taking charge of recreation for the whole community are:

1. Many schools are not yet discharging their present educational functions adequately, and we should not risk dissipating their energies and resources by placing further community responsibilities upon them.

2. Too many individual schools lack the point of view necessary to vigorous leadership in recreation. There is danger that they will formalize a program that must be kept close to contemporary needs, as they have done with education. They may not promote recreation with sufficient energy because they do not adequately appreciate its importance.

3. Two agencies conducting distinct programs are likely to meet with less tax resistance from the public than one agency performing two functions not clearly differentiated.

4. Public recreation is a function of sufficient importance to

have its own independent organization. This is perhaps the strongest argument of all.

In view of what there is to say on either side of this matter, no hard and fast principle can be laid down to govern the relationship between the school and the other community agencies ministering to young people's recreation needs. It can certainly be said, however, that if the expanded school recreation program recommended earlier in this chapter shows a tendency to develop into unified control of all the community's public agencies working in the field of leisure interests, such unification should not be resisted so long as it is evident that the full development of all recreational services will proceed unhampered.

It is important that nothing be done that would restrict the freedom essential to the proper functioning and continued growth of public recreation. No school board should assume responsibility for community recreation unless its own educational philosophy is as realistic as that underlying modern recreation practice. There must be no lessening of the emphasis that recreation places upon learning through doing and upon participation because of enjoyment rather than for the sake of "marks" or external rewards. Activities must continue to arise out of individual interests, creative values must retain their primary importance, and compulsion must have no place in the program. Of course many progressive schools accept these principles as part of their own educational philosophy and incorporate them as far as possible in their practice. We must see that they are accepted by any school that undertakes a major responsibility for community recreation.

Though it is not possible at the present stage of development to devise a formula by which administrative responsibility for a community recreation program can be fixed, it is possible to identify a central tendency and suggest that communities work toward it. The Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association foresees that in communities of appropriate size there will eventually come into being a Public Education Authority, charged with the responsibility of conducting the activities now carried on by the school board, the library board,

and the public recreation department. As a goal for the not too distant future this seems desirable. Small communities, in particular, ought to find such an arrangement beneficial. Its theoretical advantages are evident from what has already been said. Of course the union would have to embody a high degree of flexibility to ensure that the best values of all three services are retained. But this should not prove impossible. The obstacles are either administrative details or lack of public understanding of the importance of the issues involved. These difficulties, time and intelligent effort can remedy. Both economy and social need call for a unified program of cultural and leisure-time activities for citizens of all ages and at every economic level.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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## RECREATION THROUGH PRIVATELY SUPPORTED COMMUNITY AGENCIES

THE RECREATIONAL services supplied by schools, libraries, and other public authorities are only part of the provision that communities commonly make for the leisure of their younger members. Balancing the various recreational activities that people promote through their public agencies is a host of leisure-time enterprises that they sponsor in their capacities as individual citizens or members of private organizations. Nearly a quarter of all community chest funds, it is estimated, are used for some kind of leisure service. This is only a little less than the proportion going to the field of activity that receives the largest allotment. Private philanthropy annually contributes large sums for recreational work through numerous other channels.

Nearly everyone is acquainted in a general way with two or three of the larger voluntary agencies for occupying the leisure of young persons. Most people will also know of instances of useful service being rendered by private agencies whose recreational work with youth is not so widely appreciated, such as a church or a businessmen's club. Few persons, however, realize how numerous are the private agencies concerned with the leisure time of young people and how varied are the activities they foster. There are easily forty or fifty of what may be described as "community" agencies that have a substantial interest in promoting



recreation among youth. No community is likely to have all of them, and many communities, even of fair size, have few indeed. But these agencies represent potential resources that a community can develop for the benefit of its young people. If they were better known they would be more widely utilized.<sup>1</sup>

Part of the difficulty of obtaining an adequate picture of the private recreational services available to youth is the extraordinary complexity of this area of social service. There are leisure organizations of young people that are simply offshoots of organizations for adults—such as church societies. Other organizations of young people may be unaffiliated with any adult organization but still led principally by adults; examples are the Scouts and the Young Men's Christian Association.

There are a few organizations that are not only composed wholly of youth and unconnected with any adult organization, but are directed entirely by the young people themselves. However, the only agencies of this kind having a major interest in recreation are the so-called "cellar clubs." These are voluntary associations which exist to provide their members with facilities for social activities free from adult supervision. They derive their name from the typical location that their meager resources usually oblige them to seek. These clubs are numerous in our large cities, but it is questionable whether in their present state they should be regarded as a community asset.

Finally, there are organizations of adults, such as businessmen's clubs and women's clubs, whose interest in the leisure of youth usually takes the form of supplying facilities or encouraging public action to provide facilities, rather than working directly with young people themselves. These various levels at which private youth-serving agencies function need to be kept clearly in mind whenever an effort is made to assess the community's recreational resources.

It is characteristic of community organizations attempting to influence young people's use of leisure that recreation alone is

<sup>1</sup>The American Youth Commission has recently prepared a new edition of its handbook, *Youth-Serving Organizations: National Nongovernmental Associations*. This volume has been found to be a valuable guide in obtaining a view of community resources in all fields of youth welfare.

seldom the primary goal of their efforts. Often they do not even acknowledge it as a major objective. Their avowed ends are things that they consider more important or that are thought to have greater ability to attract community support. This fact increases the difficulty of obtaining a clear view of the recreational resources represented by private agencies. Cellar clubs are almost the only youth-serving organizations that claim mere recreation as their principal function, and these groups do not depend on community support but upon the resources of their own members.

When the reader looks about his community with the object of identifying the private agencies and groups of citizens whose expressed purpose is to enable young people to find more and better opportunities for recreation, he should not be discouraged to discover them few in number. The conception of recreation as a normal, enjoyable, and important *part* of people's lives, rather than as a *means* of cultivating desirable characteristics or suppressing undesirable tendencies, has been so slow in gaining ground that there is almost no private agency in the community which bases its philosophy upon it. There are, however, any number of agencies that for one reason or another are making or would be willing to make significant contributions to young people's use of leisure. The fact that such agencies exist and are an element in the community's recreational resources is more important than the motives which prompt their contribution. For our present purposes they may be regarded as recreational agencies, whatever their primary aim. In this chapter we shall attempt a brief description of the agencies of this type most likely to be found in the local community. First, however, it will be desirable to consider briefly the place of private recreational agencies.

## THE PLACE OF PRIVATE AGENCIES

It is now no longer in doubt that our society must accept the responsibility of assuring adequate opportunity for recreation to all its members. We have already made some progress toward

this goal, and when we shall achieve it is a question of time rather than principle. A large expansion of recreation under public auspices is necessarily involved in this conception of our obligation.

To some individuals, increased provision for public recreation has seemed to imply the decline and possibly the eventual elimination of the recreational activities now conducted by private agencies. Both must compete to some extent for participants, and the persons who now provide the financial support for private recreation will be required to contribute to public recreation as well. It is possible they may conclude that they would not be justified in assuming the double burden.

Such a conclusion, however, would be unwarranted. Public and private recreation perform functions sufficiently distinct to justify the continuance of both. The greater part of recreation services are still provided by private agencies. A Children's Bureau study in twenty-nine cities recently showed that on the average only two-fifths of leisure services were financed from taxes (excluding federal emergency expenditures for wages only), and the range was as low as 13 per cent. There is no reason to believe that the portion of this total load assumed by private agencies need ever become negligible. Historically, public and private recreation are found to supplement each other.

Private agencies can continue to serve their communities usefully in the face of the growing demand for public recreation. One in seven of the recreation authorities reporting to the National Recreation Association in 1938 that they were conducting a program of community recreation was a private agency. The most numerous were bodies created for the particular purpose of operating a recreation program, such as playground and recreation associations. There were sixty-three agencies of this type. Twenty-six private community houses and similar institutions were conducting public recreation programs. Luncheon clubs were known to have twelve programs in operation; Y.M.C.A.'s, four. Other sponsoring bodies were welfare federations; civic, neighborhood, and community clubs; the American Legion; chambers of commerce; and industrial plants. These were not

agencies with programs simply for their own members. They were private agencies conducting community recreation programs.

There are useful characteristics of private agencies that can seldom be matched in public organizations, and there are areas of recreational need to which private agencies can minister better than public enterprise. The following is a partial list of advantages that private recreational agencies possess in a higher degree than public agencies.

1. The private agency can often move with greater boldness and dispatch toward meeting a new recreation need or trying out a new procedure than a public agency can. It can act as a "proving ground" for demonstrating the worth of new developments.

2. The private agency may solicit funds for the needs of a special group or for functions demanding more highly individualized attention than can be provided by an agency that must serve all the people.

3. The private agency can maintain a closer relationship with religious organizations without infringing the constitutional restrictions that affect a public school or other public recreation agency.

4. The private agency gives the benefactor an opportunity to indulge his altruistic impulses more directly than is possible through the impersonal medium of taxes.

5. The private agency can take vigorous action to initiate and support public recreation without danger of its motives being suspected.

Considerations such as these provide ample justification for the survival of the private recreation agency. Communities should realize that public and private recreation are not opposed to each other in any essential respect and that it will be to their advantage to support both.

We turn now to the particular community agencies and types of agencies that have been most active in promoting recreation for youth, other than those supported by local government funds. The number of organizations of this type whose members are young people themselves is large. Few agencies that have been successful in organizing many youth for any purpose have neg-

lected the recreational approach. Organizations that do not admit youth to membership but do make some contribution to their opportunities for recreation are also numerous. We shall first consider separately the independent youth-membership organizations that have been most successful in promoting leisure interests, dividing these into adult-led agencies and those in which youth themselves supply the leadership (cellar clubs). We shall then take up by type of organization the adult agencies of the community that exhibit a particular interest in recreation for youth, dividing these into agencies that develop youth organizations of their own and those that contribute to young people's leisure in other ways. Finally, we shall consider the agencies—youth and adult—serving rural young people.

## ADULT-LED, INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATIONS FOR YOUTH

There are a number of community organizations for youth that are not outgrowths of any adult agency but exist solely for the benefits they endeavor to provide young people. While not sponsored by adult organizations, nearly all of these groups are adult led, though in some of them youth are encouraged to accept varying degrees of responsibility. This class of youth organization includes some of those best known to the public at large. The following pages give some description of these agencies. Questions raised are confined to points believed to apply particularly to the agency in question. After consideration of the individual agencies, attention is directed to certain deficiencies which characterize the agencies as a group. Finally, there will be found a discussion of certain promising developments in this field.

### BOY SCOUTS

The Scouting movement endeavors to guide character formation by developing self-reliance, wholesome outdoor interests, and a spirit of public service. The local organization takes the form of a "troop" of from eight to thirty-two boys, subdivided

into "patrols" of eight. In rural areas patrols may be organized with as few as two boys, and isolated individuals may join the movement as Lone Scouts under the guidance of an adult. Each troop is sponsored by a school, church, or other community organization, which furnishes a troop committee of adults, a volunteer scoutmaster, and a room for the weekly meetings. Scouting is organized on three age levels: boys under 12 are known as Cubs, boys 12 to 15 simply as Scouts, and boys over 15 as Senior Scouts.

Scouting captures the imagination of boys by uniform, drill, and nature lore. An elaborately worked out program of suggested activities is furnished to local groups by the national office and graded according to age and abilities. Youth are introduced to an intricate and extensive assemblage of leisure pursuits, among which they may choose to suit their interests. Camping, hiking, and other aspects of woodcraft are emphasized. Handicrafts and scores of special skills may be developed under the stimulus of prescribed minimum standards and awards for superior achievement. There are 106 different merit badges that a boy may earn and various degrees of rank to be attained.

The Scouts are one of the largest youth organizations and continue to add substantially to their numbers from year to year. There are nearly a million and a half Scouts in the United States, of whom 30 per cent are over 15. There are also a third of a million volunteer adult leaders, many of whom are under 25. In all, 2,000,000 boys who are now between the ages of 15 and 21 are or have been Scouts.

It should be said that certain of the characteristic features of Scouting that contribute most to its appeal to boys embody also the defects of their virtues. The system of awards and merit badges has in the past operated to stimulate a competitive spirit. Current trends in the movement emphasize competition with one's own standards, a type of endeavor less open to objection. However, it would seem that more effort might be devoted to the development of cooperation along the lines necessary in our modern life. Drill can readily lend itself to over-emphasis in the hands of unimaginative scoutmasters, who may use it as a substitute for more worth-while but less easily organ-

ized activities. Scouting, through its training program for leaders, has been endeavoring to reduce the possibility of this unfortunate occurrence. A recent study<sup>2</sup> has criticized the movement for employing emotional conditioning and indoctrination rather than promoting intellectual insight. This study also discerns in Scouting a tendency to believe that social improvement can be attained merely through the regeneration of individuals. There seems to be reason for questioning whether on these points the movement has been meeting the social challenge of modern American life.

#### GIRL SCOUTS

The aims of the Girl Scouts bear considerable resemblance to those of the Boy Scouts and their form of organization has been along similar lines, though the two agencies are not affiliated. The program is divided into three age groups: Brownies, aged 7 to 10; Girl Scouts, 10 to 14; and Senior Girl Scouts, 14 to 18. The basic local unit is the troop of from eight to thirty-two girls. It is under the immediate sponsorship of a troop committee of interested adults, and in communities of some size there will also be a local council of adults to supervise and further the activities of all nearby troops. There is a volunteer leader and assistant leader to each troop. Until recently the patrol of eight has been the standard subdivision through which program activities were developed. There are now over half a million Girl Scouts organized into 24,000 troops in some 5,000 local communities. The great majority of them are between the ages of 10 and 13.

The organization takes advantage of the group interest of the early teens to foster good fellowship among girls, teach them how to assume and delegate responsibility, and encourage self-government. The seventy-two proficiency badges cover a wide range of interests. Homemaking and health-and-safety have been the most popular fields, but lately they have been closely approached by arts and crafts and cultural subjects. Among Senior Girl Scouts considerable emphasis is laid upon vocational exploration.

<sup>2</sup> Edwin Nicholson, *Education and the Boy Scout Movement in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941).

Camping and hiking are leading activities. There are 1,400 permanent Girl Scout camp sites in the United States and 1,800 troop camps, which are sites for shorter outings. Girl Scouts pioneered in developing the day camp, where young people go for a few hours to study nature, cook, tell stories, or play games about a campfire. They now have 488 such camps, and are playing a leading part in advancing this popular movement.

Two years ago the national office of the Girl Scouts instituted a revised program for the conduct of activities in local troops. The patrol system, which had been regarded as the chief instrument for encouraging the spirit and practice of democracy within the troop, was judged to be inadequate for this purpose and was abandoned. The national office now makes no effort to prescribe the details of troop government. Troops are advised to organize committees or interest groups of any size that may seem desirable. Rules and regulations have been abandoned and procedure is to be devised by the local groups in accordance with a few general principles formulated by the national office. Awards for rank and special merit are no longer to be made solely on the basis of proficiency but are to take into account each girl's ability, experience, and effort. Formal testing has been abandoned. It is believed that the maximum development for each girl will be achieved through participation in small groups rather than by directly cultivating individual proficiency. The trend of the new program is thus toward breadth and flexibility.

#### CAMP FIRE GIRLS

The Camp Fire Girls enroll 274,000 members in 13,500 local groups, or "Campfires," in 1,300 communities of the United States. They are for the most part between the ages of 8 and 16. Campfire groups may be attached to a church or school, though a large proportion exist independently. Each is under the direction of a volunteer adult leader known as the "Guardian."

The aim of this agency is to develop the initiative, resourcefulness, and self-reliance of girls and to help them make a happy adjustment to life. As in the Scouting organizations, there is a



system of good deeds and proficiency awards and a strong interest in woodcraft and camping. Somewhat more emphasis is probably placed upon artistic values and the making of beautiful things. There is an equal emphasis upon health and the home.

A distinctive characteristic of the Camp Fire Girls is an elaborate ritual incorporating elements from Indian legend. This is intended to stimulate imagination and invest the ordinary relationships of life with beauty and a new significance. Girls do not buy ready-made uniforms but instead have ceremonial garments which they are expected to make themselves. The various ornamental designs these embody are given esoteric meanings. The ceremony is meticulously prescribed by the national office, but local groups have freedom in arranging their other activities.

#### THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations have been defined as "at their best, and essentially, fellowships of men and boys, women and girls, seeking to develop personality, commonly conceived as 'fourfold'—actually, of course, multifold—in accord with character ideals based upon the New Testament and particularly upon the personality of Jesus."<sup>3</sup> The fourfold conception of personality referred to in this definition comprises the mental, physical, moral, and social aspects of human behavior. We are not here concerned to estimate the extent to which either of these organizations has achieved its primary aim of character building. For the Y.M.C.A., a thorough inquiry into this question is now available in the remarkable study by Pence.<sup>4</sup> A somewhat similar study of the Y.W.C.A. also exists.<sup>5</sup> We are concerned merely to indicate the place occupied by the two "Y's" as community recreational resources and institutions with an interest in developing the fuller implications of the leisure of young people.

<sup>3</sup> *International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations* (New York: Association Press, 1932), p. 353.

<sup>4</sup> Owen E. Pence, *The Y.M.C.A. and Social Need* (New York: Association Press, 1939).

<sup>5</sup> Mary S. Sims, *The Natural History of a Social Institution—The Y.W.C.A.* (New York: Womans Press, 1936).

There are 700 community associations of the Y.M.C.A. in the United States and an additional 600 connected with colleges or other institutions. The average association has 1,150 members, and the total membership is given as a million and a third, with approximately a million additional persons estimated to participate annually in various activities. Of the members, roughly a third—or about 435,000—are boys and young men between 16 and 24 years of age; another third are men of 25 or more; the remainder are boys under 16, with the exception of a group of girls and women constituting 9 per cent of the total membership. The constituency of the Y.M.C.A. may be described as drawn from the middle and lower-middle classes, particularly from men and boys engaged in trade and commerce and having Protestant backgrounds.

The facilities offered by the average "Y" are generally familiar. The association is one of the better financed youth-serving organizations and over the lengthy period of its history has accumulated considerable property assets. The center of activities will be a building varying in size and accommodations with the resources of the community but likely to surpass that of any other organization conducting a comparable program. Gymnasium, swimming pool, bowling alleys, clubrooms, and a dormitory are usual features.

The organization for working with young people is a combination of the traditional departmental structure and the newer group work approach. The retention of departmentalism has seemed necessary, although it is known to be the less effective means of achieving the association's primary aim, because the association has taken on a number of service functions in the community and can only discharge them in this way. However, the typical "Y" program contains an assortment of young people's clubs, either of specialized interest or intended to promote general, all-round development. There are said to be over 15,000 of these groups for young men.

Hi-Y clubs enroll 200,000 members in 6,500 local units. They encourage voluntary activity among boys for the improvement of school and community life. State, regional, and national camps

are popular parts of their program. Some attention is given to social affairs, sports, and hobbies. Father and son groups called Indian Guides exist in eleven states. Youth just beyond high school age have a more diversified program of meetings, classes, teams, and other joint activities. They are formed into various groups that maintain national contact through a loosely organized Young Men's Council. Phalanx clubs are a popular form of older-youth group among young men past high school age. They are sometimes organized along the lines of a social fraternity, complete with ritual. There are some 250 such groups, with more than 5,000 members. The "Y" also has men's clubs, made up of young leaders of association activities who are between 20 and 35 years of age; these young men perform the leadership services not provided by the professional staff. There are special "Y" programs for colored youth.

The triple requirement of mental, physical, and social development, which together with moral growth defines the association's goal, gives promise of a well-rounded approach to the problems of leisure. However, it is fair to say that for many years the association's program emphasized physical recreation to the detriment of the intellectual and social uses of leisure. There is little question but that considering the somewhat specialized character of the Y.M.'s clientele a valuable service has been performed by endeavoring to modify habits of individual competition with patterns of teamwork and group participation in games. However, many of the boys and young men attracted by athletics have displayed no interest in the other activities the "Y" offers or might offer. This emphasis eventually reached a point where local branches of the "Y" sometimes appeared to be little more than athletic clubs for young men of moderate but appreciable means.

Recently a number of Y.M.C.A.'s have been stressing other uses of leisure than those mainly physical. Social events are more numerous and better attended. A considerable number of girls and young women now hold membership in the men's association, and activities that they can join in with men and boys are popular with both sexes.

The intellectual uses of leisure have perhaps been slower in coming into prominence in the association's program. The Y.M.'s traditional attitude has been to discourage interest among its members in topics of current importance that might be considered subject to controversy. However, "realization has steadily grown in recent years that religious living and interest are so gravely conditioned by the total social experience that the two cannot be dealt with separately."<sup>6</sup> In 1935 the National Council of the association took the significant step of creating its own Public Affairs Committee. The way is now open for local associations to encourage the free discussion of social, economic, and political issues affecting the welfare of their members.

Many Y.M.C.A.'s have developed substantial programs of informal education. Some of these programs are known as personal growth institutes, others as social education, personal progress, and the like. Occasionally they are coeducational. Many are open to other than "Y" members. Boston, for example, has an informal education program including crafts, dramatics, dancing, choral singing, forums, occupational guidance, and courses in preparation for marriage. Dayton, Ohio, has a Youth Council whose leadership institutes and discussion groups on topics such as world affairs, politics, and problems of marriage are balanced by dramatics, archery, low-cost dances, and hobby clubs. Portland, Oregon, has social education nights with weekly dinner sessions where the discussion ranges from etiquette, hobbies, and gardening to "adventures in thinking" and "modern marriage." These are only a few examples of activities that are becoming recognized parts of the typical program of local Y.M.C.A.'s.

In common with the majority of youth-serving organizations, the Y.M.C.A. has not been conspicuously successful in bringing its advantages to the young people of the poorer sections of the population. Yet there are communities where notable efforts have been made. In New York, the Uptown Branch in Manhattan conducts a centralized program of recreation leadership

<sup>6</sup> Pence, *The Y.M.C.A. and Social Need*, p. 315.

and guidance for about 100 social clubs. For twenty years the South Side Branch in St. Louis has carried on a comprehensive program with gangs and cellar clubs. Organization begins with boys 10 to 12 years old and ranges through junior rank to the seniors, who are 20 to 25 years of age. Some girls' clubs are included. At present sixty boys' groups, with over 2,000 members, and ten girls' clubs participate in federated activities. Each club is given assistance and guidance in its own program. On Saturday nights the club members are permitted to use the facilities of the association building without charge. In 1938 ninety-three athletic teams were active. The association accepts the responsibility for training forty to fifty volunteer leaders—business and professional men—who work with the clubs or their athletic teams at least two nights a week. There is said to have been a marked decrease in delinquency among boys who have become members of the affiliated clubs, and the juvenile courts of St. Louis frequently parole boys who are not members to leaders of the clubs or to the clubs themselves. The work of the South Side "Y" Brotherhood in St. Louis is an example of what can be done for boys in underprivileged areas and what might well be done more often.

#### THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

Like the Y.M.C.A., to which it is not affiliated but whose general objectives it shares, this women's and girls' organization is composed of locally autonomous associations. Its resources have never enabled it to develop physical plants equivalent to those maintained by the Y.M.C.A., but it has over 400 units in cities and towns, in addition to various college groups. Membership is not essential to participation in the program, and in fact less than one-seventh of those who take part are members of the association. Local units are rendering a wide and increasingly varied service to their communities and affect many more persons in proportion to the size of the membership than is usual among youth-serving organizations. In 1940, 3,000,000 persons are estimated to have taken part in programs of the Y.W.C.A.

The ages of members and other clients are largely between 15 and 35, with probably a majority under 25.

The three divisions of local Y.W.C.A. programs that are chiefly concerned with youth are those for girls of high school age, for business and professional women, and for women in industry. The first is embodied in the Girl Reserves, an organization for girls under 18, which has some 333,000 members in more than 2,400 communities. It provides such educational, religious, and social activities as local facilities permit and the needs of members suggest. The program differs from those of the Girl Scouts and Camp Fire Girls in its function of preparing for permanent membership in a senior organization—the association. It can be distinguished from those of the comparable boy organizations by the fact that it relies upon the appeal of certain ideals and standards for its emotional drive rather than upon an intensification of group loyalty.

About 54,000 women and girls participated in the Business and Professional Women's Department in 1938, and nearly 33,000 in the Industrial Women's Department. These two units are devoted to the interests of girls of modest means who are without relatives or friends in the city, and to alleviating the condition of underprivileged girls and poorly paid young working women. Recreational and educational programs are adapted to the needs of the particular groups and are largely self-determined. The Y.W. has separately organized clubs for unemployed girls, enrolling over 10,000.

In addition to these rather sharply marked sections of its program, the Y.W.C.A. in many cities and towns is rapidly taking on the functions of a community center, serving chiefly women and girls but also men and boys in some of its programs. The typical city association maintains a residence hall, serves low-cost meals in a restaurant or cafeteria (usually to both men and women), affords the customary facilities for indoor physical recreation, and has clubrooms and classrooms where a wide range of other leisure activities such as music, drama, and crafts are conducted.

The Y.W. avoids special emphasis upon athletics. The tendency is to develop physical recreation as a means of enjoyment and

self-expression. Little effort is made to utilize group loyalties for the purpose of building up winning teams. Indeed it may be said that the Y.W.'s program of physical education is somewhat more realistic than that found in the average Y.M. In place of aggressive competition in strenuous games it stresses personal hygiene and the basic relationship of temperate habits and a healthy body to mental and spiritual achievement.

Classes in current events, social practice, and dozens of other fields are available at the Y.W. The charges for these activities are on a basis less likely to discourage participation than is the case with the men's association. Instead of a substantial annual membership fee intended to cover most services, the Y.W. membership fee is nominal and optional. The various activities are supported by separate charges, moderate in amount. Discussion groups on many subjects are often a valuable part of the program. Public housing, pure food regulations, community and national health programs, federal wages and hours legislation, civil liberties, and the Negro's place in the occupational world are among the topics debated. Indeed, one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Y.W. is the freedom of discussion possible under its auspices, even on distinctly controversial matters.

Sincere efforts are made by the association to encourage youth initiative by allowing the girls to plan their own activities, develop their own policies, and cooperate with outside organizations quite as they choose. Though participants in the various "Y" programs have the opportunity of seeking advice and direction from adult workers, they supply their own leadership to a large extent. The Y.W.C.A. is noteworthy among community organizations for the degree to which it has developed volunteer leadership. It also renders a real service to the community by providing a meeting place for youth groups unable to afford or secure commercial assembly halls.

#### BOYS' CLUBS

The community organizations known simply as Boys' Clubs are among the few agencies for youth that concentrate upon serving the underprivileged young person. In 1930 it was re-

ported to the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection that 80 per cent of the members were in this category. Approximately 350 local institutions in 194 cities of thirty-seven states are affiliated with Boys' Clubs of America, the national association. The members of these constituent organizations number 296,000. They are for the most part from 12 to 16 years old, but nearly 40,000 are reported to belong to senior groups ranging in age from 18 to 25. The number of boys in a single club will vary from 100 to 1,000.

Boys' Clubs attempt to provide a more nearly continuous type of service than organizations that bring youth together for only a few hours a week can offer. All clubs are urged by the national association to remain open at least three hours a day, five days a week, nine months a year. Clubs ordinarily have their own buildings and endeavor to provide space for all kinds of activities that interest boys. Reduction of delinquency is a major aim of the clubs, and physical activities of various kinds are an important means to this end. These include swimming, gymnasium games, camping, scouting, and other outdoor pursuits. There is, however, no standardized program such as other youth-membership leisure agencies with national affiliations possess.

Though circumstances vary widely with the individual Boys' Clubs, it can be said in general that these agencies labor under a handicap in having an unusually large proportion of their resources tied up in buildings and equipment. The physical plant is sometimes so elaborate that it appears strikingly out of harmony with the environment in which it is situated and the circumstances of the boys who use it. Along with this emphasis upon material equipment has gone a seeming hesitancy in developing a planned program and providing effective leadership. The professional leader has not been especially prominent in boys' club work, and the training of indigenous leaders appears to have been neglected.

It is probable that these circumstances arise less out of any inherent limitation in the boys' club idea than from lack of guidance and promotion efforts on a national scale. This is not a criticism of the performance of the national office but rather of the frame of reference within which it has chosen to work. It



is believed that the national agency limits its functions by choice to those of a service bureau, giving much advice on building plans, equipment, and so on, but considerably less with reference to program. It thus occurs that on vital aspects of their work the local Boys' Clubs have probably received less assistance from their national association than have the constituent members of any other major youth-serving agency. The policy of the national office is, of course, adhered to in the interests of local autonomy. It is doubtful, however, that it has worked to the advantage of the youth whom the clubs are designed to serve.

Individual clubs are coming more and more to stress the need for providing every boy with opportunities to develop all his interests and capacities in order that he may grow into an efficient, useful citizen. In support of this wider aim a tendency can be noted to build up a varied program of social, recreational, and educational activities supplementing the more common emphasis upon athletics. Bands, orchestras, choral groups, and other musical ventures are of great interest to many youth with the limited opportunities of the Boys' Club clientele. Dramatics and newspaper production vary the educational program. It is not unlikely that quickening influences now manifesting themselves among other leisure-time agencies will before long result in development by the Boys' Clubs of a program of service worthy of their exceptional material facilities.

#### SETTLEMENT HOUSES

Settlements are a type of agency that should not be overlooked in assessing the community's private resources for improving the leisure of its youth. Although their aims are wider than those of the character-building agencies and involve the spiritual and material welfare of the whole community, settlements have long found a varied development of recreational opportunities to be a direct means of accomplishing at least a portion of their task. Though their work lies with persons of all ages, they have a special concern for children and young people. The fact that many settlements are in areas of foreign-born population affords

them unique opportunities for utilizing recreational skills native to other cultures. The fact that all settlements work among poor people means that their leisure services are sorely needed.

The recreational facilities provided by settlements vary according to resources, as with other institutions. If space is available a gymnasium will usually be fitted out. A swimming pool, when possible, is a welcome addition. There will be classrooms and clubrooms and perhaps craft rooms and a studio. Scores of settlements are listed as conducting boys' clubs. Not only do settlements provide general recreational facilities where practicable but some of them are noted for specializing in particular leisure activities, usually of a cultural nature. There are settlements that have earned a reputation by their work in art or music. These centers are likely to cultivate their particular fields both extensively and intensively, securing wide community participation of persons with an appreciable talent and also giving advanced instruction of a high quality in painting, singing, or instrumental playing.

The drama is particularly popular among settlements, and they are known for their early work in developing the little theater. There are many instances of settlements that have used creative and artistic leisure pursuits to relieve the clamor and dinginess of slum neighborhoods. The Graphic Sketch Club, Hull House, Hudson Guild, and Greenwich House are names that will be remembered in this connection. These are, however, simply outstanding examples of a type of activity that many if not most settlement houses are carrying on creditably.

Leisure services similar to those provided by settlements are being offered young people by many neighborhood houses and community centers operated under private auspices.

#### SALVATION ARMY

A third organization making a valuable contribution to the leisure opportunities of underprivileged youth is the Salvation Army. This agency aims to effect the physical and moral regeneration of all who need its help, particularly the poor, the

degraded, and the vicious. It maintains a vast and diversified system of social service, embracing in the United States 1,647 constituent units. Over a period of years it has developed a comprehensive program of work with children and youth. A number of junior organizations are maintained for boys and girls of various ages. They include more than 50,000 youth between 11 and 18, as well as others up to 25. The largest is known as the Young People's Legion.

These junior organizations provide instruction and practice in handicrafts, drawing, woodcraft, games, and group singing, as well as religious training. Many of the city centers maintained by the Army have gymnasiums and swimming pools. There are thirty-four summer camps for boys and girls. The Army also maintains a number of full-time boys' clubs, known as Red Shield Clubs, which are provided with separate buildings and leaders. In these it conducts a program of individual and group athletics, hiking, vocational training, artcraft, nature study, instrumental and vocal music, first-aid instruction, civics, and community service activities. It also allows part-time use of the facilities of its neighborhood centers to many other boys' clubs. Scout troops are sponsored by the Army among the less privileged youth, and it maintains an organization for girls with a program similar to that of the Girl Scouts. In numerous ways the Salvation Army manifests an increasing awareness of the role that leisure and recreation can play in its work.

#### SOME DEFECTS OF ADULT-LED, INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS FOR YOUTH

From the foregoing view of the adult-led, independent community organizations for youth it is easily apparent that they exhibit several characteristics that seriously limit their usefulness. In the first place, it will be noted that *all are relatively ineffective in reaching rural youth*. There are, it is true, organizations of this type intended specifically to serve rural youth. These we are reserving for consideration in a later section. But the agencies we have reviewed do not purport to be specifically

for the youth of large urban centers. Nearly all make some effort to operate in at least the smaller cities and towns, and none would be likely to admit that the services they endeavor to supply are fundamentally unsuited to rural young people. Yet all that have attempted to develop the countryside report slight success.

The Boy Scouts appear to have taken more pains than other agencies to build up a rural following. They have provided for the establishment of rural patrols with as few as two youngsters, and one boy by himself may become a Lone Scout if guidance is available from a suitable adult. Yet the Scouts are recruiting only one rural youth out of every ten who come of Scouting age—even though they report that 80 per cent of rural boys want to be Scouts. In small cities Scout recruiting is five or six times more successful than this.

The Girl Scouts have adapted their organizational requirements to allow for the formation of troops in towns but do not yet seem to have reached the village or open country. The Y.M.C.A. has in the past made considerable effort to adapt itself to rural conditions, but it has not yet found it possible to overcome the handicap of its gymnasium-centered program. Only one in twenty of its members lives in a rural community. The same difficulty obviously prevents Boys' Clubs from attaining any growth outside thickly populated areas. Nor have settlements yet found a means of ministering to the rural slum. The Y.W. has developed a plan to permit the forming of its Girl Reserve clubs in communities too small to support a full association, and many such clubs have been begun. However, in sum and even in combination with the accomplishments of the other agencies we have mentioned, they hardly make an impression upon the rural need.

In the second place, it is apparent that *none of these organizations reach many older youth*. Memberships drop off rapidly after 16 years of age, and at 18 only a relatively small percentage remain. This is not strictly true of the Christian associations, half of whose members and participants appear to be over 16. But it is true of the national-membership groups within the associations. Though a substantial portion of young people retain

membership in the association after dropping out of intra-organization permanent groups, it seems likely that they have come to look upon the association more or less as a service center and regard membership merely as an essential technicality.

In the third place, *relatively few youth on the lower income levels are being reached*. The majority of adult-led, youth-membership organizations draw their members from the middle, or at most the lower-middle, economic strata. Several years ago a careful study of the Boy Scouts concluded that its recruits came from better than average homes and had better than average intelligence. The national headquarters of the Boy Scouts is increasing its efforts to introduce Scouting into "less-chance" areas, and some degree of success will no doubt be attained. However, it is plain that lack of money is a serious obstacle to active membership in such movements as Scouting, where the eventual purchase of a uniform is necessary and members are encouraged to invest in a variety of other useful but relatively costly equipment.

Not only are the financial requirements of membership in youth groups difficult for many young people of poor families to meet, but it appears that organizations of the Scouting type also set up personal standards which effectively bar many youth from the lower income levels. Prospective recruits are not taken into the organization until they have undergone a period of probation during which they must measure up to standards of character, conduct, and ability. These standards naturally tend to an inbreeding upon the social strata characteristic of the majority of members. But it is the youth who cannot at first meet such standards who would be likely to benefit most from membership in a character-building organization. As matters now stand, they must usually seek one that bears the reputation of working mainly with underprivileged youth, and this they may well feel to be a form of discrimination.

The occurrence of a financial barrier is not characteristic of any one type of organization. It is certain that dues and incidental fees prevent many youth from using the facilities and services of the Christian associations. The good work done by

the organizations whose special field of action is underprivileged youth should be fully commended. But the Boys' Clubs, the settlements, the Salvation Army, and all similar agencies do not together satisfy more than a small part of the need for adequate recreational opportunities among the youth in the submerged third of the population.

Finally, it can be said of most adult-led, youth-membership organizations that *they have suffered from too detailed management by their adult leaders*. There are noticeable differences among the various agencies in this respect, particularly when current trends are taken into account, but in general the observation is believed to be true. There is, of course, no character-building organization that does not include in its aims the development of personal responsibility and initiative or that cannot point to measures specifically designed to give effect to this intention. However, competent observers gain the impression that rather frequently the intended development miscarries. The Girl Scouts regarded their patrol system as the instrument through which training in democracy was to be achieved, but after an intensive self-study they concluded that it failed to accomplish that purpose. Their new plan of organization promises more freedom for the development of real youth leadership. A minimum amount of control from adults has been characteristic of the Y.W.C.A. in its relations with young people. However, other youth organizations—and among them those with the largest enrollments—give the impression of continuing to fall short of their full potentialities partly through failure to let their young members have the invaluable experience of managing their own affairs with the least possible interference from adults.

#### PROMISING DEVELOPMENTS AMONG ADULT-LED, INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS FOR YOUTH

To balance the less favorable aspects of the agencies we have been considering, it can be reported that there have been major developments over the last decade furnishing good reason for believing these organizations will continue to take the prominent

role in the welfare of youth that has fallen to them in the past. One is *the breaking down of institutional lines*. Charles E. Hendry has pointed out that at least five factors have been responsible for this occurrence:<sup>7</sup>

(1) The impact of the depression, which brought agencies closer together in the struggle for survival. A striking testimony to the reality of this influence was the appearance of a small booklet, *Speaking Up for the Character-Building Agencies*,<sup>8</sup> prepared by a committee representing all the major agencies.

(2) Diffusion of knowledge of social science. As organization leaders came to understand more about the nature of leisure and of leadership it became clear that no agency had a monopoly on the most effective techniques.

(3) Joint financing. Using the Community Chest as a channel of finance has in some cases involved determining what common standards could be applied to the various "character"-building agencies.

(4) The fact that an increasing number of professional workers in the leisure field have had employment experience with more than one of the major agencies.

(5) Increasing consciousness of professional solidarity among workers for different leisure agencies.

The evidence that these various forces have produced a real drawing together of agencies whose programs formerly seldom touched is convincing but too extensive to cite here. As a particularly striking instance, however, there may be mentioned the partial merging of constituencies that has been going on between the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. A hundred thousand girls and women are now members of Young Men's Christian Associations, and nearly a quarter of a million more are said to be enrolled in one or another form of group activity sponsored by that institution. Similarly, very many men and boys are taking advantage of the numerous special offerings of the Y.W.C.A. in communities where a broad program has been developed. The Y.W.'s are constantly experimenting with a greater variety of activities in which boy friends and husbands can be included, and programs jointly sponsored by local branches of the two

<sup>7</sup> An unpublished manuscript prepared for the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy and kindly shown the present authors.

<sup>8</sup> National Social Work Publicity Council, New York, 1932.

organizations have proved successful. Numerous instances exist of a rapid, wide growth of cooperation and coordination among other agencies.

A further development of the highest significance is the appearance among character-building agencies of *a new capacity for self-criticism*. The depression years were the occasion of much searching of hearts among leaders of youth-serving organizations, and studies designed to reveal how an agency could serve its constituency better and with less waste soon began to multiply. This process has now been carried to a point where scarcely one of the major organizations in the field has not subjected itself to a thoroughgoing scrutiny.

Examples of the more prominent among these studies are the six-year "Standards Study" of the Y.W.C.A.; the "Program Study" of the Girl Scouts, which resulted in a complete revision of the methods of that organization; and Pence's *The Y.M.C.A. and Social Need*. There have also been numerous local studies by councils of social agencies, community chests, and other investigators that throw light on the local branch of the national agency in its community setting. Representative of the more intensive of these is *Between Spires and Stacks*, by Charles E. Hendry and Margaret Svendsen, a study of boy life in a sixty-four block area in the steel mill section of Cleveland. Special inquiries of many kinds have burgeoned, such as *Rooms of Their Own*, a study of young people's social clubs on the Lower East Side in New York. This interest on the part of social agencies in discovering their own shortcomings is a healthy symptom and suggests the likelihood that much additional improvement may be expected.

Finally, there may be mentioned a trend that was well established before the depression but that has gained momentum in the interval. *The group work concept continues to be clarified and increasingly accepted*. It has been thirty-five or forty years since modern educational and psychological thought began to reveal the possibilities for individual growth and remedial influence in the act of associating with other persons in a small group under skilled direction. The potential usefulness of this technique in developing the character of young people was soon



realized. A program of diversified activities, integrated through a dominating interest and providing a channel for self-expression, came to be regarded as the factor embodying the primary values in camping, club work, and other forms of controlled group activities. With increasing understanding, the useful range of this concept has constantly expanded, until now group work is recognized as a principal therapeutic and educative instrument. It has supplanted the old departmental technique, which aimed at but did not produce a well-rounded development. And it is being accorded a status complementary to modern psychologic and psychiatric case work.

The concept of group work continues to gain influence and has been an important element in certain forward-looking events of the past decade that have enhanced the value of leisure planning. It has hastened the appearance of a genuine professional literature. The agency publications that formerly held the field have been supplemented and may eventually be supplanted by a new literature emphasizing the areas of experience that the principal leisure agencies have in common. It has contributed to the inauguration of important programs of professional education. It has provided the basis for the creation of a new association—the Society for the Study of Group Work—which cuts across agency lines and even includes laymen among its members. It has been an important element in the founding of a new professional organization—the Association of Leisure-Time Educators. There is every reason to suppose that this major aspect of modern social work will be reflected in increased vitality among leisure and recreational agencies for many years to come.

### YOUTH-LED LEISURE ORGANIZATIONS: THE CELLAR CLUBS

Of recent years there have developed in urban centers leisure clubs for young people that have unusual interest. They are almost the sole example of a genuinely youth-organized and youth-led recreational activity existing on any considerable scale. Other youth-led organizations attract attention from time to time, but it can usually be said that they exist chiefly for political

ends or other special purposes not of a conspicuously recreational nature. "Cellar clubs," as the groups we shall now consider are termed, can be found in all large and many small urban communities. New York City alone is estimated to have 6,000 of them. They spring up spontaneously and seldom have even local affiliation with one another. The most common unifying factor is the neighborhood in which the members live, though similar ethnic, racial, or foreign language backgrounds may serve to bind together youth from different areas.

As boys grow into adolescence and begin to range farther than their home block, they soon find need for a regular meeting place where they can be free from the supervision of parents, where they are not "moved on" by policemen, and where they can entertain girls and thus obtain a social status not possible in the home of the average youth living in a crowded city area. Pooling their limited funds, they look for a vacant store, cellar, or loft and bargain with landlords. Often they can get occupancy of the premises rent free by painting and cleaning them up. Partitions are installed to produce the satisfying illusion of more space. Furniture is purchased secondhand or made by the members. A name is chosen—Club Invincible, Club Mirage, Club Casanova, Club Titans—and the club becomes an actuality.

A cellar club usually consists of from twenty to a hundred boys. They may range in age from 16 or 17 to well past 25. They will be in school and out of school, employed and unemployed, religious and irreligious, socially ambitious and socially indifferent, high and low in intelligence. They pay dues varying from twenty-five to fifty cents a week, but almost all clubs have other fund-raising devices. Dances for members and visitors (who pay for admission) are held in the clubroom, if it is large enough, or in a commercial dance hall. Minor forms of gambling are occasionally used, with the "house" taking its "cut" from the "pot."

#### STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Most of the cellar clubs are respectable and try sincerely to preserve an appearance of respectability. Fear of being evicted by landlords, closed by the police, or disapproved by the parents

of their girl friends leads members to exercise considerable vigilance over their corporate behavior. However, it is not uncommon for officious or unfriendly neighbors to resent the existence of a club, and when ill will is present a pretext for complaint is not difficult to find. The most common charge is disorderliness and the most serious is improper sex conduct. Once the police have been called in, it is generally not difficult for them to discover some technical infraction of the law, such as a violation of the building code or sanitary ordinances.

Club members feel that charges such as these are merely excuses for closing their premises. They also complain that their clubrooms are entered by the police without a warrant, that they themselves are lined up and searched for weapons as if they were recognized criminals, and that they are sometimes ordered to vacate their rooms on short notice—possibly a matter of hours. The available evidence suggests that the number of clubs that deserve such treatment is very few. A representative of the American Youth Commission visited dozens of cellar clubs in six large cities and never saw any pastime worse than a game of penny ante or heard any disturbance worse than a blaring radio—both of which may be found in the most respectable college fraternity houses.

The willingness of cellar clubs to discipline themselves is suggested by the experience of the Federation of East Side Clubs in New York City. A code of conduct has been drawn up voluntarily by the various clubs, and all members subscribe to it. Clubs agree to keep their premises clean and to obey the city sanitary code. Loud radios and profane language are banned, and a curfew hour is set for members and guests. Persons of low character are not permitted to enter the clubs, and conduct that is lewd or not in keeping with the law and with the character of a gentleman is barred. Girls under 18 years of age are not allowed in clubrooms. The code prohibits darkened rooms and sleeping at the club except in case of emergency.

Although serious infractions of such a code of conduct as the above are probably infrequent, cellar clubs sometimes furnish the occasion for other undesirable practices that receive less publicity. Frauds may be operated in connection with the

financing of clubs. Tickets are sold for dances that never materialize. Clubs occasionally cooperate in selling tickets for each other's dances, and sometimes threats of violence or of informing the police are used by one club toward another to enforce the purchase of tickets or other financial contributions.

#### POSITIVE VALUES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The problem that the cellar club movement creates is not how to do away with the clubs but *how to eliminate their undesirable characteristics without destroying their real values*. In part the urge that has given rise to the clubs may be met by better public recreational facilities. Abolition of slums, extension of aid to more needy students, and improvement of the general economic condition of the country will provide for some of youth's needs now catered to by the clubs. But even if these needs were met in these ways, it is highly improbable that cellar clubs would cease to exist, for they fulfill one of the adolescent's strongest desires—to manage his own affairs, safe from adult interference.

There are various other useful services performed by cellar clubs that tend to justify their continued existence. Almost invariably clubs draw up a constitution and bylaws of a sort; sometimes they seek the additional glory of a charter of incorporation. The training in organization that this experience affords and the practice in parliamentary procedure gained in business sessions are certain to be helpful. The use of manual skills in furnishing the clubroom provides a satisfying opportunity to work with tools and materials.

A few clubs have attempted, with varying degrees of success, to provide discussions and lectures on cultural or vocational subjects for their members and occasionally for parents and visitors. Physicians, social workers, government officials, and teachers have been asked to discuss sex and marriage, health, housing, relief and unemployment, science, current affairs, and similar topics. Sometimes clubs undertake community service projects. A club of Jewish boys in Coney Island remodeled a basement into a clubroom for the younger boys of the community and fitted up

a room where a girls' club could meet independently. The St. Louis Youth Council enlisted the cooperation of a number of cellar clubs to obtain public recreational facilities. Instances such as these appear to be few at present, but they suggest that club members might successfully be encouraged to find satisfaction in activities that would enrich the leisure resources of their communities.

#### HOW ADULTS CAN HELP

The natural hazards to cellar clubs are numerous. Violent quarrels between factions, a developing interest in girls, and the simple circumstance of growing into adulthood have been the end of many a club. About such difficulties little can be done. However, at least two of the heaviest causes of mortality among cellar clubs could be effectively combated under adult guidance. These are the problems of finance and the danger of eviction by the landlord or the police because of complaints from the neighbors. Cellar clubs have shown little inclination to cooperate with one another except under stimulation of adult impetus. The police have not been particularly useful in this respect. Their attitude toward the cellar clubs has been regulatory rather than helpful. The most prominent examples of cooperative action among clubs for their mutual benefit are those sponsored by social work organizations.

The Stryker's Lane Community Center, in New York City, located at a focal point of club activities, has developed a house council of social clubs with two representatives from each of the older-youth clubs. The council sets standards for the clubs and makes rules for their conduct. It collects rent for clubrooms and deals with landlords in their behalf. Police complaints are handled by the council. The center opens certain rooms for the use of clubs and occasionally furnishes small subsidies when they cannot meet their bills. Thus it offers them aid without attempting to dominate their activities.

The Henry Street Settlement has made somewhat similar attempts to foster the values of cellar clubs. It has sponsored

the Federation of East Side Clubs, previously mentioned, and has described their problems in the brochure *Rooms of Their Own*. It helps them to adjust difficulties arising from complaints and allows use of its rooms for federation meetings. The Federation of East Side Clubs is an excellent example of cooperation for mutual protection and improvement. The code already summarized was adopted by the member clubs in order to raise their own standards and turn public opinion in their favor. Attempted extortion, robbery, or violation of the law by club members are reported to the federation, which informs the proper authorities.

The Youth Service Division of the adult education activities of the Work Projects Administration in New York City had as one of its major objectives during 1938 and 1939 an attempt to reach unaffiliated cellar clubs. It sought to act as a clearinghouse for club problems. Fifty unemployed teachers worked with clubs to improve their methods of financing and their recreational and cultural programs. Library services were also made available. The Youth Service Division was a staunch supporter of clubs and frequently appeared in their behalf in conflicts with the police or with neighborhoods. It sought to end petty racketeering and other unwholesome features of club life. All this was done in the hope that a federation of clubs might be formed which would help them to achieve the status of a youth agency and to meet public criticism.

Since the beginning of 1940 the WPA has steadily withdrawn the funds of its Youth Service Division. The result, according to the former supervisor of aid to the clubs, has been "tragic." He thinks the 332 groups helped by the WPA will revert to their former unsupervised state and again become the object of frequent police attention. He sees a need of forming an adult group sympathetic to the clubs, that would help them continue the good part of their program.

The experiments of the settlement houses show that cellar clubs will voluntarily impose their own controls on conduct and procedure if they have counsel from sympathetic adults. Adjustments can be made that will retain the positive values of the clubs and still allow them a considerable measure of autonomy. Such action is now called for on a large scale. It is necessary

in order to preserve a recreational agency of much potential value to young people and one that may be our most truly youth-led organization.

## YOUTH GROUPS AND SOCIETIES CONNECTED WITH ADULT ORGANIZATIONS

The youth-membership groups we have so far considered are independent organizations, though—with the exception of cellar clubs—adult led. There are, however, a large number of youth organizations that are sponsored by adult agencies, either as a means of recruiting their own membership or in order to promote among young people attitudes that the parent body considers particularly desirable. Many of these organizations have substantial recreational activities. The most numerous youth groups of this class are those sponsored by religious bodies.

### CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The church was at one time a leading recreational center for young people and it still occupies a significant place in the leisure of many of them. The organizations of young people sponsored by churches make up a complex aggregation. Many are comparatively unknown to persons outside the particular denomination to which they belong. Others are probably more widespread than any other type of youth-serving agency. The youth organizations of particular churches vary in national membership from a few hundred to half a million. In all, they include several million young people of every shade of religious conviction.

Many church organizations for youth are purely devotional or concerned wholly with promoting religious education. Others conduct recreational activities varying from the simplest to the most highly developed programs. The age range of members is often wide, sometimes beginning as low as 8 or 10 and having no upper limit. In such cases the membership of local groups is usually divided into junior, intermediate, and senior sections, each with programs suited to their interests.

Among the youth organizations of Protestant churches the

largest is the interdenominational Christian Endeavor Society, which has 4,000,000 members in 80,000 churches of eighty-seven denominations in all parts of the world. There is usually a Young People's Division for youth 18 to 24. Some extrareligious aims of the society are: to enable the youth of the church to become better acquainted with one another, to promote education in citizenship, and to promote world peace. Local groups usually meet weekly, and each has its social and recreational program.

Nearly all of the leading Protestant churches have formed special organizations to strengthen religious sentiment among their younger members. Baptists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Unitarians, and numerically smaller denominations have such groups, and many individual churches have their own local organization of young people not affiliated with any national order. The programs of church youth groups frequently include a substantial element of nonreligious leisure activities as an aid to holding the organization together. Summer camps are often conducted. There may be sports, outings, nature study, handicrafts, and other hobbies. Dramatics are frequently encouraged. Study and discussion groups are held on a variety of subjects, such as world peace, interracial friendship, personality development, the movies. There are parties and other entertainments, sometimes including dances. No single local group is likely to engage in all of these activities. But these are the kinds of leisure enterprises that church organizations for youth conduct. If a community finds its recreational resources inadequate to meet the needs of its youth, it should consider whether they cannot be supplemented by organized action on the part of its churches.

The Roman Catholic Church is not lacking in provision for assisting its young people to use their leisure wisely. It has many widespread organizations for boys and girls in which a variety of spare-time interests are cultivated. Physical exercises, athletics, sports, outings, and parades are emphasized in the work with boys, but not to the exclusion of cultural, social, and physical improvement. Girls, too, are encouraged to engage



in friendly competition both in athletic and educational matters. There are glee clubs, orchestras, and classes in sewing and cooking.

The Catholic Church also has, in the Sodality of Our Lady, what may well be the oldest organization for young people in the world. It was established in 1583. Its units, which are found in all countries, are organized as young men's and young ladies' groups in communities, in colleges, in high schools, and in other institutions. The numerous groups in the United States maintain a program which, in addition to religious and charitable objectives, includes the study of social, economic, and literary subjects; forums, writing, drama, and art work; and numerous other educational and recreational uses of leisure. In addition to national organizations of Catholic youth, there are hundreds of local and regional groups with recreational interests. Some of them are very large and vigorous. Under this head come the agencies officially known as Catholic Youth Organizations, which have been formed in twelve dioceses. These agencies sponsor all the leisure activities usually conducted by church groups and seem able to develop a more intensive and detailed program than most such groups.

The Jewish faith has a variety of organizations for ministering to the recreational needs of its young people. Among the largest of these are the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Associations, which function through the community centers operated by the Jewish Welfare Board in hundreds of cities. The board estimates that a quarter of a million of those who participate in its programs are between the ages of 12 and 25. The usual forms of recreation are cultivated to a high degree in many of these centers. There are other organizations aiming to promote the mental, moral, and physical development of Jewish youth and to foster a spirit of good fellowship. Their programs include dances, plays, banquets, debates, oratorical and essay contests, and a great variety of other cultural, social, and athletic activities. The numerous Zionist organizations often have branches for young people. In addition to lectures, discussions, and debates on Jewish history, some have recreational programs. These include Hebrew dramatics, songs, and dances.

The Mormon Church, though regional in extent and not to be counted among community resources over the greater part of the country, deserves to be mentioned for the very complete program it conducts for its youth. This is administered through a Young Men's and a Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association, serving 140,000 young people of all ages. There are 30,000 between the ages of 17 and 24 and an additional 8,400 from 25 to 35. The Mutual Improvement Associations are concerned with all aspects of the lives of their members. Much recreation and wholesome amusement is provided. There are indoor and outdoor sports of all kinds. Dramatics and public speaking are integral parts of local programs and there is a well-trained choral group of youth in each church.

The attracting power of the church organizations of this denomination is impressively demonstrated by the fact that 55 per cent of their total membership is present at the weekly meetings. Mormon churches are real community centers, often well equipped for the purpose. The maintenance of so elaborate and beneficial a program for young people is in part made possible by the fact that Mormons practice tithing, a financing method that has been relinquished by most other denominations. However, the energy and forethought with which Mormons have provided for the recreational life and other experiences affecting the well-being of their youth is a conspicuous example of what a church can do for its young people if determination is present.

#### YOUTH GROUPS IN FRATERNAL ORDERS AND LABOR UNIONS

The fraternal system of America has over 250,000 lodges and more than 20,000,000 members. Many of the individuals who compose these societies have children of their own. All of them are men for whom the principles of fellowship and mutual assistance may be supposed to have more than ordinary appeal. We should expect them to be unusually responsive to the needs of the young people of their communities. In many instances this has proved to be true. Not only do local lodges render a considerable amount of unobtrusive service to individual boys and girls, but some of the fraternal bodies have endeavored to

extend and systematize their work for young people by forming national organizations of the young.

The Elks have a junior order. The Masons sponsor two organizations for boys and one for girls. It is not necessary for young people to be related to members of these fraternities to be eligible for membership. All of the youth groups have various recreational activities of the kind ordinarily favored by young people. There are athletics, drill teams, hikes, and picnics. Indoor pastimes include dramatics, debating, dancing, and other entertainments. There is sometimes a particular emphasis upon citizenship training, as is the case with the Order of DeMolay, sponsored by the Masons. The Sons of the American Legion may also be classed among the junior orders of fraternal groups. They endeavor to teach patriotism and citizenship, but there are also a variety of recreational and social service activities. Summer camps are a particular objective.

Labor organizations are likely to contain a substantial proportion of young workers. Awareness of special needs of the younger members sometimes makes itself evident in programs designed particularly to appeal to them and sometimes in the sponsoring of special youth branches of the parent organization. The chief purposes of such groups appear to be the development of a spirit of solidarity among working people and sometimes the provision of mutual aid through insurance benefits. Recreational activities, however, are very frequently conducted as a means of keeping up interest.

One youth section of a labor organization has as its aim "to offer youth an opportunity for physical, intellectual, social, and ethical development in an atmosphere sympathetic to the ideals of the labor movement." The leisure interests of the local groups of this body include organizing lectures, debates, symposiums, dramatics, music; and promoting sports, gymnastics, and mass calisthenics. It is reported that in Detroit the young people of the junior branch of the International Workers' Order assumed leadership in bringing pressure to bear on the recreation groups and city officials to fight the mayor's proposed plan to slash the recreation budget. Their efforts helped to achieve an increase of \$50,000 in place of a reduction.

## ADULT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS INTERESTED IN YOUTH'S LEISURE

The leisure organizations for youth that are formed and maintained in local communities by adults or by adult agencies do not by any means exhaust the resources of good will that the community can draw upon in its effort to provide a better recreational life for young people. There are many community organizations of adults that neither sponsor youth groups as "feeders" for their own membership nor have a primary interest in the welfare of youth. Yet very often these organizations can be induced to undertake some good work for young people as a public service to their communities.

It will not be easy to secure private support on the scale likely to be necessary. It is true that where an unquestioned need can be shown, funds and volunteer effort are likely to be forthcoming. Difficulty, however, will be encountered in awakening a sense of community responsibility for the ordinary, undramatic, everyday necessities of young people, among which recreation must be counted. It is a comparatively simple task to find a civic organization that will send food baskets to a starving family, or pay the hospital bill of a crippled child, or provide a scholarship for a poor but promising youth. It is more difficult to convince people that special action is required in order that all youth may have a fair chance of growing up as youth ought to grow up.

An appeal to provide recreational facilities for youth is likely to meet with greater favor from civic groups if emphasis is laid upon the probable reduction of delinquency, the saving in the cost of law enforcement, and so on. These, however, are not the true reasons why young people should have an opportunity for wholesome play and self-improvement. They can be advanced for what they are worth when they seem likely to yield results, but no adequate or lasting program for young people will be developed from negative arguments. Every effort should be made to overcome the community's apathy toward the situation of its ordinary, unexceptional young people and to convince it of the necessity of affording physical and cultural advantages to the normal boys and girls who have left school.

## BUSINESSMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Among the adult agencies most likely to have a contribution to make to the recreational life of youth are businessmen's organizations. Junior Chambers of Commerce often take a considerable interest in youth welfare. A substantial proportion of their 60,000 members, aged 18 to 35, are themselves under 25. The national organization has standing committees on public health, city planning, crime, safety, juvenile welfare, and sports. All of these have obvious connections with the community's provision for the leisure of its youth. Many of the local chambers have adopted juvenile welfare as a major goal for their projects. Activities include Christmas parties for underprivileged children; forming juvenile details in police departments; sponsoring community dances, athletic leagues, boys' clubs, and Scout troops; and establishing recreational centers.

Luncheon clubs frequently promote recreation as a phase of their public service activities. They are especially likely to undertake work on behalf of underprivileged children. Clubs cooperate with the juvenile court authorities by helping to provide the kind of environment that will keep youth from relapsing into delinquency. They provide memberships in the Y.M.C.A. and similar organizations for youth who would otherwise be unable to obtain them. They sponsor Boy Scout troops, work with boys' and girls' clubs, and promote summer camps.

Recreational facilities open to all the youth of the community are also among those which luncheon clubs are frequently instrumental in providing. Swimming pools, beaches, skating rinks, tennis courts, and playgrounds are acquired or equipped through their efforts. Cultural uses of leisure are not overlooked. Clubs have been known to organize musical activities, sponsor open forums for the nonpartisan discussion of current problems, and aid public libraries. All of the luncheon clubs—Civitan, Kiwanis, Lions, National Exchange, Optimist, and Rotary—report some activities of the nature of those just mentioned, and the Kiwanis clubs in particular appear to deserve praise for the number and variety of the leisure enterprises for young people they have promoted.

## WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Women's organizations often take a substantial interest in assisting youth to spend their leisure in approved ways. The General Federation of Women's Clubs, which ties together 14,500 local organizations, has a Conservation-of-Youth Committee that proposes specific study and activity programs for member clubs. Among the matters on which this committee endeavors to center interest is recreation. The federation also has a department of public welfare incorporating a community service division. This unit is concerned with sponsoring local groups of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Camp Fire Girls and cooperating with other recreational agencies.

The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, some thousands of whose members are themselves under 25, recommends that each local club have a youth council to coordinate its work for young people. Clubs often sponsor or help Girl Scout troops and other character-building agencies. Women's luncheon clubs have community service interests similar to those of the parallel organizations for men already described. Altrusa, Quota, Soroptimist, and Zonta clubs include among their aims the encouragement of participation in community and public affairs of a nonpartisan character. Typical of the recreational activities they foster are annual hobby fairs where girls may exhibit the products of their leisure.

The various Junior Leagues are well known for their volunteer social work. The ages of members are from 18 to 40, and a considerable number are young people themselves. The national office has a welfare department whose function is to make contacts between the local leagues and the local professional social workers. It also puts members in touch with the specialized national agencies, advises local leagues on social work, and offers training courses in this field. An arts department stimulates and fosters interest in cultural activities among local leagues and individuals. Branches and their members perform volunteer social work of many kinds, including community organization, recreation, and neighborhood activities. They also promote many enterprises in the fields of music, art, drama, and civic planning.

## OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

A variety of other community organizations have an interest in the welfare of young people. Often this interest can be led to express itself in promoting worth-while recreational opportunities. Parent-teacher associations have been formed in thousands of communities throughout the country. One of their aims is to promote child welfare in home, school, church, and community. The national organization has a number of committees, of which the following have a major concern with the leisure activities of young people: library service, motion pictures, recreation, art, music, juvenile protection, radio, safety, and health.

Councils of social agencies are found in most communities of considerable size. Usually they function only as coordinating bodies, but occasionally they work directly with youth. In some instances this work is related to leisure-time needs. In Chicago there is a Youth Social Problems Club formed under the auspices of the Council of Social Agencies. Its large membership is made up of youth from local groups. The monthly meetings are devoted to discussions of various social questions, from war to delayed marriage. There is an active entertainment program with emphasis on hikes and picnics.

American Legion posts throughout the country organize or sponsor local branches of such recognized youth groups as Boy and Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Sons of the American Legion, and boys' athletic clubs. Many posts observe National Boys' and Girls' Week. The national headquarters of the Legion has an active Child Welfare Division which works through similar divisions in the state organization and brings to the attention of local posts the best information concerning standards for child care and protection. The division seeks to educate members of the Legion and citizens at large concerning the condition and needs of children in the United States. Its entire child welfare program is built upon cooperation with existing agencies in the communities and states.

In many cities the police have developed a program of work with boys designed to make them feel that the law is a friendly influence rather than repressive. Some of these programs grew

out of attempts to substitute wholesome activity for vandalism at Halloween and other times. They are variously named Boys' Clubs, Police Athletic Leagues, Junior Police Reserves, and so on. Usually they are financed outside the city budget and the community chest. Shows, tournaments, auctions of confiscated property, and personal solicitation by policemen are the chief sources of income.

Police programs are often elaborately worked out and include athletics, indoor games, handicrafts, and hobbies. In many cities police precinct stations are used as meeting places for the groups. Churches, fraternal halls, and community centers are frequently used for the same purpose under the sponsorship of police. Occasionally a special building is constructed with funds collected by police. Streets are reserved and vacant lots are designated as play areas with volunteer or part-time paid supervisors keeping a more or less watchful eye. These areas, usually in sections where recreational facilities are limited or nonexistent, supplement the playgrounds financed by the city. Tournaments and contests between clubs in various areas of the city help to stimulate the interest and participation of the boys.

When police departments undertake work of the kind that the various character-building agencies have long promoted they expose themselves to the criticism that they are venturing into a rather highly specialized field for which their own training has not particularly equipped them. It may seem ungrateful to raise such an issue in the face of the good will to which their efforts testify. Success can be claimed for some of these efforts, and the need for such work greatly exceeds all the resources that have been mobilized to meet it. However, the criticism is not without weight. We do not expect the post office or the sanitation department to promote boys' clubs, yet it is not clear that the police department is any better qualified for such work.

Police do have an oblique interest in extending social services to underprivileged youth. These services are believed to reduce delinquency and hence can be expected to lighten their task. However, this connection is somewhat beside the point. Certainly all practicable steps to prevent delinquency and crime



ought to be taken. But work with boys is a profession in itself, requiring special types of individuals and special kinds of training. Satisfactory results are most likely to be obtained if individuals with these qualifications are employed. The public pays the bill either way and should expect the job to be turned over to the persons best qualified to carry it out successfully. The boys, for their part, are entitled to pass their leisure in an atmosphere free from the suggestion of repression that can hardly be dissociated from the police even when they are engaged in benevolent work.

### RURAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH YOUTH MEMBERSHIP

In a rural county surveyed in a midwestern state, 92 per cent of the youth reported they would like to belong to a young people's organization. Yet 44 per cent of the youth stated there was no organization available to them. This is typical of the situation in many parts of the country. The agencies ministering to the leisure needs of rural youth are notably fewer than those whose services are available to youth in urban areas.

The disproportion is not quite so great as the small number of organizations to be described in this section would suggest, for many of the agencies most active among city youth also make some effort to carry their programs to young people in the country. The larger church organizations for youth have numerous branches in rural areas. One Boy Scout troop in five is in a village of under 1,000 population or in the open country. Among urban organizations that sponsor branches of the 4-H clubs and the Future Farmers of America are the Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, National Exchange, and Optimist clubs; the American Legion; and various business and professional women's clubs. The Junior Chamber of Commerce has an interesting cooperative program for making city and country youth better acquainted with one another.

Rural young people also have at their service an agency with great resources for which no parallel exists in cities—the Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. This

is the largest and most important system of agricultural education in the world, and its comprehensive purpose is to make rural America a better place in which to live. It has a permanent staff of 8,500 persons and over 400,000 part-time volunteer workers. The county agricultural agents and home demonstration workers are the channels through which the knowledge possessed by government experts on all phases of rural life is funneled down into the local community. Information on agriculture, farm economics, home management, and social organization is disseminated by them in easily understandable terms, and they assist in the practical application of this knowledge to the daily life of the farmer and his family. In numerous ways the Extension Service aids rural young people, directly as well as indirectly. In some counties there are special agents who work only with youth.

#### BOYS' AND GIRLS' CLUBS WITH RURAL INTERESTS

One of the most important means through which the influence of the Extension Service is exerted is its clubs for rural youth. The United States Office of Education also sponsors clubs among high school students of vocational agriculture.

#### *The 4-H Clubs*

These organizations are a phase of the agricultural extension service of the United States Department of Agriculture, working through the state agricultural colleges and the county agricultural agents. They enroll 1,380,000 youth between the ages of 10 and 20, of whom about a fifth are 16 or over. The clubs are organized and guided by the county agricultural agent, and each is under the immediate leadership of an unpaid adult. In 1939, 6,500 county agents were engaging in full or part-time activities with 4-H clubs, and over 147,000 local adult leaders were giving volunteer services to 78,000 clubs in every state.

The aims and methods of 4-H work are so well known in the parts of the country the clubs are designed to serve that there would be little point in describing them in detail here. For city people, who may not be so fully acquainted with the clubs, it may

be said that the four "H's" are Head, Heart, Hand, and Health. Among the purposes the clubs accomplish are teaching rural boys and girls to appreciate the environment in which they live, and training them in cooperative action, in healthful living, and in intelligent use of leisure. The clubs develop self-determined programs based on the immediate needs and interests of members. They include numerous social and recreational activities. In nearly all states there are annual state camps or conventions of 4-H club members at the agricultural colleges. In 1935 there were approximately 2,000 county 4-H club camps, with an aggregate attendance of 150,000 young people.

#### *The Future Farmers of America*

This is an organization sponsored by the Vocational Education Division of the United States Office of Education for high school students of vocational agriculture. Local chapters, of which there are 6,300, are formed and conducted by teachers. There are over 225,000 members. Among the aims of the organization are the creation and nurturing of a love of community life, the improvement of the rural home and its surroundings, and the encouragement of organized recreational activities. Similar groups are sponsored for Negro youth under the name of New Farmers of America.

#### YOUTH GROUPS CONNECTED WITH ADULT RURAL ORGANIZATIONS

In addition to the boys' and girls' clubs discussed above, there are a number of rural agencies with recreational interests, membership in which is open to both youth and adults. Four of these organizations and their programs are briefly described here.

#### *The American Country Life Association*

This organization composed of rural sociologists and other persons interested in improving country life has an active Youth Section. Its object is to work for "a worthy country life in America" and it emphasizes not merely economic improvement, but also social development. The Youth Section aims principally

to integrate the activities of existing youth groups rather than to be an organizing force. It will, however, help to form groups of young people where none exist. Its affiliated organizations comprise some eighty youth groups in colleges and rural communities, enrolling 10,000 to 15,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 25. The groups vary in size from a few members to county groups including some 300 persons. Usually they are sponsored by county extension agents, teachers of vocational agriculture, or home-room teachers. Some of these groups are already branches of national organizations for rural youth. Others, such as clubs of 4-H alumni, have little connection with the organization from which they arose. Still others are county or community groups of older youth not affiliated with any national body other than the American Country Life Association. At typical meetings of these groups there will be speeches and discussions of the rural community and its problems, followed by a social hour. Recreation in the form of handicrafts and dramatics is developed by some groups, and such activities as skating parties and picnics are very popular.

#### *The American Farm Bureau Federation*

The purpose of this organization is "to advance agriculture and everything involving the welfare of farmers and their families." Families join as a unit, and 600,000 individuals—or half of the membership—are under 25. There is, however, no general policy of organizing young people into a separate division. In a few states Junior Farm Bureaus have been formed, but the young people themselves must request and arrange for such organization. In Michigan, where a junior bureau has been in existence since 1934, the members range from 18 to 28 years of age and are for the most part former students of vocational agriculture now working on farms. The junior bureau's aims include bridging the gap between youth and adult participation in the Farm Bureau and providing a program of continuing education and other activities for rural young people. Recreational functions include picnics, excursions, camping, hiking, and community singing. Such quasi-organizations for young Farm Bureau members enroll 2,000

youth in Michigan, 3,000 in Iowa, 3,000 in Ohio, 8,000 in Illinois, and 8,000 in Indiana.

### *The National Grange*

The Grange is a rural fraternal organization aiming to promote cooperation among the farmers of America and generally to improve life in rural communities. It takes an interest in churches, schools, playgrounds, and every other rural agency occupying an important position. Its chief distinctive feature among rural organizations is its fraternal character and its secret ritual, which includes "degree work." The Grange does not attempt to develop a special youth program. It seeks to interest young people in sharing the responsibilities and social life of their elders. Youth are eligible to full membership at 14 and are urged to join along with the whole family.

The Grange endeavors to give young people a substantial share in the management of the organization and to see that the program is attractive to them. The national office urges that local Granges place at least one young member on each important committee. Special effort is made to see that youth talent is used in a variety of ways both within the organization and in public relations. The Grange has always sought to better local communities by providing drama, music, and debating to enrich rural social life. Grange halls, of which there are over 3,600, are used for rural entertainment. Responsibility to the community is made especially clear to young members.

The young people of the Grange frequently organize special-interest activities, such as dancing, athletics, and hiking. One state official reports:

About half of our Granges do a great deal for youth. A typical local Grange, and one that has many young people among its members, has two tennis courts on the grounds adjoining the hall, ten miles out in the country. It has a softball team entered in a league that plays city teams, it maintains an orchestra, promotes 4-H clubs, and has numerous other activities of special interest to youth.

It is worthy of note that such programs are initiated and developed by the young members themselves.

*The Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union of America*

This organization endeavors "to build toward a cooperative society wherein service and use, rather than profit, are the motives of business." It has a special division—Farmers' Union Juniors—for young people between the ages of 16 and 21. About 250,000 youth are eligible to be Farmers' Union Juniors through the membership of their families in the parent organization. Sixteen states now have functioning junior programs. The educational activities consist of classes that each year are centered around a topic of national importance, such as the cooperative movement, money and credit, the Machine Age, and world peace. Kits of reference material and study outlines are sent out by the national office, and volunteer leaders provide the instruction. Winter cooperative institutes are conducted as a part of the junior and adult education program. Classes are held over a period of from three to four weeks. Cooperative recreation is carefully studied in an effort to enrich the life of the individual and the community.

Recreation is an integral part of the juniors' program. Sometimes the young people are made responsible for the recreational features of the program of the senior division. Numerous activities are organized. One state leader expresses the philosophy of his program thus: "We believe there is a great need for a rural culture that can be developed through the introduction of folklore, games and song, handicraft, and drama. Thus we are encouraging this type of leisure-time activity."

The educational and recreational enterprises of the local groups are supplemented by summer camps and institutes. The state camps usually have from 100 to 150 boys and girls between 16 and 21. Camp life is cooperative, the campers washing dishes and serving meals. Camp classes are sometimes conducted on the project basis, the end product being a pamphlet summarizing the discussions. *Farm Youth Talks About War*, a forty-seven page booklet, was written by the world problems class in the all-state camp of 1937.

## CONCLUSIONS

Three facts stand out distinctly from the foregoing review of the private organizations of the community whose interests include a

concern for the recreational life of young people. One is the enormous amount of good will and voluntary effort represented by these agencies. The 147,000 unpaid adult leaders of 4-H clubs and more than 300,000 Scout leaders, many of whom serve an average of eight hours a week, are only two among the many impressive examples of this spirit of community enterprise. In all, probably three-quarters of a million men and women are giving their time and efforts to help the young people of their communities employ their leisure in wholesome and profitable ways—and this estimate relates only to the larger national youth organizations with local branches. These people willingly contribute their experience, long hours of laborious work, and often their money because of a desire to better their communities and a regard for young people. It is evident that they and the organizations they represent must have a prominent part in any comprehensive community program for the welfare of youth.

The second fact that emerges from this chapter is the complexity of the private-agency structure for ministering to the recreational needs of the community's young people. This is important, for it carries with it a strong probability that there is considerable lessening of the efficiency with which the community might be applying the effort it puts forth. Making all possible allowance for interagency good will and for the working agreement that leaders of the various youth-serving organizations have established among themselves, it is still quite clear that a great many community agencies are endeavoring to do very much the same things for the same young people.

There is no inherent reason why a number of agencies should not be engaged in trying to bring similar benefits to youth. The task is certainly great enough for all. Moreover, it is quite reasonable to suppose that their methods will bear a family resemblance to one another. It is important, however, that duplication of programs and overlapping in the groups served shall not accumulate to a degree that will impair the total service rendered by community agencies. The complexity of our private-agency structure is now such that we are in danger of finding ourselves in this position. If nothing more fundamental than the prestige of the agencies themselves were concerned the matter would not

be serious. But we must face the fact that the real victims of unwieldy organization of private agencies are young people, who are not receiving the quality of service that the community believes itself to be giving. Many of them are not receiving any service at all.

This brings us to our third conclusion: that the sum of all the efforts of private organizations working to improve the uses to which youth put their leisure is notably inadequate to meet the need for the kind of services they are supplying. As nearly as can be determined from available information, the total enrollment in all the youth-membership organizations described in the preceding pages approximates 13,000,000. This is a large figure, but it represents persons from 8 or 10 to upwards of 30, and the greater portion consists of boys and girls around 12 to 15. If we attempt to confine it to youth between the ages of 16 and 24 we arrive at a probable total of only about 5,000,000. Even this figure is too large, for there is overlapping in memberships.

In the Maryland study of the American Youth Commission it was found that the young person 16 to 24 who belonged to any club or organization belonged to an average of 1.4. Reducing the total youth enrollments in national, youth-membership leisure organizations to allow for this factor, we obtain a figure approximating 3,500,000. This may be taken as a rough estimate of the number of young people 16 to 24 who are members of groups of this type. But there are 22,000,000 youth between these ages in the United States, which means that only one in six is being served by the agencies we have been considering.

It is true that there are many purely local organizations whose activities relate to young people's use of leisure and that often these are doing excellent work. But the bulk of organized recreational service to young people is probably supplied by the agencies with national affiliations. The fact that all youth-serving organizations, national or local, public or private, enlist the regular participation of only a small portion of young people over 16 has been repeatedly demonstrated in recent years by surveys. Typical of the evidence obtained is the finding of the Commission's Maryland study, which reported that only one young person in



four between the ages of 16 and 24 had an organizational affiliation of any kind.

If growth is an indication of vitality, privately sponsored community organizations for American youth are in a healthy condition. During the past decade the Girl Scouts more than doubled their membership, the Y.M.C.A. nearly doubled theirs, the Boy Scouts increased by two-thirds, the Camp Fire Girls by a third. The time has come, however, when we must recognize that the condition of the young people of our country cannot be adequately measured by the extent to which organizations serving them flourish. Most out-of-school youth are left to work out their leisure life as best they can. In view of the scanty preparation the schools give them for this task it would be a difficult one under any conditions. Faced as many of them are with prolonged idleness, and surrounded as all of them are with the cheap and tawdry attractions characteristic of many commercial amusements, it is hopeless to expect a majority to achieve anything like the full development of interests, skills, and personality that leisure can be made to yield. They desperately need assistance.

To be effective, assistance must take some organized form. Youth want to belong to groups that will help them live more enjoyably in their spare time. The surveys have demonstrated this. The cellar clubs that give their elders so much concern are additional evidence. But youth deserve to be helped to develop a more satisfying leisure life than expedients such as these afford. The problem of organizing the private resources of the community to give youth wholesome opportunities for recreation can no longer be put off with half measures.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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- Rooms of Their Own*. New York: Henry Street Settlement, 1939. 79 pp.
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## COMMUNITY PLANNING FOR THE RECREATION NEEDS OF YOUTH

FROM THE study conducted in Muncie by the American Youth Commission comes this story of a local analysis of a community problem:

On a Monday after one of the frequent Saturday night dances at B— school, some of the boys and girls were asked by teachers where they had gone after the dance. Most of them said they had driven to C—'s and other places for refreshments. The teachers and the principal disapproved. The latter said he was giving the school dances so often in order to keep the young folks in their own neighborhood and away from the various "hangouts." But the students protested that they had to go somewhere afterwards to get something to eat. Besides, the dances were held only once every two or three weeks, and they had to find places to go on other nights. The teachers countered with the suggestion that they visit in one another's homes and make their own refreshments. "But," said one youngster, "our parents won't let us spoil their quiet evenings at home beside the radio by bringing in a bunch of kids. They think we mess up the house and make too much noise."

Here in epitome is the recreation problem of youth—sincere but insufficient efforts by the school, lack of understanding at home, and nonschool opportunities restricted largely to commercial places of entertainment. What is the youngster to do but seek amusement where he can find it and hope for whatever "breaks" home and school will give him? This situation is faced by the youth of nearly every community in our land. How is it

to be remedied? The community must organize itself to meet the recreational needs of its young people.

A community can be defined in various terms, according to the purpose for which it is being considered. For most purposes, however, it is sufficient to use the simple and homely definition that a community is "any group of people, living within neighboring distance of each other and having a common interest." In this sense the local community is the meeting ground of all the recreation agencies we have discussed, as well as of some that remain to be mentioned. On the one hand we have the schools, parks and playgrounds, libraries, the home, the church, the multitude of other private organizations. On the other hand we have the recreational interests of the state and federal governments. All must be utilized in a community program. The community is also important because, as our definition states, the individual *lives* there, and it is with his daily life and needs that planning must begin. The local community thus becomes the focal point of recreational planning.

### THE WILL TO ORGANIZE

The first necessity toward getting an adequate community recreation program under way is a full realization of the need. By this is meant not simply that the deficiencies of the opportunities available to young people should be accurately known. This too is essential, but there is an even more fundamental requisite. The community must adopt a realistic point of view with regard to the economic and social difficulties of our time that lend emphasis to the need for recreation. Its leaders must accept the fact that we are faced with long-term problems of social organization, such as unemployment and overcrowding, which make the need for a publicly sponsored leisure program both urgent and lasting. They must understand that the individual growth and development of the young people of today and tomorrow will depend very largely upon what they do in their spare time. They must realize that one of the best uses to which community endeavor can be put is to place opportunities in the way of young people for spending their leisure wisely. In short, there must

have been aroused in a community the will to assist its youth to obtain a full and satisfying recreational life. If this is present there is no other obstacle that cannot be overcome.

These are the realistic considerations that a community must face:

Life for most youth 16 to 24 is dull, routinized, and congested. Jobs are not too plentiful and not too satisfying.

Boys and girls have little money to spend, but an increasing amount of time to dispose of.

After leaving school they have only limited opportunities for meeting members of the opposite sex under wholesome conditions.

They are unable to travel to national or state parks, no matter how fine these may be.

Can a community look at this picture and not want to improve it? Let the reader not think that the picture is biased or unnaturally gloomy. If he will examine the files of the Maryland, Dallas, and Muncie studies of the American Youth Commission; if he will talk with social workers, recreation leaders, and county agricultural agents; if he will visit the cellar clubs of any city or the poolrooms of any village—he will be convinced.

## FINDING THE FACTS

Assuming that the community has made up its mind to act, it will then require reliable and detailed information on various topics relating to the leisure needs of youth and the resources for ministering to these needs. This information may best be obtained by a series of studies or by surveys. The surveys should determine the recreational interests of young people, the existing recreational facilities of the community, and unrecognized community resources for developing a leisure program.

### SURVEYING THE LEISURE NEEDS OF YOUTH

Information on the leisure-time interests and needs of the young people in a community can best be obtained through a youth survey, either one conducted for the particular purpose or as part of a larger study of all aspects of youth welfare. Hundreds of





DIVE  
AT OWN  
RISK

American communities made youth surveys of greater or lesser scope during the past decade, and recreation was one of the subjects most frequently investigated. The American Youth Commission has issued a booklet, *How to Make a Community Youth Survey*, suggesting the most suitable methods of approaching this task. Each town or rural area has its own particular set of circumstances. It is these which should serve as the basis for developing a program—the needs of youth themselves, rather than any plan that existing organizations might find it convenient to put into effect without knowledge of how nearly it meets the situation. The needs of youth should be known, not merely guessed.

In carrying out a community youth survey along the lines suggested in the Commission's booklet it should be borne in mind that recreation presents various problems different from those that arise in other fields of youth welfare. Care should be taken that the information necessary to deal with these is collected. For instance, the survey should:

1. Regard as somewhat distinct, groups of youth who are in school and those who are out of school. Both the activities and the interests of these two groups will probably be found to have as many dissimilar points as they have points in common. The needs of out-of-school youth should be studied with particular care.

2. Attempt to determine the extent to which the school is providing training in leisure skills that will match the opportunities available to youth when they leave school and the interests that they are likely to develop then.

3. Study the extent to which the recreational life of youth depends upon commercial amusements. Study the implications that any considerable dependence upon this source must have for the large majority of young people with little spending money. These implications are likely to be tragic.

4. Inquire what opportunities there are for boys to engage in recreational activities with girls, and girls with boys. Find how much desire there is for corecreation. This should be an important focal point of the study.

5. Analyze the extent to which young people's leisure pursuits involve physical activities (the emphasis varies with age), how often they are merely of the spectator sort, how much seems to consist of "escape" activity, and how much could be considered individually or socially creative.

A point in favor of beginning community action by a study of youth themselves is that it will help to focus the sympathetic attention of the community upon youth needs. If the start were made by studying the organizations through which the community provides for the leisure of its young people, "agency-mindedness" might rear its ugly head and endless discussion of abstract functions could easily ensue. The best approach is to establish proof of need. Public support for community action can then be more quickly and effectively rallied. The youth themselves are the object of the proposed action, and development of the program should begin with them and revolve about them. This is particularly true of needs the urgency of which is only vaguely realized by the public. Recreation is such a need.

#### SURVEYING EXISTING FACILITIES

One of the soundest principles for developing a program of recreation is to build upon what you already have. When the community has determined in which directions it needs to expand its leisure services for youth it must start out from where it *is* in the way of organizations and facilities. It therefore needs to preface its prospective expansion with a study of what it now has in this line. It may seem odd that a formal study should be required in order to acquaint the community with the identity and resources of the agencies that seek to assist its young people to occupy their spare time. None of these agencies has any reason for wishing to remain unknown. They all draw their clientele from the public and depend upon the public for support. Nevertheless, it is probable that in a community of any size there will not be one person who knows the full extent of the leisure resources, public and private, available to youth.

Only the few agencies with which individual members of the public come in direct contact are likely to make any lasting



impression upon them. As for the agencies themselves, they are too busy cultivating their own gardens to spend much time looking over the fence into their neighbors'. A special study, then, is necessary to show the community where it stands. In cities, the number of agencies and facilities may run into the hundreds. A recent survey of adult education and recreation opportunities in Buffalo listed 150 organizations.

In smaller communities the study will have less to cover, but even where there is no perceptible program at all there will be facilities in the way of school playgrounds, Grange or lodge halls, and church buildings. The school and the church, in fact, may well serve as the point of departure for the study of recreation facilities, particularly in smaller communities. These two institutions are found everywhere; both are socially-minded; both are interested in young people; one represents public support, one private; and, most important of all, both will have at least some element of a recreation program already in action.

#### IDENTIFYING UNUSED RESOURCES

It is a pathetic yet hopeful fact that in every community there are many unused or only partly used facilities that might be employed to enrich the leisure of young people. Lack of vision and leadership keeps them from being used. Numerous illustrations of this fact have been uncovered by the employees of the Work Projects Administration who in recent years have gone into thousands of communities to lend their assistance to local groups. One of the most extreme cases reported concerns the discovery by a WPA recreation supervisor of an unused but fully equipped library in a southern mill town. It was closed and locked when the supervisor found it, and no one could tell her why. She persuaded the advisory committee of the local recreation project to investigate, then went on to her next community. When she came again someone had the key and instructions to let her in. She found a bronze plaque inside the door, recording the gift of the library to the town by a former owner of the mill in memory of his father. The plaque read, "To Be a Place of Recreation for the People." The bank that had been placed in charge of the

trust had failed. The library had been locked and the key almost lost. It was an excellent small-town library with a large assembly room upstairs that could be used for social recreation.

Few towns will wake up to discover an unused library in their midst, but in every community there are less pretentious facilities lying fallow—playgrounds idle for portions of the day or seasons of the year; vacant lots or fields that could be put to better use than growing a crop of thistles; public or private buildings that might be adapted to indoor recreation; a school program of sports, music, dramatics, arts, and social activities that might be broadened to include out-of-school youth. Only enterprise is necessary to uncover resources such as these.

The interests and energies of the members of the community are potential resources. In every community there are citizens with hobbies (collecting, handicrafts, nature study) and skills (music, art, sports, social games) that can be used in a recreation program. Their talent and enthusiasm may need only an initial spark and some direction to be converted into public assets. The normal possession of recreational interests and abilities by lay people who love their hobbies and can be induced to share them is a leisure resource of great significance.

The interests of young people are community assets, too. The East Side Y.M.C.A. of St. Louis looked upon the boys' gangs of a section of the city noted for its bad record of juvenile delinquency and saw in them a community "resource." Intelligent, sympathetic volunteer leadership converted these groups, which had formed naturally around common interests, into boys' clubs—forty of them—with educational and recreational programs adapted to the needs of each group.

Existing agencies and programs are by no means the sum of a community's resources for recreation. There is always an unsuspected reservoir of facilities, energies, and interests waiting to be tapped. These should be studied and weighed before the community moves to set up a leisure program for its youth. It should be determined which of the three main fields of recreation—physical, creative or cultural, and social—volunteer effort and unused facilities are best fitted to serve. This knowledge will

enable a substantial addition to be made to the organized recreational resources of the community. It will be particularly valuable where expense is a major obstacle, which is nearly everywhere.

## CONSTRUCTING THE PROGRAM

When a community has discovered the kinds of recreation that its young people are in need of and the kinds that interest them most, when it has blueprinted the organizations already working to meet leisure needs and inventoried the latent facilities and abilities that can be drawn upon to enrich its resources, it is ready to take the major step toward which all its preparations have led. It must now utilize the full potentialities both of public and of private agencies in a coordinated community program.

### ADAPTING TO LOCAL CONDITIONS

No single plan for building a unified community recreation service for youth can be applied everywhere. The circumstances of communities vary widely, and the approach that will prove most suitable in any particular instance will depend upon local conditions. In general, however, it can be said that in rural areas, villages, and small towns it will not usually be desirable to attempt to establish a separate recreation authority. Development of a community program is best left to whatever existing social agency or agent is most active in working for the welfare of young people. County or state support may be solicited to enable a program to be developed, but the local community should demonstrate its interest and initiative by utilizing some existing center of influence. In the open country it may be the school, the church, the Grange, or the extension agent. In villages, the school offers perhaps the best possibility of becoming a point for expansion. Whoever accepts the position of leadership should quickly move to secure the close cooperation of all other agencies concerned with the leisure of young people.

In cities and larger towns the situation is somewhat different. Here there is less doubt as to where the obligation to develop a pro-

gram rests. The provision of adequate public recreation should be accepted by cities and larger towns as a full responsibility of local government, on a par with their obligation to provide fire protection and public health services. Our larger cities have long recognized this responsibility and have agencies that attempt, however imperfectly, to carry it out. But the hundreds of American cities of less than 50,000 population have been slow to provide for public recreation, though numerous small and middle-sized urban communities have demonstrated that it can be done and well done regardless of population. Any community that is big enough to have a fire department and a public health officer is big enough to maintain its own recreation authority.

The precise form that this authority should take will vary according to the particular circumstances of the community. In cities well supplied with parks, the logical place to develop playgrounds, playfields, and recreation centers will be on the public open spaces. Accordingly a recreation division may well be established in the park department, although this will not necessarily be so. The educational functions of playgrounds and other recreation centers may be considered more important than their accidental physical connection with parks. In this event, their design and operation may well be placed in the hands of the school authorities, always providing that the schools are progressive enough to administer public recreation along lines that will result in the greatest public good. In some communities the majority of the potential facilities for public recreation may be represented by the school buildings and grounds, or the school itself may have a well-developed recreation program for its pupils that needs only to be expanded and thrown open to out-of-school youth to become a real leisure-time program for the public. In such cases the board of education is obviously marked out to be the community's public recreation authority.

Still other communities may find it desirable to create a separate and independent recreation authority. This arrangement has the advantage of freeing the newly developing service from the immediate influence of long-established and possibly hampering policies. It has the disadvantage that the new organization

must start from scratch and that certain of the agencies whose cooperation is essential to it will for a long time be much stronger and more influential than itself. The intrinsic importance of public recreation certainly justifies that the organization promoting it be comparable in resources and standing to those administering the schools, libraries, and parks. However, for getting the best results with the least lapse of time most communities will probably be well advised to follow the principle of building onto what they have. And the "going" programs of public recreation will often be found in organizations whose major interest lies somewhat outside the field of leisure activity.

In canvassing the possibilities of community organization to promote recreation there should not be forgotten the device, mentioned in Chapter IV, of a Public Education Authority with jurisdiction over schools, libraries, playgrounds, and related provisions for recreation. This form of organization seems to be designed, practically as well as theoretically, to ensure the coordination and active development of all the community's public effort to promote the mental and physical growth of its young citizens. It is, however, rather an advanced form, and there are obvious difficulties in the way of securing its wide adoption. Communities that find themselves in a position to experiment with it should be urged to do so. Average communities may well keep it before themselves as a goal toward which their local governmental organization should be stimulated to evolve.

#### SECURING COMMUNITY COORDINATION

There are numerous methods and techniques for bringing into effective coordination the various agencies, public and private, that have a concern for the way young people spend their leisure. Whatever the kind adopted, they should be chosen with care and full knowledge of the local situation. They must be applied with discrimination and tact. A publication such as the present can say little that would be helpful regarding the details of the process in any given community. The initiative may come from any source, including young people themselves. Agencies such as the

Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Junior League have sometimes taken the lead in organizing the existing welfare institutions of their communities into councils for coordinated action upon youth problems. In many cities the accumulated experience of community chests and councils of social agencies constitutes a rich reservoir of information on procedures and other technical matters and should not be neglected. Some of these organizations have made studies of local conditions that may well serve as models for the investigation of youth needs.

Special mention may be made of the coordinating council movement as it has developed in California. These councils are interested in the reduction of juvenile delinquency and similar behavior problems among youth. Recreation is considered to be one of the most significant factors influencing such phenomena, and frequent studies are accordingly made of leisure facilities and organizations with leisure interests. On the basis of these studies, community programs are developed that have produced concrete results. The councils are composed of both lay and professional persons, representing private agencies, civic organizations, and the departments of the county and city governments most directly affected. The movement has a central promoting body, Coordinating Councils, Incorporated, which stimulates the development of councils in all parts of the country. It aids local communities to set up functioning groups where none exist and gives advisory service to established councils. Its *Guide to Community Coordination* will prove helpful to any community considering this type of organization.

The relationship of existing leisure agencies, public and private, to any coordinated program of community recreation services that may be set up invites some comment. It is obvious that the success of the program depends upon the wholehearted cooperation of all community agencies. It is equally obvious that such cooperation will be difficult to secure if those in charge of developing the program come forward at an early stage with plans that radically disturb the structure or functions of existing agencies. However desirable such plans may appear on paper, it will be best to accept the fact that at least in the beginning what-

ever is accomplished will be through skillful and effective handling of the agencies and personalities already in the field.

The principle governing relationships with other leisure organizations should be that *the independence of existing agencies is to be preserved so far as is consistent with the need for serving all youth*. The single condition that this principle embodies is, however, an important one. It must never be forgotten that the sole object of attempting to coordinate the community's leisure services is to ensure that adequate opportunity for wholesome recreation is made available to all youth (or, if the wider goal is chosen, all members of the community). Even more fundamental than interagency harmony is the principle that the needs of no group of youth be left unprovided for.

Here is where the survey of youth's leisure needs should prove its value. The survey will have indicated what recreational needs of youth are unmet and what groups of youth are being neglected. Once these things are clearly determined the extent of the readjustment becomes obvious. At the same time there will have been created a powerful force of public opinion working to bring about the adjustments. The greatest single obstacle to the revision of services and areas of operation that periodically become necessary in any public welfare program is the failure of the public to understand the necessity for revision.

In summary, hasty and overambitious plans for reorganizing leisure services along ideal lines are above all things to be avoided in setting up a coordinated plan for community recreation. But when it is apparent that some measure of reorganization is essential to reach youth groups or youth needs that are being neglected, there should be no hesitating.

## LEADERSHIP IN PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

It is essential to the development of an effective public recreation program that the responsibility for conceiving it and carrying it out in detail be shared between lay members of the public and persons professionally trained.

## LAY CONTROL OF THE PROGRAM

According to the generally recognized practice, laymen should take a prominent part in the control of the program. This is important because:

1. It will keep the program closer to community needs.
2. It will make financial support easier to obtain.
3. It will encourage volunteer leadership to develop.

The policy of lay participation in control is advocated by the National Recreation Association and has consistently been applied by professional recreation leaders everywhere. The history of public education in America provides evidence of the wisdom of this practice. In recreation as in education there is need for a clear-cut distinction between the policy-making responsibilities of the board of control and the executive functions of the professional worker or administrator. The board is designed to provide responsible representation of the wishes of the community and to determine the extent of financial support. From the professional worker is expected clear thinking on objectives, detailed knowledge of procedures, and administrative skill.

## THE PLACE OF PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

Administrative responsibility should rest with persons professionally trained. The organization and administration of recreation programs are no better suited to amateur efforts than is school teaching or any other professionalized public service. This is equally true whether the programs are conducted under public or private auspices. Recreation service as a profession has a history of considerable length in this country. Its oldest association was formed over thirty years ago. There are now at least four national organizations of professional workers in recreation, and their leadership is a significant factor in the total scene. Numerous men and women have by training or experience acquired the techniques and skills necessary to make recreation programs succeed. No community should endeavor to get along without their services unless compelled to do so by absolute necessity.



There is plenty of room for volunteer effort in recreation, but to attempt to substitute it for adequately compensated professional staff members is to endanger the success of the whole program. In publicly sponsored recreation there is sometimes a tendency to assign school teachers to carry on recreational activities as sidelines to their regular duties. But undue dependence upon them is a grave injustice both to employees who have necessary functions of their own to perform and to the social importance of leisure needs. Under such conditions recreation invariably becomes subordinated to other functions or is provided for only in piecemeal fashion. The next two decades will see public recreation universally acknowledged as a necessary function of local government, demanding professional training equal to that now required of secondary school teachers or even college instructors and public health workers. The community will be wise that sees the writing on the wall and builds its program adequately from the start.

#### THE NEED FOR PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

The community should go further than this. It should demand not only a sufficient proportion of professional workers but also well-trained ones. If public recreation is to become a major social function, then the preparation of recreation workers is a well-defined social responsibility, comparable to the extensive teacher training activities that have been developed during the last century. Though there are many similarities between the vocations of teacher and recreation worker, the differences are great enough to justify specific attention to the latter.

As is likely to be the situation in any relatively new profession, many of the present workers in recreation have not had the benefit of specialized training. They have entered their occupational field through a side door. It is now time that an adequate front entrance be provided. The well-trained professional worker in recreation will be a qualified individual who has at least a bachelor's degree, and preferably graduate work, in a recreation curriculum. However, provision should be made for the worker who has had no college education and perhaps no more than a

limited amount of any formal training, but who is capable of performing routine recreation functions such as play leadership. Junior college or extension training will be best adapted to his requirements.

Institutions of higher education should be encouraged to study the local or regional need for recreation workers and to provide adequate training opportunities. Not every college or university should develop professional curricula in recreation, but each region of the United States ought to contain a few institutions where such training is available. Laymen should be alert to request trained leaders and to know the kind of service to expect from them. They should be slow, however, to suggest to an institution just how the training is to be given. In some universities the development will come through a college of education or through a physical education department. In others it will come through social work departments, while in still others the opportunity may present itself to build an independent curriculum drawing upon several departments and colleges for its resources. New courses will have to be developed, particularly survey courses and courses dealing with the application of skills to recreation situations. Explicit and extended consideration should be given the significance of leisure in modern life.

The training required by a well-prepared recreation worker may be represented by a triangle. One side consists of the possession of recreation skills and the ability to teach them to others. A second side will be a thorough knowledge of the type of individual at whom the recreation program is to be aimed—children, youth, or adults—especially their leisure interests and needs and their growth characteristics. The third side of the triangle is comprised of an understanding of the social significance of leisure and of the community setting in which the program is to operate. To these three qualifications there must be added much practice and field work in order that the prospective worker may learn to apply his professional knowledge practically and realistically. Training programs of the past and present have not been sufficiently comprehensive. Though each has had its strong points, all have been weak in one or more of the essential

elements. Very seldom have apprenticeship and field work arrangements been adequate.

An aspect of professional training that seems to have been completely neglected by colleges and universities is preparation for positions of leadership in commercial recreation.<sup>1</sup> Practically all training now given in recreation is pointed toward employment in publicly sponsored services. Although this field is potentially large, its present extent is limited and its rate of growth has been moderate. By comparison, employment possibilities in commercial recreation are vast. Professional services in many commercial lines have been improved through specialized training given by colleges and universities. Commercial recreation skills, however, continue to be acquired almost wholly on the job.

There does not seem to be any obvious reason why training for positions of responsibility in commercial recreation should not be offered by educational institutions. It is likely that many of the techniques of public recreation would prove equally useful in commercial situations. A job analysis of commercial recreation would probably reveal a core of essential information and skills that could be imparted through organized instruction. If colleges and universities could successfully develop professional and semiprofessional training in this field it would not only tend to raise the standards of commercial recreation, it should also provide a stimulus that would act favorably upon our training provisions for service in nonprofit recreation.

#### THE PLACE OF VOLUNTEERS

Once competently trained individuals have been secured to form the nucleus of the working staff of the community's recreation program, it may be possible to supplement their services by extensive use of volunteer workers. One of the things that differentiates recreation from other types of social service is that to

<sup>1</sup> The authors are indebted to George Hjelte, superintendent of the Playground and Recreation Department of Los Angeles, for the suggestion developed in this and the following paragraph.

a greater degree volunteer effort is both possible and desirable. The informal nature of recreation leadership and the fact that it is so close to the daily lives of people make it unnecessary for leaders to be clothed in the authority or dignity ordinarily associated with professional status. Ability in some recreational field, however small, and a talent for getting on with people, will often bring success to the amateur leader. Many lay persons have well-developed leisure skills or interests which they can communicate to others. Oglebay Park, Wheeling, West Virginia, uses some 135 committees of volunteers in operating its year-round program.

It should be noted, however, that not only the possession of specialized knowledge but also the ability to impart it is essential. Proficiency in a particular leisure activity is not in itself sufficient. To get the best results, volunteers must be carefully selected for their qualities of leadership and should be brought under an adequate program of supervision. Recreation institutes, conducted by the professional workers, will assist volunteer workers to assimilate the experience their in-service training affords.

In addition to being possible, volunteer leadership is acceptable in the light of current administrative practice because recreation needs outstrip the ability or willingness of many communities to provide trained and paid workers for all the positions of leadership that ought to be filled. Further, volunteer service is not only expedient, it has the positive recommendation that it is desirable in itself. Volunteer workers are a particularly effective means of making the public aware of recreation as a normal and constructive social function. They are themselves members of the community, known and respected by the people about them. To enlist their services in the work of bringing better recreation to the community is one of the best ways of assuring the public that it is their own program, not something handed down to them by salaried officials behind office desks.

## LET YOUTH HAVE A PART IN THE PLANNING

In developing cooperation in the service of all youth, the participation of young people themselves should be enlisted. Its

purpose should be to lead youth to do better the desirable things they will do anyway and also to encourage them to engage in a wider variety and a higher level of activity in the leisure-time and cultural fields. Youth must feel that they have played some part and have had some responsibility in the development of the community program.

It is not a mere gesture to give youth a share in the planning. It is a common-sense provision for safeguarding the program. A community service for youth must be kept close not only to youth needs but to the interests of youth. Although the youth survey with which planning should begin will reveal what these are at the time, some provision is desirable for early recognition of the shifts of interest that are frequent among young people and for making sure that the program is really working out to their satisfaction.

Moreover, youth participation in the planning is good public relations. It is the young person's equivalent of the volunteer service rendered by the adult group leader. It serves to convince youth that the program is really their program, not merely something that adults think they ought to like. It should also help to convince adults that the program is not simply another example of something being done *for* youth, but that it embodies a true effort of youth to help themselves.

Young people can perform useful service at all points in setting up and developing the community program. A particularly appropriate piece of work for them to undertake is the survey of youth needs. When recreation boards or central coordinating committees are formed, youth should if possible be given direct representation upon them. Failing that, there should at least be an advisory group of young people attached to the central organization of the program. In California an interesting recent development has been the establishment of junior coordinating councils, composed of representatives of youth organizations, which work with the adult council of the community and provide leadership in joint youth activities.

## AN EXAMPLE OF PLANNING BY YOUTH

That youth have the capacity to analyze community problems and themselves organize action to improve their recreational opportunities is demonstrated by the following account of young people's activities in a country town, given in the 1939 Yearbook of the Department of Rural Education of the National Education Association.<sup>2</sup> It would be the utmost negligence if a community were not to avail itself of such talents as the youth in this story displayed.

In one seventh-grade group the problem of recreation in the community was being discussed. Someone asked what the boys and girls actually did with their time out of school. A survey of the activities of the pupils in the grade led to a survey of the activities of their schoolmates. They found that many attended motion picture shows frequently, others less frequently because of parental policy or lack of funds, others read, went driving with the family, played games with their friends, and engaged in other activities, but the group came to the conclusion that some inexpensive recreational facility should be provided in their community. After exploring various possibilities they decided that a skating rink would meet the need.

The question of financing the building of the rink arose. Immediately the group began estimating the size necessary for the number of children to be accommodated, the availability of a lot, the cost of the lumber, the necessary finishing of the floor, and other details.

After the findings of the survey were in hand and the estimates completed, some means of providing the rink had to be found. It was decided that it should be a community affair and, therefore, that the mayor was the proper person to interview. With their prepared data a committee visited the mayor and asked him what possibilities he saw for a town appropriation for building the rink. He was enthusiastic and appreciative of the suggestions from the boys and girls and promised his cooperation. The investigation of the pupils and their earnestness in solving this problem became community news. Commercial interests sensed the possibilities of the need and soon three skating rinks were built. At the present time skating is available for the payment of a small sum.

<sup>2</sup> *Community Resources in Rural Schools*, Yearbook 1939 (Washington: National Education Association, 1939), pp. 49-50.







## THE GUIDANCE AND LEADERSHIP NEEDED

Youth would like to help themselves. What they want is skilled leadership and facilities. Given leadership they may be able to manufacture their own facilities. Or the prospect of material help may be all that is needed to start them on a program of their own. In small communities a group of young people can often do much for themselves, aided by a little vision and support from their elders. This "little" is all-essential, however. The lack of it is likely to make the difference between an active group program and stagnation. Youth do not want a great deal, nor do they want it prescribed. But they deserve mature leadership, minimum facilities, and the opportunity to assist in working out their leisure-time salvation.

Youth should have training in the democratic procedures of community organization. To allow them a voice in planning their own program is a most reasonable step. The trend in education is toward giving children and young people increasing responsibility for the decisions of daily life, a responsibility to be increased gradually as developing intellectual, emotional, and social maturity justifies it. Certainly programs of activity that they have helped to plan and toward which they feel some responsibility will be an effective means of teaching youth how to use their leisure hours constructively. Recreation, even planned recreation, must retain the element of spontaneity and freedom of choice. *Let youth help themselves*—not through a do-nothing policy of carelessness and inattention but by providing them with the material means and the expert guidance that will result in a program of activities planned by them and for them.

## COMMUNITY ACTION SUMMARIZED

The elements of community organization to meet the leisure needs of youth may be summed up as a realistic approach, a passion for uncovering facts, and the ability to proceed with tact, determination, and persistence. The basis of any accomplishment must be an appreciation of the seriousness of the situation confronting youth in the world of today. Having this, it will

first be necessary to obtain as complete and accurate a view as possible of those characteristics of the young people of the local community that have an important bearing upon their recreational life. An equally detailed view of the leisure resources of the community should also be secured. It will then be in order to proceed carefully but firmly to draw together all the community's resources into a coordinated program designed to remedy the deficiencies that have been discovered.

Particular attention must be paid to the various safeguards that are essential to ensure the success and continuance of the program. Control must be in lay hands, but well-trained, adequately paid professional workers must bear the main share of the planning and administration. The program must be continually checked against the interests and needs of participants. Wide community participation in the form of volunteer service is to be sought. Every effort should be made to adapt the program to meet any special circumstances that may exist locally, so long as its integrity is not compromised. To fulfill these conditions will not be a simple task. But a lasting program requires a solid foundation. The effort necessary to build securely will be amply repaid.

### COMMUNITY YOUTH PROGRAMS THAT WORK

Of recent years many communities have taken steps to bring their resources to bear upon the problem of making a better recreational life available to their youth. A comprehensive survey of these developments cannot be attempted here. Readers who wish an account of this nature should consult such works as the pamphlet *Leisure for Living*, issued by the Committee on Youth Problems of the United States Office of Education. However, a few examples of programs that have been successful with only average resources should emphasize the fact that any community can make real progress toward giving its young people satisfying recreational opportunities if only it will put forth the effort. With this purpose in view we give the following brief accounts of what three alert but representative communities have accomplished.

## DOWAGIAC, MICHIGAN

A notable example of what a community can do for its young people is afforded by Dowagiac, Michigan, a town of 5,000. Although the school leaders recognized the problem of commercial amusements and the lack of opportunity for constructive activities, they did not have the public financial support for a recreation program. The youth themselves, upon being asked, said that they would like to have a recreation center for after-school hours, with facilities for ping-pong, pool, and billiards. They also wanted dancing lessons and opportunities for social dancing. There was an unexpected request for some sort of forum with speakers and discussions.

The community then went into action. A school man provided the initiative, a public-minded citizen the first \$500 to buy supplies. The school and a church furnished meeting places; the Work Projects Administration, labor and professional services. Together they put on a year of activities highly satisfactory to the youth themselves and to their parents. As a result, these young people voted for a second year's program, to contain more social dances, to include instruction in crafts and hobbies, and with their speaker-forum idea incorporated into the regular school program.

These are sound lines of growth. If this community does not eventually broaden its school program and develop a town-wide recreation interest it will not be because its young people have lacked ideas when they were once given scope in expressing them.

## LISBON, OHIO

Lisbon, an Ohio town of 3,500 population, is conducting a cooperative experiment in organizing to provide leisure activities for all the young people of the community. The Lisbon Youth Association, formed in 1939, is composed of representatives of all the organized clubs, lodges, and religious and civic bodies in town. Its forty-one members meet twice a year to hear reports and pass on policies for the organization. A board of trustees, consisting of six persons elected annually from among the mem-

bers, meets once a month to determine activities and pay bills. It also employs the director.

The association's major achievement so far has been building and equipping a playground through popular subscription. There are swings, slides, bars, basketball goals, and a baseball diamond. During the summer it was supervised by two teachers lent by the board of education. When school resumed, a full-time program was begun under WPA supervisors. It includes play periods for the various age groups, baseball leagues, and tournaments. A major playground event was a kite-flying contest. This was followed by a city-wide marble contest for boys and girls.

Numerous other active pastimes are part of the association's program. Hikes are conducted. Game rooms have been opened at the school buildings and in the American Legion hall. An average of 150 boys use these rooms daily. By arrangement with the county Scout Council the boys of the community have the use of its swimming pool, situated a mile from town, twice a week. During the winter, swimming parties were held in the Y.M.C.A.'s of nearby towns. Fourteen basketball teams were organized last winter, representing business organizations and churches. They played three days a week. An ice rink—a very popular innovation with the young people of the town—was built on the grounds of a school with the aid of the volunteer fire department and the school board. The association provides for cleaning and supervising the rink. During the past summer two ten-day camps were held—one for boys, the other for girls. They were open to any youth in Lisbon between the ages of 9 and 16. There were also four camps for shorter periods of from two to five days, and a day camp was maintained for three weeks.

Other interests of young people have not been neglected. The association has been responsible for organizing a dramatic club under the leadership of a local high school teacher. The group builds its own sets and obtains considerable experience in stagecraft. Courses have been held in handicraft and in group psychology. There are storytelling hours and musical programs. The big event of the fall season was a Halloween party, arranged

with the help of the Junior Chamber of Commerce. It was held in the high school gymnasium. Motion pictures, refreshments, and a costume parade were among the entertainments provided. Over 500 youth and 200 parents attended. In cooperation with the local newspaper, the association maintains a community calendar in which the meetings of all the organizations in town are listed.

The association has been in operation only a year, and most of the equipment used in its activities is lent by the school board, the American Legion, the town council, and various churches. The WPA supplies recreation supervisors. The budget is only \$2,000 annually, but it is estimated that if equipment and services had to be fully paid for they would cost in the neighborhood of \$8,000.

#### COLUMBUS, INDIANA

Columbus, Indiana, an industrial community of 10,000, has developed a leisure program for its youth that is recognized as a model of its kind. Most communities with populations up to 20,000 should be able to adapt it to their situations. Though it began as an effort to combat juvenile delinquency, the plan was from the outset designed to meet the recreation needs of all youth. The initiative came from a group of leading businessmen who thought growing boys and girls should have wholesome outlets for their normal interests. They turned to the superintendent of schools for advice and assistance. The program that finally evolved was marked by three stages.

In the first place, the city council levied a special recreation tax to be spent for juvenile work. It was used to make playgrounds available where needed, especially to provide supervision. Then the board of education granted free use of its buildings after school hours. Gymnasiums, swimming pool, and auditoriums, as well as playgrounds, were thus opened to all the youth of the community. The board also allowed an abandoned schoolhouse to be used for a boys' club and as headquarters for the whole program. The third step in coordinating the community's facilities was to organize the Columbus Foundation for Youth.

This is a nonprofit corporation with a board of directors of leading citizens. Its function is to secure the cooperation of local social and civic groups and of the general public in the joint enterprise. It raises funds by private subscription, purchases equipment, operates and assists in supervising the program. A recreation director was employed as the foundation's executive. He also serves as director of the City Recreation Commission's youth activities and as a part-time teacher in the city schools.

The Boys' Club and the Girls' Club are the hubs around which revolve the wide variety of youth activities sponsored by the foundation. The Boys' Club accepts members from 9 years up to 21 or over. Every foot of space in the building is utilized for some form of activity. There is a junior game room, a billiard room, a library, a scout room, a gymnasium, and work rooms. In the yard are open-air courts for basketball, volleyball, and handball, as well as space for marbles and other boys' games. The club is organized into special interest groups, such as a glee club, an airplane modeling club, and various other hobby clubs. There are boxing, wrestling, and swimming classes under experienced supervision, and an almost continuous series of ping-pong, billiard, checker, and other tournaments arranged for different age groups.

Holidays are excuses for club parties. Those on Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas have become red-letter days on the club calendar. The annual watermelon party in early summer is primarily an open-house occasion, when the boys who have reached an age of eligibility are shown around the club and made acquainted with the advantages of membership. Club activities change with the seasons and with waning interests. The director and his assistants continually seek to capture youthful imagination with new ideas or variations of old ones.

There are nominal dues for membership in the club, but no boy is prevented from belonging by lack of money to pay his way. Any boy may elect to work out his dues by performing chores on the club premises. The Boys' Club enrolls more than a thousand youth from 9 to 17, or four-fifths of all the youth of the com-

munity of these ages. Average attendance is slightly over once a week.

The success of the Boys' Club led to a demand by local women's organizations that similar facilities be provided for girls. The board of education made a second school building available and appointed the director of the new club as a part-time teacher in the schools. Going a step further, it arranged for domestic science instruction to be given in one room of the building, thus making it possible for the school to provide heat and maintenance. Women's clubs, in turn, contribute sums of money from \$10 a year upwards, according to their size. These funds go to furnish rooms and purchase equipment. Subscribing groups use the club premises for meetings. The girls' club has a governing board of women on which thirty-one local groups are represented. Club activities include a band, scouting, cooking classes, athletics, folk and tap dancing, and instruction in music. The membership is 700, or about three-fifths of the girls of eligible age in Columbus.

A summer camp for youth has been developed on a seventy-acre tract five miles from the city. With WPA labor a fifteen-acre lake was created by damming a stream. A road was constructed; an athletic field, a running track, and concrete tennis courts were installed. Local organizations—the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, the Elks, the Business and Professional Women's Club—helped to provide accommodations by each erecting and equipping a log cabin. A large number of small donations paid for a general recreation and meeting hall. Additional gifts made possible numerous other improvements, until today the Columbus Youth Camp, with accommodations for ninety young people, is considered one of the finest and most complete in the nation. About half of Columbus youth have a vacation at the camp each summer. The premises are used by boys and girls alternately. The cost for each camper is \$6.00 a week. Many young people whose parents are unable to pay this sum are sent to camp by local service clubs and other civic groups. The city welfare department pays for children who are in poor health or underweight.

The cost of the Columbus youth program is about \$10,000 a year. Various sources of support have so spread the load that it does not weigh heavily on any one group or agency. They also remove the uncertainty that would exist if the program were dependent on one source of income. Approximately \$3,000 is raised annually by the special city recreation tax, which goes in part to pay the salaries of the staff and to maintain playgrounds. The board of education carries an indeterminate share of overhead expenses in making school property available after hours, in providing quarters for the boys' and girls' clubs, and in contributing to the salaries of staff members who have the status of part-time teachers. About \$400 is obtained from membership dues. The remaining funds needed for equipment, staffing of special projects, and general operation are raised by private contributions through an annual campaign sponsored by the foundation. The amount of the appeal is determined by the anticipated budget. During recent years it has averaged about \$6,000. Still another source of revenue consists of gifts for plant improvement or special projects, such as the camp site.

Columbus is an average community with average resources. It had the normal number of youth-serving agencies, but they reached only a small portion of its young people. It had its share of playgrounds, parks, and swimming pools. It had its outmoded school buildings. It had few wealthy families, but it did have a quota of public-spirited citizens interested in young people and ready to support any worth-while effort to solve their problems. The Youth Foundation plan made it possible to organize all these resources into a united program for youth. What Columbus has done other communities can do.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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## STATE RECREATION FUNCTIONS AND AGENCIES

ALTHOUGH local autonomy in the administration of public services is an accepted and honored principle of democratic government, the need for activity on a larger scale becomes increasingly evident. Education, public health, and recreation are matters of immediate concern to the local community, but their implications reach much farther. It is important to states, to geographic regions, and to the whole nation that the young people of every village, town, city, and county be well schooled, healthy, and able to find opportunities to develop into normal, useful citizens. We are now realizing that in many instances it is necessary for the larger units of government to intervene if these conditions are to be universally achieved.

### RECREATION FUNCTIONS

The state has a clear obligation to come to the assistance of local communities. Since towns and counties and cities are the political creations of the state, it is particularly fitting that the state should aid them in their effort to improve the condition of their youth. In the field of recreation there are four types of activity that are undoubtedly appropriate for it to undertake.

The state should render advisory and promotion services to local communities. There are numerous situations where much can be accomplished by encouragement and counsel from an experienced outside authority. This may be the stimulus neces-

sary to bring abreast of the times a community that otherwise would drift along for years without making any effective effort to organize local resources for the benefit of its young people. If the state will make demonstration surveys of the recreation needs of youth in areas where improvement is especially urgent, many other communities may be stimulated to conduct their own surveys.

In the second place, states should accept the duty of equalizing recreational opportunity for young people and grant financial aid for recreational purposes where aid is essential. There are communities in every state whose taxable resources are so limited that even the most energetic leadership will be gravely hampered unless financial assistance from outside can be obtained. In practically all states, grants are already made to at least some local communities for the support of education, and a portion of these funds may generally be used to provide recreation for youth in school.

A third state function is inherent in the recognition that individuals everywhere will benefit from direct recreational services that require a broader organization than the local community gives scope for. The outstanding example of this type of service is the establishment and maintenance of large natural parks, reserved forests, game preserves in mountain, swamp, and shore areas, and certain types of historical sites. These are primarily tasks for the state government.

Finally, there is need for an agency that can take a broad view of the recreational requirements of the people of the state and develop plans for putting all the state's recreational resources to work in an effort to meet these requirements adequately. There must be energetic promotion of voluntary coordination of the welfare agencies within the state, public and private. All the elements of policy bearing upon the development of a state recreation program—conservation, finance, agency planning—must be competently examined. Legislation must be prepared to give effect to the plans that are finally drawn up. These things can only be done on a state-wide basis. In some instances it may be possible for private organizations to undertake them.

In all cases the cooperation of private interests should be secured. However, if the development of a broad-gauge program for the state is not proceeding effectively in other hands, the state government should hold itself responsible for exercising this function.

No state yet has a major unit of state government charged with the general duty of promoting recreation. In all states, however, there are officials and agencies that are or could be active in promoting wholesome recreation for young people. The most important are those in a position to take the broadest view of the public interest: governors and legislatures, and state planning boards.

## GOVERNORS AND LEGISLATURES

The matters that call for the attention of governors and legislatures are numerous and often pressing. Young people are seldom highly enough organized to compete successfully with recognized pressure groups for the consideration of lawmakers. They must depend upon the good will of persons in authority. They have a right to expect that this dependency shall not work to their disadvantage. No function of the legislative or executive branches of government can be more important than helping to assure the oncoming generation opportunities for developing into useful citizens. Governors and members of state legislatures should bear this fact constantly in mind. Theirs is the responsibility for establishing the machinery through which the state acts to promote the welfare of its youth.

The subject of enabling legislation, to promote the development of recreation in local communities, is complex. In general it is probable that the growth of public recreation would be materially assisted by declaratory statutes clearly specifying the extent to which local units of government may use public funds for recreational purposes. The delegated power of municipalities and of counties to provide for the local public welfare is sufficiently broad so that question of their legal ability to promote public recreation should seldom arise. Nevertheless, there are numerous instances where a clear statement of the intent of the legislature

would remove doubts that might otherwise prevent local governments from exercising their full powers.

School boards need somewhat more explicit legal authorization if they are to assume the responsibility for public recreation that their special position in the community warrants. There is no doubt that schools are justified in spending educational funds for promoting recreation among their pupils. But if the school's leisure facilities are to be extended to all youth—whether in or out of school—and especially if they are to be brought to all the members of the community, it is essential that declaratory statutes be enacted making the legality of these steps unmistakable. Over half the states have already passed rudimentary legislation of this type.

### STATE PLANNING BOARDS

State planning boards are a type of agency that should be able to render particular assistance in promoting the recreational development of a state. They are expected to take a broader view of the state's resources and needs than any other special-purpose branch of the government, and the recommendations they make for legislative or executive action are likely to carry weight. Planning boards are of comparatively recent origin, but they are now found in forty-two states. At least half of the boards are giving definite consideration to state recreation lands and the need for a state recreation program. It is true that on the whole the boards have been more interested in the conservation of lands than in the conservation of human resources, but there is a distinct trend toward broadening their interpretation of their duties.

State planning boards should look upon the well-being of young people as a matter worth their most careful attention. No agency is in a better position to study the leisure needs of youth and to determine how the state may assist in meeting them. An instance where this has been done may be cited from North Dakota. There the State Planning Board made and published a survey of the recreational opportunities and needs of youth in

the city of Grand Forks. To undertake such functions it is essential that planning boards receive sufficient appropriations. It is one thing for a state to have created a central planning agency on paper and quite another thing to support it adequately. For the year 1939-1940 only thirteen of the state planning boards had allotments of over \$20,000.

### STATE CONFERENCES OF SOCIAL WORK

Among nongovernmental organizations functioning at the state level, the conference of social work agencies affords notable possibilities for serving the leisure interests of youth. Nearly all of the states have such conferences. They exist chiefly for the purpose of coordinating the activities of the member organizations, but they may well provide the impetus for a state-wide consideration of the recreational situation of young people. There is a definite trend among the conferences toward experimenting with new activities of value to the state. Over half are reported to be participating in the sponsoring, drafting, or promotion of social legislation.

Conferences of social agencies have the advantage that they will usually keep human values uppermost in their planning. To make a survey of the recreational needs of the youth of the state, to take the lead in coordinating existing recreational services so that a wider coverage may be achieved, to urge upon the state government the necessity of developing the state's recreational resources—these are activities that it would be highly appropriate for a state conference of social agencies to undertake.

### STATE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION

Among the major branches of state government there is one whose primary concern is the welfare of youth—the state department of education. This agency exercises a varying degree of supervision over the public schools of local communities, provides advisory services, formulates standards, studies the

extent to which they are met, and is the means through which the state distributes financial aid to local school districts.

There is much that a state department of education can do to increase worth-while leisure opportunities among young people. In its conferences with local school officials it can stress the desirability of the school's giving instruction in the use of leisure time. It can encourage the discriminating development of extracurricular activities and advise on how these may best be conducted. It can emphasize the need for a well-rounded school program of recreation to reach all students and even out-of-school youth. It can undertake to certify as qualified school recreation workers those teachers who have had suitable training in recreation leadership.

In order to provide these services, departments of education will need to add to their staffs one or more specialists in recreation. They now commonly have on their staffs subject-matter specialists or "supervisors" for physical education, Negro education, the education of handicapped children, vocational rehabilitation, and various branches of vocational education. There is an urgent need for similar service to the field of recreation. In some instances this would mean the appointment of a new official with appropriate duties. In others the need might be met by a reinterpretation or expansion of the services already provided to physical education.

In connection with the state's services to the schools of local communities, one of the most useful steps that could be taken to improve the leisure opportunities of youth would be to distribute state financial aid to local school districts on an equitable basis and to make it clear that a portion of this aid could be used by the school for recreational expenditures. Practically every state already contributes to the cost of general education in local communities. However, the amount of aid given by states varies greatly, even in proportion to the state's ability to subsidize local education. Many states do not aid the schools of local communities as fully as they could afford, and in nearly all states the system of distribution works hardships upon many communities.

If state aid to local school districts were put on an equitable basis, it would be a tremendous advance recreationally as well as educationally. Present arbitrary methods of determining how much shall go to each district within the state and the close control the state exercises over the expenditure of allocated funds usually prevent the use of state aid to build up the school recreational program. State aid is most often given on a basis of so many dollars for each pupil in average daily attendance. This method allows nothing for services to out-of-school youth or to adults. In some states the aid is on a basis of so much for each "approved" teacher; almost always, however, the number of pupils a school district may count for this purpose is strictly limited by a prescribed teacher-pupil ratio. In many states a substantial part of the state aid must be reserved for transportation, free textbooks, or other specific purposes. In nearly all states, aid to school districts is accompanied by a detailed and often rigid and unimaginative supervision of local budgeting and accounting. Sometimes this control is not even lodged with the department of education, but is exercised by a noneducational state office lacking special knowledge of or sympathy with educational aims and procedures.

If local school boards received state aid proportionate to the educational needs of their communities and the financial resources of the community and the state, and if they were free to use a substantial part of this aid to expand their recreational activities, much could be accomplished that is not now being done. A relatively small expenditure would enable buildings to be kept open evenings for leisure purposes. New recreational facilities and trained leadership cost more, but state funds would be well employed for this purpose where it is evident that they will supplement local initiative and endeavor. The state should make an earnest effort to increase its aid to local schools to the point where it will be of real assistance toward conducting an adequate recreational program.

### STATE YOUTH COMMISSIONS

Before we come to state governmental agencies that have routine administrative responsibilities for certain phases of the



recreational life of citizens of all ages, a word should be said about a further type of agency dealing with youth alone. In recent years there has been a movement to establish, under public or private auspices, bodies sometimes known as state youth commissions. These organizations are intended to do whatever is possible to advance the interests of young people through such means as studying their problems, coordinating existing programs, and drawing the attention of the public and of legislators to the need for further action. Recreation is, or could easily be, one of their fields of major activity. If a youth commission is a branch of the state government, it is likely to be sponsored by one of the permanent administrative departments having a special interest in youth, particularly the department of education. If it is privately organized, it may be an outgrowth of the state conference of social agencies, or it may be sponsored by a few private agencies or individuals who are concerned for the welfare of young people.

The youth commission movement is still in a very tentative stage and no accurate account is possible of its accomplishments or even of its extent. It is known that steps to organize bodies of the nature of state youth commissions have been taken in at least fifteen states at one time or another during the last few years. In 1939 a survey made for the American Youth Commission reported that "nearly half the states in the Union already have some sort of agency whose objective is unification of youth resources." Not all these enterprises have been successful, and even among those that have persisted it is likely that there have so far been few notable accomplishments. However, the numerous activities of this character testify to the increasing concern for the welfare of youth and the feeling that not all that might be done at the state level is being done.

In New York an attempt was made at the 1939 legislature to have a state youth commission created by law. The bill failed to pass, but the following extract from its foreword may be quoted as an example of the considerations that motivate such efforts.

It is in the interest of the state to conserve and develop its human resources by evolving and maintaining a thoroughly rounded program

of services for youth utilizing the full cooperation of all state departments and all volunteer agencies to assist young people in the discovery and development of their capacities and enlarging their opportunities for useful service. It is the responsibility of the state to provide the leadership which, through appropriate community organization, will bring about the keeping of local youth inventories and the development of needed service; work with existing local, state, and federal services; recommend new services in accordance with discovered needs, thus promoting a coordinated and flexible program adequate to meet the needs of young people as times and circumstances require.

It is at least debatable whether youth will profit from an attempt to supplement the present organization of state social services by additional organization on an age basis. It may be that the chief result of trying to follow two different lines of approach will prove to be confusion. A youth commission which has no administrative responsibilities of its own, but whose primary task would be to coordinate existing state services for youth, might avoid the more obvious difficulties of some of the organizations that have been proposed. However, coordination is a complex matter and not to be achieved by the simple act of appointing a commission to see that it is given due weight. If the agencies concerned sufficiently appreciate the need of special service to youth, they should be able satisfactorily to coordinate their own efforts. If they do not, the intervention of a new agency attempting to instruct them in their responsibilities is as likely to complicate the situation as to clarify it.

There would seem to be no objection to state youth commissions limited to research and advisory services. It is true that these functions should be performed by each of the several state agencies whose activities affect the well-being of young people. However, experience suggests they are likely to be neglected in organizations whose responsibilities are primarily administrative. And in any event it would be a convenience to local communities to be able to appeal to one centralized agency for counsel on all aspects of youth welfare. A youth commission having these functions would in effect be a state planning board for young people.

Whether a state is justified in creating a planning agency wholly

for youth will depend largely upon how fully existing agencies are performing this service. In case of doubt, it is probable that no error would be committed by making the experiment. Distinct agencies for distinct tasks always have publicity value, and if planning activities overlap they are not likely to produce the confusion that would arise if overlapping activities should develop among administrative agencies.

## STATE LIBRARY EXTENSION SERVICES

There remain to be considered certain state agencies having in common the fact that they are charged with specific responsibility for promoting the worth-while use of leisure among people of all ages. These are the library extension services and the departments of state parks and forests.

All states have libraries, but most state libraries serve only a limited number of people. There are exceptions. Some state libraries have developed their extension services to a high degree of usefulness. Wisconsin, for instance, has had a mail order library since 1913, the year books were first admitted to parcel post. It now circulates 100,000 volumes annually to readers throughout the state. Borrowers are not charged for this service; they pay only postage. In most states, however, the greater part of the state government's efforts to promote reading are indirect and take the form of assistance to local libraries.

Every state has legislative provisions enabling local communities to tax themselves for the purpose of supporting public libraries. Every state but two has a library extension agency with the general function of promoting local libraries and bringing library service to all parts of the state. These agencies offer advice and encouragement to local people who wish to establish a library in their own communities. Some also make grants-in-aid to local libraries. Thirteen states have a system of grants for public libraries, and twenty states offer grants to school libraries. The certification of librarians is another service that states sometimes perform for local communities. Requirements for professional workers in public libraries are in effect in

ten states; in county libraries, in nine states; and in school libraries, in twenty-three states.

State assistance to local libraries is very commonly on an inadequate basis. It is said that only ten or twenty states have succeeded in establishing state library services of the first rank. The importance of state aid to libraries is likely to grow. Decreasing sources of local revenue suggest that state participation will soon be the only likely means by which library service can be improved locally and extended into rural areas. State grants-in-aid to libraries should be as widely available as state aid to public schools. State certification of librarians should be the rule rather than the exception, and it might be desirable to establish a special classification of young people's librarian. The state can hardly engage in a more fruitful recreational enterprise than to encourage the extension of local library service. This is an activity that deserves to be promoted by every possible means.

## STATE PARKS AND FORESTS

We come now to the means through which the state encourages outdoor recreation—its parks and areas with related uses. In 1938 there were 1,395 state-owned outdoor recreation areas, exclusive of tracts administered as state forests. They fell into the following categories:

Parks	819
Monuments and historic sites	241
Recreation reserves	153
Waysides	98
Parkways	51
Preserves	11
Miscellaneous	22

Every state has at least one of these areas, but there is a concentration of state parks in the northeastern part of the country. The West is more amply provided with national parks than are other sections, and the South has had few parks—either national or state—until recently.

State parks and related recreational areas total nearly 2,000,000 acres.<sup>1</sup> Although this is only one-tenth the area of the park and monument system of the federal government, it represents nine times the number of separate areas and draws five times as many visitors annually. The fact that many state parks are near large centers of population tends to make them more readily accessible than most national parks. In 1938 they are estimated to have received 78,000,000 visits.

Forests may also be counted among a state's resources for the enrichment of leisure. States own 17,000,000 acres of forest land in addition to that included in state parks. Nearly half of this acreage is in the form of game preserves or similar areas. The remainder consists of tracts designated as state forests. All types of forest land afford numerous and varied opportunities for the quiet enjoyment of natural surroundings. There were 28,000,000 visits to state forests in a recent year. Some forests, because of their location or their exceptional interest, are especially suited to recreational use. It is estimated that state forests where recreation has been particularly developed number 236 in nineteen states and include a total of 4,250,000 acres. Over half of this area is comprised by the two large forest preserves of New York State.

#### RAPID DEVELOPMENT

The most striking fact about state recreational lands is the rapidity with which they have developed. Only one state had a state park system before 1900. During the past decade the growth of state parks has been particularly marked. This is in large part owing to the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps, which offers state governments the opportunity of improving public lands with no cost for the labor involved. Since the beginning of the CCC in 1933, a total of some 680 work camps have at one time or another been established on 867 state-owned recreational areas, where they carried out improvements.

<sup>1</sup> Exclusive of the Adirondack and Catskill state forest preserves in New York, which are sometimes considered state parks. These have an area of two and a third million acres.

When the Civilian Conservation Corps was created there were a dozen states east of the Mississippi that had no park system in active operation. About half that number, mostly in the South, owned no park properties at all. Only eighteen states were regularly appropriating funds in fairly large amounts for the administration of park systems. Since that time twenty-two more states have organized their park work and nineteen of them are appropriating substantial sums for carrying it on. The states that already were conducting an organized park service increased their park budgets during this period by 50 per cent. Seven states acquired their first state parks, and thirty-seven states acquired 250 new park areas. The total state park acreage has doubled since the CCC began its activities seven years ago.

#### THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL LANDS

State park systems now have two principal needs. Despite the period of rapid expansion, still more lands are required. Though every state now has at least one state park, seven have only a single area that can be so described. In three of these the area is of negligible size. On a basis of state park acreage per 1,000 of the population, the range in those states having appreciable park lands is from two to 158 acres.

Because of the complicating factor of the existence of national parks and forests and municipal park reserves it is difficult to say how many more state parks are needed. The National Park Service in a careful state-by-state estimate, taking account of the extent and variety of parks in each state and the use they will probably receive, concludes that 5,000,000 acres will eventually be required. This is two and a half times our present area. Certainly where large, open-country recreation areas are not now available to any considerable body of people they should be established by some agency. This duty will in most instances fall upon the state.

A particularly important need is for access to waterfronts along the oceans, the Great Lakes, and the major rivers. Only one per cent of the 22,000 miles of tidal shore line of the United

States is included in state park systems. Of this meager area less than 200 miles is beach land, and most of that is owned by two or three states. Here is an unexampled opportunity for developing a wide range of recreation accessible to large numbers of people. Nearly half our population lives within fifty-five miles of the seacoast or the Great Lakes.

#### THE NEED FOR MORE LEADERSHIP AND FACILITIES

The second major need of state park systems is one that faces all agencies administering recreational lands, whether local, state, or national. They must provide leadership for their patrons and develop programs of activities.

There are people who are strongly repelled by the thought of having any part of their leisure time arranged by someone else. To them it may be said that nothing in the nature of obtrusive leadership is intended by any recreation authority. Every patron of a park or forest should be free to enjoy himself in his own manner. Experience shows, however, that the attraction of such lands for the ordinary person is multiplied many times by the knowledge that he will find there a variety of interesting things to do and sympathetic leaders to help him do them. Even if the solitary contemplation of nature is a nobler pursuit, organized activities have the advantage that they get people out into the country and expose them to the temptation to go off alone. Much the greater proportion of any forest or large park will always be available for quiet rambles.

Most state recreational lands still make no attempt to develop a program of activities for their visitors or to provide leadership. People are drawn to them by the opportunities they offer for camping, fishing, hiking, and picnicking, or simply because of the attraction of the out-of-doors. The facilities of the average state park are likely to consist of little more than picnic sites, equipped with outdoor fireplaces, shelters, drinking fountains, and toilets. If a natural swimming area is not present, a stream may be dammed and a small beach developed. It is becoming increasingly popular to erect groups of cabins that may be oc-

cupied during the summer at moderate (though hardly low) rates.

There are a few parks that by reason of exceptional administrators or unusual resources have been able to provide numerous means of increasing the pleasure and benefit offered the public. Oglebay Park, near Wheeling, West Virginia, and the Palisades Interstate Park may be mentioned as examples of such developments. Parks with programs as elaborate as these afford a great variety of recreational opportunities. There are likely to be nature museums with permanent staffs. In the summer, volunteer naturalists from nearby high schools may escort individuals or groups over trails. Workshops and leaders may be provided for arts and crafts groups. Special hobby interests such as astronomy, geology, observation of wild life, photography, and music will be encouraged. Staff members will endeavor to stimulate interest in these subjects among people in the countryside and in the city within an effective radius of the park. Groups will be organized, meeting places provided, and specialists in various fields will assist in planning and conducting programs of activities.

There will be facilities for a wide variety of sports, both summer and winter. Swimming, boating, tennis, golf, riding, ice skating (rinks and lakes), iceboating, skiing, snowshoeing, tobogganing, and other activities may all be provided. When special equipment is needed, arrangements will be made to rent it. Instruction will be available in the more difficult skills. There will be restaurants and hostels. Cabins can be occupied in the winter as well as the summer. Organized groups may obtain permanent camping facilities, and assistance will be provided in developing their activity programs.

It must be emphasized that very few state recreation areas, and indeed relatively few public lands of any kind, provide such a wide variety of services. However, the trend is unmistakably in the direction of leadership and expanded facilities. A few years ago the National Park Service began a series of program demonstration experiments in various state parks, using recreation leaders obtained from the Works Progress Administration. The



results were so encouraging that many more state parks have requested such assistance.

It is a function of leadership not only to make recreation areas more interesting to the people who come to them but to attract people who ordinarily might not come. A good group leader can get people out at times when they themselves would not think of visiting a park or forest. There are numerous ways in which communities can make use of nearby parks and forests, but they will not always reveal themselves without effort on the part of interested persons. By one means or another, state recreation lands must be made of greater service to local communities. Working relationships must be established between the staffs of these areas and community leaders. In every local community within convenient range of a state park or forest (about fifty miles) there could well be a standing committee on the utilization of this recreational resource.

#### COOPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

An important aspect of the new leisure service that public parks and forests are developing concerns their articulation with the program of the school. The school can do much to bring about greater community awareness of the opportunities that public recreation lands offer. These areas, in turn, can enrich the program of the school and materially assist it to attain its leisure objectives. Nearby parks and forests are admirable laboratories in which to continue the introduction to biology, botany, and geology begun in the classroom. Bus loads of school children taken to a park for nature study can be depended upon to communicate to their parents something of the enthusiasm the experience should give them. A more distant park containing natural features of particular note can be made the goal of weekend expeditions. These will provide the educational stimulus of travel, which more and more schools are seeking to give their pupils.

A particularly promising field for cooperation is camping. It is not unlikely that before long a common objective of school

systems will be a camping experience for every child. Public forests and country parks, whether municipal, state, or national, offer exceptional locations for school camps to communities within convenient distance. The growing practice of erecting permanent camp buildings on these lands and making them available at low rental to nonprofit organizations should enable many a school system to get a program of camping under way with the minimum of difficulty. At the very least it should not be possible for any community within range of a public park or forest to argue lack of a suitable site as reason for failure to establish a school camp.

#### THE NEED FOR LONG-TERM OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

A particularly pressing problem that concerns state parks and forests (as well as their national and municipal counterparts, in a lesser degree) is the obligation to take over and place on a permanent basis the necessary work that for the past seven years has been done by relief agencies. The physical facilities of state parks and forests have been enormously increased by the labors of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Work Projects Administration and the National Youth Administration have made a contribution of hardly less importance in supplying leaders whose skills have made possible the development of programs of activities.

The question of how to ensure that these services shall continue to be performed does not hinge solely or even primarily upon whether the agencies that have been supplying them are to become permanent responsibilities of the federal government. Both the physical development of recreation lands and the conducting of programs are continuously necessary. It is therefore desirable, and in the long run essential, that they be done by the authorities who administer the lands. Federal assistance was indispensable at its beginning because it enabled the states to catch up in matters that they should have been doing of their own accord. But we have reached the stage where, even if federal assistance is to be continued, the states must assume a larger

share of the recreation work now being done for them by the national government. This is a reasonable conclusion, and it has the support of the federal agencies concerned.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- MORRISON, RAYMOND C., and MYRTLE E. HUFF. *Let's Go to the Park*. Dallas, Texas: Wilkinson Printing Co., 1937. 172 pp.
- State Enabling Legislation for Local Recreation*. Works Progress Administration. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1937. 71 pp. Mimeographed.
- State Forests for Public Use*, Miscellaneous Publication No. 373, U. S. Forest Service. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1940. 36 pp.
- 1940 Yearbook: Park and Recreation Progress*. U. S. National Park Service. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1940. 92 pp.

## FEDERAL RECREATION FUNCTIONS AND AGENCIES

ONE of the major responsibilities of the federal government in America, clearly set forth in the Constitution, is "to promote the general welfare." In numerous ways the government has shown its awareness that ministering to the leisure needs of the people is one way of meeting this obligation. A survey of the recreational activities of the federal government in 1936 reported that thirty-five units scattered through twelve departments were engaged in promoting from sixty to seventy distinct programs affecting the citizen's use of leisure. It has been estimated that between 1932 and 1937 the expenditures of the federal government for recreation facilities and leadership totaled \$1,500,000,000.

### THE RECREATIONAL USE OF PUBLIC LANDS

The oldest recreational function of the federal government and probably the one best understood by the general public consists of acquiring and maintaining public lands for recreational use. Until recently, all the efforts of the National Park Service were devoted to this end, and a considerable and increasing part of the activities of the Forest Service bear upon it. There are also other branches of the government that hold lands available to the public for recreational purposes.

#### NATIONAL PARKS

Forty-four years elapsed between the establishment of the first national park—Yellowstone—in 1872 and the creation in

1916 of the National Park Service in the Department of the Interior. Since the advent of this Service, federal park lands and areas with related uses have rapidly increased until now they total 153 areas in addition to the national capital parks of the District of Columbia. They may be classified as follows:

National parks	27
National historical parks	2
National military parks	11
National monuments	78
National battlefield sites	8
National historic sites	4
National recreation areas	1
National memorials	8
National cemeteries	11
National parkways	3

The national park and monument system has a total extent of nearly 21,000,000 acres and reports upwards of 16,000,000 visits annually. The list above indicates the variety of types of area it contains and suggests the purposes for which they were acquired. The parks—which make up the bulk of the system—are usually much larger than state parks and are situated in thinly populated regions. The variety of scenic attractions they afford is great—ranging from the giant redwood trees of the California parks to the geysers of Yellowstone and the glaciers of Mount Rainier. All the parks have within their borders some superlative natural phenomenon. Although they are intended to be places of recreation for the people, the federal government's purpose in taking them under its protection was to preserve them unspoiled for future generations. Historically, the emphasis in their administration has been upon custodial care.

In addition to the lands it holds in its own right, the National Park Service has accepted the responsibility of developing and administering the recreational use of large areas such as Boulder Dam Reservation, controlled by the Bureau of Reclamation in the Department of the Interior. The National Park Service also has temporarily in its possession lands that have been acquired for the purpose of conducting demonstration recreation

areas in cooperation with state park authorities. These will be referred to more fully later.

#### NATIONAL FORESTS

The Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture has a responsibility for the recreational use of federal lands rivaling that of the National Park Service. Although the Forest Service is not wholly concerned with leisure interests, it regards recreation as one of the major purposes of the national forests—the others being conservation, timber production, grazing, and watershed protection. The area under the control of the Forest Service is more than eight times the size of all the national parks. And the fact that these lands were not, like the parks, chosen for their exceptional scenic interest has perhaps tended to make their recreational development proceed more along lines of active use by the public than would have been the case if they were more renowned for breath-taking wonders likely to exact passive contemplation.

Among the things done in the national forests by people who go there for enjoyment are: exploration of prehistoric sites, mountain climbing, pack trips, saddle trips, canoe and boat trips, scenic drives, picnicking, camping, week-end or summer residence, hunting, fishing, clam digging, berry picking, nature study (botany, geology, trees, wild life), photography, swimming, skiing, snowshoeing, tobogganing.

Forests comprise a third of all our land, of which the Forest Service administers over one-sixth. There are 155 national forests, totaling 177,000,000 acres. Recreational use of these areas has increased greatly in less than two decades. About 14,000,000 recreational "stops" are now made annually, and there are many more visits by motorists who drive through. It has been estimated that the public spends \$250,000,000 each year for recreation in the national forests.

#### OTHER LAND-USE PROGRAMS

In addition to the National Park Service and the Forest Service various other branches of the federal government make public

lands available for recreational purposes, although to a more limited extent. The Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior has ninety hatcheries throughout the country whose grounds are open for picnicking, day camping, and similar outings. It also maintains 241 wild life refuges which are made available for outdoor recreation whenever practicable. The Tennessee Valley Authority develops public recreation areas along the shores of its reservoirs in the southern highlands. The Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture purchases submarginal land unsuited for cultivation and develops it for grazing, forestry, wild life conservation, or recreational purposes.

#### NEEDED PRESERVATION OF RECREATIONAL VALUES OF GOVERNMENT LANDS

A review of the recreational use that is made of lands held by the federal government suggests several ways in which the program needs to be safeguarded or improved. In the first place, the recreational values of the government's present land holdings should be carefully preserved. The danger of deterioration is particularly present in connection with forests. Their value for recreational purposes depends upon saving the trees. Four-fifths of the virgin timberland of America has already been cut or otherwise destroyed. Of the drain on forests, 86 per cent is attributed to cutting for use. We are removing every year five times as much saw timber as is being replaced by growth and twice as much of all kinds of woods.

Even in the national forests, total losses through fire and commercial logging have not always been completely offset by replanting. Two-thirds of the forest-growth area of the national forests is in timber suitable for commercial use. The natural desire of private interests to avail themselves of this source of supply wherever it can be profitably worked must not be allowed to inflict irreparable damage to the recreational utility of the forests. The Forest Service estimates that at the current rate of planting it will take about thirty years to replant the now denuded areas of the national forests. There are many sources

of commercial timber, but the means for public recreation are far too few. Nothing should be done that will reduce them.

The Forest Service has taken an important step to protect its lands from commercialization by designating certain parts of them as "wilderness" areas. These are regions of natural beauty and ruggedness in which no roads are to be built, no buildings erected, no "improvements" of any sort made. They are without permanent inhabitants, and the only visitors are people who are willing to travel on trails, carry their equipment in packs, and exercise the pioneer virtues of competence and independence. They constitute the remnants of the geographical frontier—places where the world of mechanization and easy transportation has not penetrated and will not be allowed to penetrate. These areas are "sufficiently spacious that a person may spend at least a week or two of travel in them without crossing his own tracks." The minimum size is 100,000 acres. Similar tracts, somewhat smaller in extent, are classified as "wild" areas. There are now 14,000,000 acres in seventy-four tracts set aside as wilderness or wild areas. It is to be hoped that the Forest Service will steadily increase its holdings until it has acquired all that can still be saved of these potentially valuable recreational lands.

Tracts the size of wilderness areas are necessarily remote from the large centers of population. In any event they are not likely to be used by large numbers of people, since relatively few have the initiative or means to undertake solitary trips of a week or two through virgin forests. It is desirable, however, that such areas be preserved for future generations who may know how to make better use of them than we do. Meanwhile, our own generation has a need for unspoiled natural areas of smaller size, and the Forest Service has taken steps to provide them. Spots of unusual beauty or natural interest have been designated "scenic areas." These average a few thousand acres in extent. Stretches along roadsides, on waterfronts, and adjacent to trails have been declared protected zones and will probably be of greater immediate recreational value than the wilderness areas. This type of activity deserves every encouragement.



## THE NEED FOR MORE LANDS FOR RECREATIONAL USE

A second need evident in connection with the land-use aspect of the federal government's recreation services is the desirability of bringing the geographical distribution of land holdings into closer relationship with the distribution of our population. The areas of relatively dense population are in the eastern, southern, and middle parts of the country. National parks, as we have noted, have ordinarily been established only where there is some natural feature of superlative interest, and the vagaries of nature have placed the majority of these areas throughout the West. However, even on the basis of selection heretofore employed, there are still a number of areas worthy of being designated national parks or monuments, and not all are in the West.

Moreover, it may be that the time has come to call in question the older idea that only areas possessing unique features of scenic interest should be declared national parks. The need of city dwellers to have access to open country recreational areas, whether or not these areas possess what may be termed "museum pieces," has become so urgent and so generally recognized that the federal government may well be justified in lending its assistance. We may grant that state, metropolitan, and municipal parks and forests should adequately render this service. But they do not. It is more important to meet essential needs than to preserve theoretical distinctions between the functions of different levels of government.

The distribution of national forests resembles that of the national parks—the great majority are in the West. This is because most of them were created by reservation of land from the public domain. Only 11 per cent of the publicly owned land in the national forest system is east of the Great Plains, and most of that has been purchased from private owners since 1933. National forests are still being acquired in the East, the South, and the Lake states. This policy is commendable and should be vigorously pushed.

The extension of the national forests is not hampered by as restricted a conception of the kinds of land the federal govern-

ment may properly acquire as the National Park Service has operated under. National forests were established for ends that are primarily utilitarian—"to perpetuate the timber supply and preserve the watershed of streams." They may reasonably be created in any part of the country where they are needed and the land is available. When new sites are to be acquired, special consideration should be given to those regions where the need for public recreation spaces is greatest.

#### THE NEED FOR LOW-COST USE OF RECREATIONAL LANDS

Means must be found of enabling more people to visit the national parks and forests. This is a third improvement long overdue in the federal government's land-use recreational policy. If the nationally owned recreation lands are for all the people, as surely they are, it is not sufficient to proclaim them for that purpose. We must make it possible for the majority of people to use them. So far we have depended almost entirely upon commercial enterprise or the private resources of the individual to bring people to the parks and forests. These have not proved sufficient. In spite of the very considerable increase in attendance figures during the past two decades, the national parks and forests are still visited by only a relatively small minority of our population.

The people who use the national parks and forests are for the most part in the more favored economic classes. In the summer of 1937 the Forest Service learned from questionnaires filled out by 25,000 visitors that only 18 per cent had incomes of less than \$1,000 a year. Nearly one-half the population of the United States is below this income level. The present expense of getting to federal recreation areas, and the cost of staying there, are beyond what the average family can afford.

The national forests are more widely distributed than any other public lands. Yet according to estimates of the Forest Service it would cost the average American family approximately \$15 simply to make a round trip to the nearest national forest. This is only the cost of transportation. The total cost of recreational

outings to public lands is frequently much heavier. In 1934 the National Park Service conducted an inquiry which showed that the average party of visitors to state parks made a 541-mile trip for the purpose and spent \$43.

If really large-scale use of national recreation lands is developed, it should be possible to provide transportation from distant points at rates that will be within the reach of the majority of the people. Organized camps or other communal residence facilities in or adjacent to national parks and forests should greatly reduce the cost of a vacation in the open. The problem cannot be solved by allowing private individuals to build summer residences on forest lands, or even by renting moderately priced individual cabins constructed with emergency labor. At best these serve only the middle-income groups. Other and more far-reaching measures are necessary. The whole subject will require much experimentation, but the rewards to be achieved are great.

#### THE NEED FOR FACILITIES AND LEADERSHIP

A fourth need in the recreational use of the federal public lands, and perhaps the most urgent of all, is that the agencies administering the recreational services of the national government should furnish recreation facilities and recreation leadership in national parks and forests and cooperate in developing them in other publicly owned lands. Up to the present, practically the only thing in the way of a program of activities offered visitors to the national parks has been the services of guides and nature lecturers. Even these are absent from the national forests. Lack of funds has been a major cause of this restriction, but a keener appreciation of the value of a program of activities suitable to the surroundings might have done something to remove that handicap. The public's interest in its recreation areas and the value it receives from its investment in them could undoubtedly be increased many times by vigorous, intelligent program leadership.

Many activities might be sponsored that would be entirely in harmony with the parks and forests. Examples are: woodcraft,

nature study, and hobby and handicraft classes using materials found in the woods; swimming, canoeing, and pack trips; outdoor dramatics, group musical activities. Money spent on program organization and leadership is good business. It has been said that a recreation area without adequate leadership will soon develop into a recreation slum. No one wants a cut-and-dried program that would force itself upon visitors and make them feel they must do something. But there is no question of this. The proposal is that the agencies responsible for federal recreation lands provide trained recreation leadership and develop activities that will result in greater use of the natural attractions of these areas.

In the matter of facilities, somewhat more has been accomplished. Practically all of the national forests possess "improved" camp or picnic grounds. There are over 4,000 such grounds, and individual forests have from one to over 300. The improvements consist of tables, stone fireplaces in the open for cooking, drinking water, and comfort stations. Other public conveniences found in the national forests are overnight shelters, cabin camps, lookout points, play facilities for children, softball and horseshoe courts, winter sports developments, and bathhouses. Similar elementary facilities exist in the national parks, where they have been greatly increased in recent years through the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

### *Commercial Facilities*

A considerable part of the facilities on national recreation lands and of what little leadership is available is furnished by commercial interests. When national forests and parks were acquired they often contained structures erected by private enterprise to cater to tourists. These were generally allowed to continue in operation and, from time to time, permits have been granted for new construction. Such facilities include cabins, lodges and hostels, hotels, resorts, and "health centers." There are also establishments that supply equipment for pack trips and furnish guides and carriers.

There does not seem to be any tendency to exclude commercial

recreational enterprise from public lands so long as its activities do not impair the natural recreational values. On the contrary, the National Park Service has quite recently inaugurated a policy designed to assist commercial interests to serve the public more adequately. In May 1939, government-built and government-owned facilities at Bandelier National Monument were opened to the public under private operation. This is the first occasion upon which the national government has constructed new facilities in its parks and turned them over to private concessionaires. During the remainder of the year various other facilities were provided and let out for private operation.

These were the first steps in a policy of closer relationships between the National Park Service and private recreational interests. Other federal agencies have plans for the recreational development of their lands that leave a place for private enterprise. The Tennessee Valley Authority has drawn up a comprehensive program for utilizing the recreational areas of the southern highlands, in which provision is made for the private development of facilities for public use on public lands.

#### *The Case for Public Facilities*

On the other hand, it must be said that many people look upon the private exploitation of public recreational resources as a makeshift arrangement at best. They see a fundamental incompatibility between private ownership or operation of facilities and public ownership of the lands on which the facilities stand.

It is certainly true that where the profit motive enters into the picture the public is likely to pay more for comparable services than if it met the cost through taxation. The chief argument that can be advanced for private enterprise on public recreation lands rests primarily upon our traditional distrust of government activity. To create or continue a private concession is easier—providing there is money to be made—than to obtain funds and authority to develop accommodations under public auspices. Given this reluctance to make wider use of our established administrative agencies, it can be contended that private enterprise has provided more facilities on public recreation lands than could

otherwise have been obtained. We must not, however, overlook the possibility that fewer people may have benefited from them because of higher prices. Also, there are innumerable situations where facilities that would add much to the recreational value of lands have not been constructed because the likelihood of profit was not sufficiently great.

There has been introduced into the last two Congresses a bill to authorize the government to acquire and operate concessionaires' facilities throughout the national park system. We greatly need a carefully thought out policy for the development of the national recreation lands. Whatever part it ultimately assigns to private enterprise, there is no doubt that the federal government itself should do more to make the national parks and forests the playgrounds of all the people.

#### COOPERATION WITH OTHER RECREATION AUTHORITIES

In the development of recreational facilities, the past few years have also seen an encouraging growth of cooperation between other public and private recreational authorities and the agencies administering the national forests and parks. The Forest Service is making a particular effort to assist in promoting woodland recreation activities that private organizations and local governments may wish to develop. In the national forests there are now over 500 camps conducted by social agencies, other private organizations, or city and county recreation departments. The responsibility for establishing camps, managing them, and developing a program of activities ordinarily rests with the local authority. The contribution of the Forest Service is officially described as "merely to make lands already in federal ownership available for additional and supplemental local recreational uses when the needs for such uses and the character of the lands make that course clearly in the public interest."

Though this arrangement is commendable as far as it goes, a more liberal policy could easily produce much benefit. The great majority of local communities do not have any organized recreation service to which they can look for initiative in establishing

camps and conducting outing activities for their youth. If the Forest Service would take the lead by providing permanent facilities in suitable locations there can be no doubt that the recreational use of the national forests would be much advanced.

A beginning has already been made in this direction. During the last three years, the Forest Service has constructed some twenty-five organization camps, consisting of recreation hall, mess hall and kitchen, infirmary, bunk cabins (housing six to twelve persons each), and washrooms. They are built to a higher standard than most private organization camps and are located on attractive lands where swimming, hiking, fishing, and other pastimes are available. These camps are usually leased to local civic groups, which in turn rent them to organizations desiring to use them. The cost to users averages \$4.00 a week per person, which includes food, lodging, and transportation. The Forest Service controls the amount of the rental and also the priority of use, giving preference to agencies that sponsor vacations for underprivileged groups. These camps, though not yet well established, are reported to be very successful.

A comparable though more extensive program is being carried out by the National Park Service in a particularly promising experiment of cooperation with state and local park authorities. In 1935 the Service began to acquire and develop for intensive recreational use a number of areas conveniently located to large centers of population. It was believed that developing these areas would demonstrate to state and local governments how open-country tracts with recreational values might best be employed to meet the leisure-time needs of the people, especially those who dwell in towns and cities. The active cooperation of state and local authorities was secured from the beginning, and if pending legislation is enacted about half of the areas will eventually pass into their possession. The remainder will be added to existing national parks or monuments or established as separate national recreation areas. In some instances demonstration programs were set up on land already owned by the state or the local community.

Recreation demonstration areas are of three types. A few are

intended to serve whole regions, and consist of from 10,000 to 15,000 acres so located that they can be used by large numbers of visitors. The greater part of the land in such sites is left undeveloped and reserved for wild life. In addition to large areas of this type, there are some thirty smaller tracts of from 1,500 to 2,000 acres. These are close to industrial centers and are developed as family or children's camps for use by people in the lower income groups. A limited program of leadership is provided, and the camps are rented to public or nonprofit private agencies. A third type of recreational area consists of wayside tracts of from twenty to fifty acres along principal highways. These are equipped as picnic grounds.

The recreation demonstration experiment is now well advanced. Forty-two projects have been established in twenty-four states. Last year 3,000 CCC youth were engaged in making further improvements to the various areas. Public use of the demonstration projects has doubled in each of the last three years. Some 700 community organizations now use the camps that have been established on various areas, not counting day outings. Twenty or thirty million people live within range of these newly developed areas, and the immediate results by way of opening up to them new opportunities for wholesome outdoor experiences are certain to be worth the effort. The most impressive results, however, are likely to come from the impetus the project should give to the development of recreational resources by state and local authorities. In the long run it may prove to be one of the most important recreational undertakings of our time.

#### A PROGRAM FOR YOUTH?

Young people have a greater need for leadership and facilities that will enable them to make effective use of the national parks and forests than any other age group. Their energy, enthusiasm, and love of the outdoors mark them out as the most natural clientele for our national recreation areas. Yet of all age groups young people have the most difficulty in availing themselves of the opportunities these areas offer. We have seen that it costs



more to visit the national parks and forests than the majority of our population can afford. This difficulty bears especially heavily upon youth, whose financial resources are usually very meager.

Moreover, park and forest facilities are for the most part planned around the family party traveling in a car. If it is inconvenient or impossible for the family to seek outdoor recreation as a unit, a young person is even more unlikely to obtain it on his own. On the other hand, it should be possible to make the national recreation lands more readily available to young people than to any other section of the population. The vitality of youth will carry them through experiences that would be hardships to older people. The simplest facilities will suffice when the spirit of adventure is aroused.

The recent activities of the National Park Service and the Forest Service in promoting organized camping on the national recreation lands are wholly commendable. However, they are directed toward persons of any age. In view of the special need of young people for recreation and the special opportunities the national parks and forests offer, it is worth seriously considering whether the federal government should not sponsor a program with the particular purpose of increasing the recreational use of public lands by youth. Something resembling the great development of outdoor life among young people that took place in Germany in the 1920's might well be the goal.

Youth hostels have been promoted in the United States for several years under private auspices, but they are still far from being available to or patronized by the majority of youth who might wish to use them. The possibilities for such enterprises in the national parks and forests would seem to be great. If transportation to these areas can be arranged for young people at especially low cost, all else that would be required would be trails, maps, and simple overnight shelters.

A vigorous program of leadership should of course accompany the providing of facilities. The opportunities available and their special attraction to young people would need to be made widely known. Group participation should be organized. To make the outdoor recreational resources of America widely used by the

youth of America is an effort we owe our young people. There is every reason to suppose that the response to such a program would be gratifying.

## OTHER PROGRAMS CONCERNED WITH RECREATION

We have been discussing the land-use programs of the various agencies of the national government so far as they bear upon the citizen's use of leisure. But the government has a number of other programs that directly affect the recreational lives of millions of people. Two of these are wholly concerned with youth.

### THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

The Civilian Conservation Corps<sup>1</sup> had, during 1939, an average of more than 275,000 boys and young men in 1,500 barrack camps in continental United States. During the day these youth engage in hard labor, but week ends and evenings are free. Despite handicaps of leadership and equipment, a diverse and reasonably full program of recreational activities has been developed for their benefit. Though it does not afford the variety and quality of leisure opportunities that are open to urban youth of well-to-do families, it is an improvement on the previous leisure life of most of the 3,000,000 boys who have passed through the camps in the eight years of their existence.

From materials variously obtained, buildings have been constructed and equipped where boys may carry on various leisure-time activities. In the education building a library and reading room will be found as well as classrooms. There will also be shops where craftwork in wood, leather, or metal can be done. The recreation hall will have one or two pool tables and ping-pong tables, a few small tables for cards and checkers, and a canteen. All camps have motion picture apparatus.

<sup>1</sup> A fuller discussion of the educational and sociological aspects of the CCC camps and the NYA resident centers, including some account of recreation, will be found in the book *Youth in American Work Camps*, by Kenneth Holland, to be published in 1941. by the American Youth Commission.

The reported circulation of camp libraries averages about eleven books annually per boy. Although this does not seem high in view of the accessibility of the books, it is approximately twice as great as the average per capita circulation in public libraries. Reports from the camps indicate that nearly half the total enrollment of the Corps uses the reading room more or less regularly. The evening courses in the camps, conducted on an informal basis, afford many opportunities of recreational value. Though the majority of the subjects are vocational or designed to make up deficiencies in school work, others are not. It is officially reported that 17 per cent of enrollees are now engaging in sponsored "informal activities," such as arts and crafts, music, and dramatics. There are other activities organized by the boys themselves, but participation in them is very limited.

The strenuous life the boys lead would seem to minimize the need for physical recreation. Nevertheless, they display the normal adolescent desire for outdoor sports. A greater development of games that larger numbers of youth could take part in might be desired. Too often the camp authorities are persuaded by a few aggressive boys to spend a large portion of the recreation funds on such sports as baseball and boxing, in which only a dozen or two youth can take part.

A fuller participation in recreational pursuits might result if more emphasis were placed upon nonathletic activities. In every camp there is a nucleus of boys with musical skills and other boys who would like to learn to play some instrument. Nearly all boys can be interested in singing. These possibilities are seldom fully developed. Boys ought also to be encouraged to follow one or more of the numerous hobbies appropriate to the outdoor environment in which they live. Nature study and the forming of collections of natural objects can easily become absorbing interests. Opportunities to perform civic duties about the camp, such as serving on committees, would be particularly valuable to these young men since their backgrounds are generally lacking in such experiences. It should benefit them greatly to learn that leisure can be employed for other than personal ends and still yield a high degree of satisfaction.

The social side of leisure is probably least developed by life in the camps. Often the boys must live at some distance from communities of any size, which reduces the occasions to mix with young people enjoying a normal community life. Their opportunities for meeting girls are particularly infrequent. The boys like dances, and instruction in dancing is one of the most commonly requested activities. With the help of Y.W.C.A.'s, girls' clubs, and NYA youth, a number of social dancing classes have been organized. However, there are many camps where this is not possible.

The camp authorities do what they can to improve social opportunities by conveying the boys to town on special occasions. In some communities the townspeople have from time to time provided entertainment for enrollees and are in turn frequently invited to attend entertainments at the camps. In general, however, the boys are obliged to depend upon the full program of camp life to relieve the monotony of semi-isolation. They make the best they can of the situation by organizing game tournaments, "camp nights," and similar special events. It would seem, however, that more could and should be done to make it possible for the boys to have pleasant and profitable contacts with the right kind of young girls. In every community near a CCC camp there are groups of people who would be willing to cooperate. The chief need is to train boys in social behavior. Until sufficient attention is paid to this there are always likely to be a few individuals whose indiscretions will earn a bad reputation for the group.

It can reasonably be objected to the CCC program that it allows for little attention to individual needs and lays somewhat too much stress on mass participation. To help the boys spend their leisure profitably could easily take the full time of an experienced recreation leader in each camp. But there is no one specially charged with this responsibility. The duty sometimes devolves upon the administrative assistant to the camp commander, who has a number of other functions. More often it falls to the lot of the official in charge of educational activities. Other staff members assist in supervising athletics and conducting various free-time activities, and capable volunteer leaders sometimes are also found among the boys themselves.

The educational adviser's main duty of organizing evening instruction to supplement the work experience the boys get on the job and of advancing their general education is so important and exacting that he cannot be expected to give other leisure needs the attention they deserve. Moreover, he is handicapped by the fact that he lacks authority to initiate and develop the measures he believes necessary, even in strictly educational matters. As his title suggests, he can only recommend. Permission for every step must be obtained from the camp commander, who is ordinarily an Army reserve officer.

The authorities of the nine geographic areas through which the camps are administered have some degree of freedom in determining the general educational policies of the camps. Though practices differ from one area to another, camp educational advisers are likely from time to time to receive instructions from regional headquarters to promote this or that activity more vigorously, together with a batch of forms on which to report progress. They are thereupon apt to feel themselves under pressure to show results and will proceed accordingly.

If it is increased library circulation that has been decreed, the boys will be urged to borrow books, perhaps with little attention to whether the library has the right kinds of books or whether they get into the hands of the right boys. If craftwork is to be promoted, boys are urged or even required to spend time in the shops, though in many individual cases other activities might be more suitable. In the end, participation is boosted, the record forms are filled out and sent in, and the regional office congratulates itself on having made a good showing. It is not surprising that the best interests of the boys should sometimes be sidetracked in this process. CCC youth deserve the individual guidance in use of leisure that good educational systems should afford.

In many of the camps participation in recreation is not wholly voluntary. One Corps area requires all boys to take part in at least one "informal activity" as well as to enroll for a course in each of three other fields—academic, job-training, and vocational. Recreation is rightly considered a phase of the educational work of the camps. But this fact should mean that the authorities will take pains to discover what use of spare time will

be most beneficial to each boy. The present staff facilities of the camps do not permit such effort, and the policies of the higher levels of the Corps administration do not encourage it.

The United States Office of Education is responsible for advising the Army on the conduct of educational work in the camps. This work, as we have seen, includes recreation; but the policy of the Office has been to confine its attention to the academic aspects of education. Even though these may sometimes be officially described as "informal" activities, they fall outside the field of leisure to the extent that the boys are required to participate in them. The Office of Education would seem to have an opportunity to promote recreation as a voluntary instrument of education through conducting research and providing advice on how real leisure-time programs may best be organized in the camps. This opportunity remains to be developed.

A primary hindrance to the fuller development of recreation in the camps is that an authoritarian regime does not furnish an environment in which spontaneity and voluntary effort flourish. One educational adviser relates that when he ventured to suggest in a staff meeting that a committee of enrollees be appointed to help work out recreation plans, the camp commander's immediate response was: "Oh, no! It will never do to let those fellows think they can *decide anything* around here."

This adviser's suggestion, however, was a very appropriate one. A camp recreation council or committee or association could be a real help in stimulating interest in the worth-while use of leisure. It would require careful organization and tactful management. The boys should be made to understand its purpose and the ways in which it could benefit them. The camp management, in turn, should give prompt and serious consideration to the council's views. A live and conscientious body of enrollee representatives could be of great assistance in deciding what recreational activities the camp funds are to be spent on, what sites are most suitable for sports, what equipment is necessary, how and when competitions are to be conducted, and so on. Such voluntary cooperation from the boys would do much to offset the tendency to lethargy inherent in the present organization of the Corps.

The Civilian Conservation Corps has another and broader connection with recreation than the fact that efforts are made to promote the leisure interests of its members. The work projects carried out by the Corps have included a prodigious amount of recreational improvements to public lands. This circumstance has already been referred to. The availability of CCC labor was directly responsible for the establishing of functioning state park systems in numerous states that had no organized park work before 1933. More than 300 state, county, and metropolitan parks in the region east of the Mississippi have been developed as a whole or improved and extended with CCC assistance. This work has been done in cooperation with the National Park Service and local commissions and boards. During the six years that the CCC existed as a separate, independent agency, it carried on park improvement programs in 361 camps. In 1939 there were some 300 camps operating in connection with national, state, and local parks. The Corps has also done a vast quantity of work in national and state forests, much of which has recreational value. It can reasonably be claimed that the development of public parks and the recreational use of public forest lands in America have been set forward a decade or more by the services the Civilian Conservation Corps has supplied and is still supplying.

#### THE NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION

The federal government has established a second program of emergency employment wholly for young people—the National Youth Administration. This agency, too, has made an important contribution to the recreational resources of the nation.

The NYA does not have as great a responsibility as does the CCC for the majority of the youth to whom it furnishes work, since most of them live at home or attend college. There have been established nearly 600 NYA resident centers, but many of these are operated in connection with schools and colleges, and the others do not usually involve the isolation from ordinary community life that creates a particular need for organized recreation. The NYA does not therefore have an official leisure program for

its enrollees, though in particular centers there are sometimes activities similar to those conducted in the CCC camps.

The recreational functions of the NYA consist in providing labor and other services that enable public authorities and nonprofit-seeking private agencies to improve their equipment and expand their activities. A considerable portion of these services has gone into projects of recreational value. In March 1940, 60,000 out-of-school youth between the ages of 18 and 24 were engaged upon NYA work having significance for the use of leisure. These were about one-fifth of the total employed on the work program for out-of-school youth. Over half of this number was comprised of youth engaged in constructing recreational facilities. Over a third were supplying leadership or program assistance. The remainder were engaged in: library service and book repair, museum work, exhibits and visual aid, art, music, drama, writing, and craftwork—all subjects with obvious recreational implications.

Additional youth, probably numbering in the tens of thousands, were engaged upon types of projects whose recreational importance the official reports do not attempt to indicate, though it was undoubtedly large. Thus thousands of youth were employed in NYA workshops, and among the articles they manufactured most frequently were toys, games, and other objects intended for recreational use. An indefinite but substantial part of the NYA work done in parks and other public lands by way of landscaping and constructing trails and paths could be placed under the head of recreational facilities. Many of the buildings that NYA youth have worked on other than those classified as social or recreational are used partly for recreational purposes. Through June 1940 more than 9,000 schools, libraries, museums, art galleries, and other educational buildings had been erected, remodeled, or repaired by NYA labor.

Community centers for young people have been a particularly useful part of the program and one that the NYA believes might well be expanded. As constructed by NYA workers, a community center usually consists of a building divided into classrooms, game rooms, library, kitchen, and an assembly room that



can also be used for banquets or dances. Other small rooms can be adapted for such special purposes as art exhibits, first-aid service, and vocational guidance. In some centers there are little theaters, and a few even have space for radio stations.

The accomplishments mentioned do not disclose the full extent of the service the NYA has rendered in recreation, for they are drawn wholly from the work program for out-of-school youth. The NYA also conducts a student-aid program involving work projects for young people who are continuing their education. The college section of this program in itself enrolls 40 per cent as many youth as the whole out-of-school program. Though the activities involved are somewhat more limited in scope, the number of college students engaged upon NYA projects of recreational value is not negligible. Several thousands are employed in work described as recreation, education, art, dramatics, or library assistance. A much larger number are participating in research, surveys, or community service, a considerable proportion of which undoubtedly relates to recreational objectives. There can be few sizable American communities whose recreational resources have not in some degree been strengthened by the young people for whom the National Youth Administration provides employment.

#### THE WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

The recreational activities of the Work Projects Administration<sup>2</sup> deserve a chapter to themselves. A book would be required to do them justice. To give any adequate summary of them in the limited space available here is a difficult task. It must, however, be attempted, because the contribution of this agency to the organized recreational resources of the nation has been tremendous, and its influence will be felt for a long time.

When the ordinary citizen thinks of the WPA, the type of activity that is likely to come most readily to his mind is construction work—the building of roads, bridges, and other improve-

<sup>2</sup>The figures cited in this section are the latest obtainable from the Work Projects Administration.

ments to public property. Construction does bulk large in the program of the WPA, and a good portion of it has been done in the field of recreation. Much construction has to do with physical recreation. Municipal facilities for practically every form of sport have been built. Through 1940, newly erected stadiums, grandstands, gymnasiums, and such other facilities as pavilions, bathhouses, and the like, totaled above 6,500, and nearly three-fourths as many similar structures had been renovated or enlarged. Outdoor recreational facilities have been provided even more frequently. Over 20,000 new structures other than buildings have been completed and an equal number of existing facilities improved. These include tennis courts, athletic fields, playgrounds, and parks. Structures with general recreational uses include 700 auditoriums built, added to, or renovated. Libraries have benefited greatly from WPA construction work. Most of the library building during the latter years of the past decade was accomplished by WPA labor. The list includes 900 structures erected, repaired, or enlarged.

#### *The WPA Recreation Section*

The creation of recreation facilities is simply a part of the general construction program of the WPA. The purpose of this program is to utilize the large supply of idle unskilled labor, and it implies no special concern for the development of public recreation. The WPA has, however, another program that aims not only to provide work for certain types of unemployed persons but has also the definite purpose of promoting organized recreation in local communities. This program is administered by its Recreation Section<sup>3</sup> and constitutes the core of the WPA's recreational functions. It consists of supplying leadership for all types of recreational activities that local communities may wish to try to establish. In 1939 the program was operating in more than 7,000 communities and included some 15,000 job locations. Nearly 70 per cent of the communities were rural. Over 6,000 had no other source of organized public recreation.

<sup>3</sup> This branch of WPA activities was formerly known as the Recreation Division. Since January 1940 it has been the Recreation Section of Community Service Projects in the Professional and Service Division. It will here be referred to simply as the Recreation Section.

Every activity for which the WPA furnishes leadership is originated by a sponsor. This is often an agency of the municipal or county government. It may be the board of education, the health officer, the librarian, the mayor and council, or—if there is one—the park board or recreation department. However, in 1939 over half the 10,000 local sponsors were described as private or semipublic groups. Outside initiative, when any is required, comes not from the WPA but from an agency of the state government.

All the activities of the Recreation Section within a state are considered to be a single state-wide project and are placed under the guidance of an official state sponsor. This may be the department of education, the board of public welfare, the state university, or some other qualified agency. The official sponsors contribute a quarter of the cost of the programs—a proportion considerably higher than the past average for all WPA programs. All but 3 per cent of the federal money goes to pay the wages of the relief workers who furnish the leadership on the projects. Materials, equipment, and facilities are contributed by the local sponsors.

Every area and building that the community affords is used. Playgrounds, parks, community centers, schools, camps, athletic fields, swimming pools, bathing beaches, settlement houses, auditoriums, gymnasiums, housing projects—all the facilities that can be utilized in developing the proposed activities are sought and usually obtained. The effective cooperation of all interests, public and private, is made easier through the use of advisory committees. These are composed of representatives of service clubs, churches, labor unions, business concerns, private social agencies, and educational institutions, as well as other interested citizens. In 1939, 5,500 such committees were giving the programs a firm anchor in the community. Approximately half of their 38,000 members were lay persons, and the experience in social organization they received should stand their communities in good stead when the time comes to carry on without outside financial aid.

At the height of its activity the Recreation Section of the WPA was employing 50,000 persons in conducting leisure-time programs

in local communities. It has trained 140,000 relief clients for some type of recreation leadership. Recreation workers tend to be young. It is estimated that as high as a fifth of the employees of the Recreation Section have been under 25. This means that a substantial number of youth—some 8,000 to 10,000—were engaged in developing community recreation programs of which young people themselves were in large measure the beneficiaries.

Few of the employees of the Recreation Section were former recreation workers. They were unemployed school teachers, musicians, athletic directors, clerks, salesmen, or recent college graduates who could not find jobs. An intensive program of pre-service and in-service training was necessary to equip them for their new employment. The WPA and the NYA, with the cooperation of local agencies, have organized many training institutes to fit emergency leaders of recreation projects for permanent local employment in recreation work. These have materially strengthened the community resources available for future recreation planning.

The services rendered by the recreational leaders on WPA projects are as varied as available talent will allow and local initiative desires. Fifteen thousand community centers have been operated and assistance given to 8,000 more, according to official reports. Supervision has been provided for parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, beaches, and swimming pools. Dancing is taught—folk, ballroom, and tap. Community nights are organized. Social games, carnivals, and club meetings are arranged. Instruction is provided in such craft and hobby activities as sketching, photography, leather work, pottery, marionettes. Groups are formed in drama, music, and nature study. Forums, pet shows, and story contests demonstrate to the community how comprehensive a recreation program can be. Many local programs include day camps for children and sometimes one- or two-week camps for underprivileged youth and adults.

Sample studies of the projects of the Recreation Section show that of the activities participated in by young people from 16 to 24 about three-fifths can be classed as physical, one-fourth as social, and 13 per cent as cultural. A deliberate effort is being

made to increase activities of a social and cultural character. In the words of the Recreation Section, "these are the activities most likely to enlist the participation of all persons, regardless of sex or age, and to develop attitudes of mind, habits, and skills beneficial to the temper of the participants' personal and family life."

In 1939 more than 5,000,000 people, not counting spectators, were estimated to be taking part in the programs of the Recreation Section of the WPA each week. Their participation totaled, on the average, from three to four hours. A sampling indicates that at least 1,250,000 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 were among those who used the various services. The great majority of the remainder were children.

There are unmistakable indications that the WPA's program of providing recreational leadership in local communities has had a beneficial effect both on the individuals and on the communities concerned. Some 7,500 of the employees of the Recreation Section have found permanent work in local recreation agencies, according to the WPA, and this circumstance must be largely attributed to their training on relief projects. That the Section's activities stimulate communities to greater effort of their own is the conclusion of a recent inquiry made in 148 municipalities where federal recreation projects have been in operation. It was found that these communities had increased their appropriations by 22 per cent and that salaries paid to recreational staff members had risen by 12 per cent. This should dispel any suspicion that communities are letting the federal government take over recreation activities previously financed locally.

Whether the impetus that appears to have been given community endeavor will be sufficient to meet the employment emergency created among WPA recreational workers by the 1939 Relief Act is another and more doubtful matter. In 1939 Congress enacted a law requiring all persons who had had as much as eighteen months' continuous employment on federal relief to be dropped from the rolls for thirty days. This obliged the Recreation Section to dismiss 20,000 workers, or approximately half its employees. These persons, when they became eligible for re-

employment by the WPA at the expiration of the specified period, found themselves at the bottom of a long waiting list.

Since the whole WPA program is gradually being contracted, there is little likelihood that any large proportion of the dismissed recreation workers will return to the jobs they learned to fill and in which they were performing a useful community service. Nevertheless, there is a need for the skilled services of these individuals. It is estimated that public recreation would now require for an adequate program five times their number, or 100,000 workers, in addition to the usual staffs of recreation departments and those still retained by the Recreation Section. At its peak, therefore, the WPA was meeting only 40 per cent of the need for supplementary recreation workers. Congress at one stroke swept away half of this accomplishment, painstakingly built up by the Recreation Section over the previous four years. It remains to be seen what part the local communities can replace. But it would be optimistic indeed to assume that municipal recreation is yet ready to take on, unaided, 20,000 workers—even if they were employed only part time. To do so would nearly double present municipal staffs.

#### *Other WPA Recreation Activities*

In addition to constructing facilities and supplying leadership for general community recreation, there are a number of ways in which the WPA contributes to the profitable use of leisure by the American people. Its Professional and Service Division contains other branches besides the Recreation Section that have the task of finding employment for persons with special talents or skills. Some of the projects developed to utilize the capacities of these people are wholly within the field of leisure interests. Others are partly so. Among the former may be mentioned the projects built around art, music, and the theater.

The existence of a Federal Art Project is generally known, and most people have seen some of its products. Although the more conspicuous benefits of this activity lie in the preservation and development—in the service of the American people—of the highly specialized talents of a relatively few gifted individuals, the

project also has numerous points of contact with ordinary people. Fifty community art centers are in operation and hundreds of art classes are conducted. In January 1940 the enrollment in art classes was 47,000, and there was an aggregate attendance of 2,500,000 at civic art centers.

The Federal Music Project is organized on a similar basis and has had an enrollment of 160,000 in its classes. Five thousand musical performances were given in January 1940, drawing over two million people. There are more than a hundred federal symphony and concert orchestras. Concert and dance bands, chamber music ensembles, and choral and opera groups have numbered 125.

The Federal Theatre Project was one of the casualties of the 1939 Relief Act and has been dissolved in accordance with the wish of Congress. In its prime it had some 100 companies operating in twenty states. It staged 1,500 productions, with a monthly average of 2,800 performances and a monthly attendance of over a million. Shows were given in CCC camps, orphanages, hospitals, schools, and other institutions, as well as in regular theaters. About half of them were free, and for the others the admission fee was small. The Theatre Project put on productions that were Broadway successes. It pioneered in developing new art forms for the theater, of which the "living newspaper" is perhaps the best remembered. Its greatest accomplishment, however, was to bring theatrical productions to millions of Americans in whose lives they had previously had no part. The leisure of the people is the poorer for its disappearance.

In many countries, art, music, and the theater are subsidized for the cultural advantages they afford the public. The United States was persuaded to give federal aid to the arts only because artists, musicians, and actors were widely unemployed. That this is an insecure basis for a public subsidy is shown by the fate that has overtaken the Federal Theatre Project. The time has come when we should seriously ask ourselves whether these activities do not deserve federal assistance in their own right. Useful as they are in providing employment for talented individuals, their capacity to enrich the leisure of all persons is a

much more precious thing. Experience has shown that when art, music, and the theater are left wholly to profit-seeking enterprise they tend to be so costly that the ordinary individual cannot often afford them. Amateur efforts are valuable and deserve every encouragement. But they are not an adequate substitute for low-cost professional services. The arts cannot be brought to the masses of the people without public aid. Public aid deserves to be put on a firmer footing than unemployment palliatives afford.

In the category of activities that may in large part be described as promoting public recreation are the WPA's assistance to museums and libraries, its Writers' Project, and its educational classes.

White-collar relief workers in museums have constructed or repaired over three million articles and catalogued over five million. Library construction and renovation have already been mentioned. But the WPA also provides staff assistance that enables libraries to make wider use of the facilities they already have. Branch libraries are conducted and reading rooms set up in existing libraries that could not otherwise afford them. Traveling libraries circulate in rural areas. An epic might be written of the experiences of the pack-horse librarians of the South, who penetrate into the farthest reaches of highland glens where even revenue agents tread cautiously. In 1937 there were 1,150 traveling libraries. New branch libraries totaled 3,500, and 4,000 reading rooms had been opened.

WPA white-collar workers have performed another valuable service for librarians and the people who use libraries by the work of renovation and rearrangement that they have done among book stocks. Twenty million library books have been catalogued, and 34,000,000 have been cleaned and repaired. Library budgets seldom contain adequate provision for reconditioning books, and these services of the WPA have kept in circulation many volumes that otherwise would have had to be withdrawn.

The leisure value to the public of the books that are now pouring forth from the Federal Writers' Project will be greater or less according to the extent they are used. They certainly embody



substantial leisure potentialities. The main program of the project consists of a comprehensive and detailed description of the American scene. It is to be completed in some 400 volumes of regional, state, and local guidebooks. These will treat in full all the points of interest in the territory covered, both natural and historical. Over a hundred have so far appeared, and reviewers describe them as both interesting to the casual reader and invaluable to anyone who wishes to acquire a detailed knowledge of particular sections of the country. Wherever there are American youth who like to read about their native land these books are likely to prove to be a leisure resource of more than ordinary importance. They have been described by Lewis Mumford as "the finest contribution to American patriotism that has been made in a long time."

The WPA's Division of Education is one of its outstanding achievements. It has conducted upwards of 100,000 classes a month and enrolled more than a million voluntary students. It constitutes an educational system that in size of student body is nearly as large as the public and private colleges of this country. People come to its classes only because they wish to learn and stay only as long as they find it profitable. It thus operates, from necessity, on principles that should motivate a good recreation program.

A listing, by type of subject matter, of the classes the division conducts shows that a large number are concerned with topics that to many people are leisure interests. Among the categories reported on as of March 1938 was one consisting of 13,600 classes, described as "avocational or leisure time," which enrolled 315,000 people. An additional 2,000 classes with 57,000 enrollees dealt with "public affairs." A third group listed as "general adult" consisted of 24,000 classes enrolling 335,000 persons. Together these three sections, which constituted the bulk of the nonvocational subjects, account for over one-third of all classes, or approximately 40,000, and nearly half of all enrollees, or approximately 700,000.

It is known that youth form a large proportion of the persons who patronize adult education activities. A sample count in

Chicago reported that three out of five persons attending WPA classes were under 26. It would seem, therefore, that the number of young people who participate in WPA emergency education from a desire to improve their leisure is probably in the hundreds of thousands.

The WPA does not care why youth come to its classes. There are no credits to be earned. It is not preparing them for college or for anything but living. It understands the fact, which schools are barely beginning to appreciate, that education is a part of life itself. If young people choose to come to learn how to spend their leisure hours more enjoyably, the WPA is glad to have them.

It was an emergency that led to the creation of federal work relief. An urgent necessity had arisen not only for keeping millions of jobless workers from starving, but also for maintaining their self-respect and preserving their availability for future private employment. This has been the main purpose of the Work Projects Administration throughout its existence. All its programs have been primarily directed toward the goal of putting the unemployed to work. It is desirable that we should remind ourselves of this elementary fact from time to time because the WPA has done so much more than merely create jobs that it is easy to lose sight of the mainspring that makes it tick. To say this should not in any degree reduce the importance of its other accomplishments. If the WPA had not already justified its existence in terms of its chief objective, it could easily do so many times over on the record of the incidental benefits it has brought to American communities. This is clearly true of its work in the field of recreation.

The unemployment emergency was not the only crisis we faced during the depression. There was another emergency, hardly less acute, that threatened large numbers of people. This was the danger of losing individual initiative, creative skills, physical vitality, and respect for democratic institutions. Adequate recreational programs for youth and adults were recognized as one of the best means of combating this menace, and it soon became evident that only with the assistance of the federal government could such programs be quickly developed on anything approach-

ing an effective scale. The recreational activities of the Work Projects Administration have offered a determined resistance on all fronts to the forces of disintegration and decay that are attacking the leisure life of American youth and the American public.

#### MISCELLANEOUS PROGRAMS

The Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior has been mentioned in connection with the use it allows people to make of its lands for picnics and other outings. But such functions are merely incidental to the main purpose of this agency—the protection and restoration of desirable wild life in forest, field, and stream. In carrying out this aim it not only performs a useful economic function, but also renders a direct service to the millions of Americans who like to spend part of their spare time hunting or fishing or simply observing birds and beasts. We are destroying the once abundant wild life of America much faster than it can renew itself. There is real danger, amounting indeed to certainty, that if conservation activities are not greatly accelerated an important and enjoyable recreational resource will in no very remote time practically disappear.

Land-use and conservation programs are examples of a limited kind of recreational service for the benefit of the general public. There are instances in which the federal government undertakes to provide a more or less full and well-rounded program of leisure activities, but they involve only limited groups or special classes of persons. Some of these groups are composed largely or wholly of young people. The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration have already been discussed. There are other sizable groups of individuals over whom the national government has custody, or who work for it in remote or isolated places, or whose welfare for one reason or another is of special concern to the government. These include the inmates of federal prisons and reformatories; the members of the armed forces—the Army, the Navy, and the Marine Corps; the crews of such large construction projects as the dams of the Tennessee Valley Authority; the children and adults who attend schools on

Indian reservations; and residents in government housing projects and resettlement communities.

For each of these groups the government agency in charge conducts or sponsors a program of recreational activities. The programs vary with the degree of freedom possible, but all are intended to provide an adequate outlet for the leisure interests of the individuals concerned. Libraries are maintained, athletics promoted, group activities such as music and acting encouraged, and where possible there are social entertainments of various types.

The efforts of the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture on behalf of rural youth should also be listed among the instances of service supplied to a special group. The federal government has accepted a particular responsibility for the well-being of rural youth. Through its extension agents it endeavors to stimulate rural communities to provide all appropriate recreational opportunities for their young people as well as to encourage these youth to improve their own use of leisure. This activity has been referred to more fully under the section on rural youth in Chapter V.

## NATIONAL PLANNING

The federal government has a responsibility for the national planning of recreation. This obligation lies in two directions. The first is to put its own house in the best possible order.

### BROAD-SCALE COORDINATION

The government's recreational activities have been entered upon one by one as needs arose and the necessity for federal action became obvious. There now are, as we have seen, a large variety of government leisure-time programs conducted by numerous federal agencies. It does not by any means follow that because they are dispersed among some thirty-five different operating divisions they are weakly or wastefully administered. On the contrary, if an attempt were made to uproot them from their present settings and bring them together as a single administrative

unit it is likely that the most notable result would be confusion twice confounded. The government does, however, owe it to the cause of efficiency to promote cooperation and coordination among its recreational activities somewhat more vigorously than it has in the past.

Machinery ought to be maintained for the periodic or even continuous review of federal leisure programs. There should be a means of obtaining from a single source a comprehensive, detailed, and current account of what the various government agencies are doing in the recreational field. This would benefit not only the outside inquirer, who has a right to know what services his government is prepared to render him, but it should also prove helpful to the agencies themselves. The points where related programs approach each other could be determined and lines of demarcation clarified. If overlappings exist, they would be revealed. Areas where mutual assistance can be rendered should appear. Economies may be possible or it may be that the same amount of effort could yield greater returns. It might also be a function of such a service to secure agreement on recreational standards to be applied in the work of the various units. The bringing of the government's leisure programs into close relationship with each other should not be left to chance or the spare moments of busy administrators.

The second direction that must be taken by the federal government's recreational planning relates to the leisure needs and resources of the nation as a whole. The term "planning" is perhaps an oversimplification of the service that needs to be rendered. At least two coordinate functions are involved in addition to the formulation of plans themselves. On the one hand there must be research, for planning cannot be done in a vacuum; and on the other hand there must be promotion in order to secure the adoption of plans requiring the cooperation of other agencies.

Important contributions in both of these areas have been made and continue to be made by the various private organizations of national scope concerned with leisure problems. These include such agencies as the National Recreation and Education Council, the American Camping Association, the National Conference

on the College Training of Recreation Workers, community chests and councils, the National Conference on State Parks, the several professional associations of recreation workers, and the central bureaus of the various youth-serving organizations of national and international extent. These agencies perform a function that is continuously and increasingly valuable. But their existence does not obviate the need for an over-all planning body that has no special interest—however worthy—to promote, but only the well-being of the whole nation. The federal government is the logical agency to assume this duty.

The nation has a distinct need for a plan indicating the steps that must be taken if its recreational resources are to be preserved and adequately developed. It is a need that grows more urgent with every year as irreplaceable resources are allowed to disappear. It has lately acquired an imperativeness from the necessity we now face of making every aspect of the national effort contribute to the security of our country. The plan we require should make clear the role that the federal government can best assume and the functions that are most appropriately left to regional organization or to states, local communities, and private agencies. There are decades of steady effort ahead before we shall have made a reasonably close approach to accomplishing what organized action can do to improve the leisure experiences of American youth and of the American public generally. The task will be greatly facilitated if we can carry with us an agreed working plan.

#### FEDERAL PLANNING AGENCIES

A number of government agencies are already engaged in leisure-time planning on a national scale. Some of them are among the authorities conducting the programs we have been considering in this chapter. In these agencies the planning is likely to be restricted to the particular phase of recreational work for which the agency is responsible. It may, however, go beyond the scope of federal activity, present or prospective, and review the desirable distribution of functions at all levels of government. There are also branches of the national government that conduct

no recreation programs but are obligated to maintain an interest in the leisure activities of other bodies. Federal agencies that are or might well be active in recreational planning include the following.

*The National Resources Planning Board*

This body, which has existed in some form since 1934, is of all divisions of the executive branch of the government the one best situated to take a broad view of the general welfare. The task of preparing a master plan for the recreational development of our national life would seem particularly appropriate for it. The board has already published a detailed report on the recreational use of land, surveying the existing situation and endeavoring to some extent to forecast needs and outline policies. As far as it goes this is an able document, but there is a disappointing lack of emphasis upon the need for providing recreational leadership on public lands. The initial survey has not been followed by further publications that might report upon other recreational needs of general interest.

The staff of this federal agency is small, and the board's policy is to have its inquiries conducted by experts temporarily retained for the purpose. The report on land use was prepared by the National Park Service and represents, therefore, the views of the permanent government agency most concerned with that subject, rather than an independent appraisal. Though the National Resources Planning Board is the logical agency to undertake a comprehensive survey of national recreational needs and resources, its interests are divided among numerous other important subjects of inquiry, and it may be that these competing claims will prevent leisure needs from receiving the attention they merit. Certainly the board's restricted ability to undertake its own research is a hampering factor. Moreover, it is not in a position to offer advisory or promotion services to other levels of government or to private agencies if any considerable demand for these services should develop. This fact would further restrict its possible usefulness.

*The Technical Committee on Recreation*

This body is a subdivision of the Interdepartmental Committee to Coordinate Health and Welfare Activities. The subcommittee was created to ascertain the scope and nature of the recreational activities of the federal government and to recommend any reorganization that might seem desirable. It has published a brief report in which it recommends that a federal Bureau of Recreation be established. The functions of this bureau would include securing voluntary coordination, setting standards, promoting research, and serving as a clearinghouse for recreational information to the various government departments and to the public at large.

The Technical Committee on Recreation does not appear to have engaged in any other activity or to be now functioning. However, the fact that it was composed of administrators from the fifteen units of the federal government most closely concerned with recreation gives it the appearance of a coordinating council, and the possibility of its acquiring permanent functions deserves to be kept in mind. If the proposed bureau should materialize, recreational planning would be one of its major responsibilities. If a coordinating council should be established in its place, research and large-scale planning would be no less appropriate, though it is likely that they would receive less attention.

*The National Park Service*

This is the federal agency that has been most active in recreational planning. In addition to preparing the report on the recreational use of land, issued by the National Resources Planning Board, it has published an extensive reference work on park structures that promises to have a wide influence on the building programs of state parks.

The National Park Service's major activity in research and planning is an ambitious project known as the Park, Parkway, and Recreation Area Study. This aims to be no less than an inventory of all existing recreational facilities, areas, and systems. It was specially authorized by Congress in 1936 and has been carried out in cooperation with all but three of the states. Re-



ports are prepared on a state basis and twenty-seven have now been completed. They are uniform and will enable a master plan to be drawn up. The information obtained in the study is to be analyzed and compared with population data in an effort to determine requirements for recreation over a period of years. In the end there are expected to emerge clear-cut plans and recommendations for adequately meeting present and future recreation needs on a nation-wide scale. The outcome of this imposing project will be awaited with interest. There is also in hand a study of municipal and metropolitan park systems and an analysis of state laws relating to recreation.

The National Park Service has in recent years demonstrated a capacity for enterprise and leadership in recreational endeavor that shows it to be well removed from an earlier preoccupation with custodial problems. If one still has difficulty in seeing in it the agency best fitted to guide the development of recreation in America, it is only because recreation—even public recreation—embraces so much more than the use of lands.

### *The Forest Service*

Though the Forest Service has no such extensive project in research as that just mentioned, it has shown itself to be well aware of the necessity for planning the recreational use of the lands it administers. It has lately lost, through death, a chief of the Service and a chief of the Recreational Division who did much to promote a concern for recreational matters. It may be expected that the spirit and interest brought to the Service by F. A. Silcox and Robert Marshall will not cease to develop. The late chief administrator described its recent advances in the following terms.

The Forest Service has stepped up its recreational activities; has engaged and is engaging additional, adequately trained specialists; has reviewed principles, standards, and practices; has extended and brought up to date surveys and inventories of present and future possibilities and demands; and has revised existing plans and is making new ones.

*The Tennessee Valley Authority*

Because of the limited geographical range of its interests, this agency is hardly in a position to undertake recreational planning on a nation-wide scale. However, it has been industrious in planning the recreational use of the large areas under its control and in cooperating with local authorities and private enterprise to ensure the widest possible benefit from facilities. In these respects it affords a conspicuous instance of what may be accomplished. The report it has issued on the recreational resources of the southern highlands is a model of its kind. Other planning bodies may well be stimulated by the example of the TVA to give more attention to recreational matters.

*The Office of Education*

Though it has had little concern with recreation, the Office of Education would seem to be in a strategic position to assist in developing public interest in that subject. In its advisory capacity to school systems it could stress the importance of education for leisure. It could suggest how school recreation programs might best be organized and how to take advantage of community resources. Demonstrations in selected areas would be appropriate. As part of its statistical service the Office might gather information on the recreational activities and facilities of local schools. This would permit a clearer view of the needs to be met and the resources for meeting them.

The Office of Education can be an important factor in securing public approval and adoption of any recreation program for American youth that may be formulated. So far its efforts along this line have been limited to a few publications bearing on recreation in the schools and one, issued by its now inactive Committee on Youth Problems, describing community efforts to improve the use of leisure among out-of-school young people. The radio programs formerly provided by the Office were in themselves an element in the leisure of many persons, and this function might be renewed and extended. The Office of Education has recently established a Division of Library Service that

will no doubt eventually be of some indirect assistance in improving the leisure opportunities of youth.

#### *The Public Health Service*

In much the same position with respect to recreation as the Office of Education is the Public Health Service. It has an important clientele throughout the country that could without doubt be induced to take more of an interest in recreation than they now do. At present, however, the Service appears to have little connection with recreation beyond suggesting possibilities in health education to recreation leaders who may write to it expressing a desire to set up programs in this area. It is not the primary responsibility of the Health Service to formulate plans for the enlargement of young people's recreational opportunities. But if a comprehensive program to effect this can be agreed upon, the Service should be able to furnish no small assistance in carrying it out.

#### *The Federal Communications Commission*

This agency has the important function of allotting wave lengths for radio broadcasting and determining the times when stations may be on the air. Radio, as we have seen, occupies a high place among the leisure interests of young people, and its influence upon them is in all probability great. It does not come within the commission's power to control the nature of particular radio programs, but whatever educational broadcasts from noncommercial stations are heard by the public come to them because the commission has licensed these stations to broadcast and has assigned them suitable positions.

Wave lengths are crowded and air time is limited. The best broadcasting bands and the most convenient times are sought and generally obtained by commercial interests. It is within the commission's power to increase the opportunities for hearing noncommercial broadcasts, or to diminish them, by adjusting the allocation of wave lengths and air time between commercial and noncommercial broadcasters. At present, when new developments in radio broadcasting are appearing, this power has become

particularly important. If the commission adheres faithfully to its obligation to regulate broadcasting "in the public interest, convenience, and necessity" it will preserve a fair proportion of the new wave lengths that have recently become available for educational, nonprofit broadcasting.

### *Other Agencies*

In addition to those mentioned above there are various agencies of the federal government whose functions touch upon recreational interests in one way or another. Although these agencies need not be discussed here they will have greater or lesser contributions to make toward maturing national recreational plans and making them effective.

## FEDERAL RELATIONS WITH THE STATES IN THE PROMOTION OF RECREATION

The federal government need not and should not limit its efforts in the promotion of recreation to what may be accomplished by working directly with the ultimate consumer of leisure-time services. In its operating programs it is in friendly competition with state and local authorities. There is no harm in this competition. Indeed much good may come from it. And in any event the combined efforts of all agencies meet only a small portion of the need. But there are other ways of increasing the leisure opportunities available to American youth and the American public. One is to subsidize the states in their attempts to conduct recreation programs.

### FEDERAL SUBSIDIES

If the principal state and local agencies now serving various areas of leisure needs show themselves fully awake to their responsibilities in this field there should be no necessity of a federal subsidy specifically for recreation. The financial aid of the federal government could go directly to the state agencies concerned and be redistributed by them to local communities for use in supporting and expanding their programs. Assuming

that these programs will give adequate consideration to recreational needs, the federal government would thus be enabled to supplement local resources without departing from the channels now recognized as appropriate for distribution of federal aid.

Local education has long received a subsidy from the national government. Up to the present it has been permissible to apply it only to the teaching of certain types of vocational subjects. It is, however, well recognized in the educational profession that a broad federal-aid program, applicable to all aspects of the training of youth, is essential and inevitable if we are to overcome the handicaps that many states suffer because of their inability to support education adequately. This was the conclusion reached by the President's Advisory Committee on Education, which in 1937 recommended a program of federal aid to the states for general educational purposes, including recreation, beginning with \$70,000,000 and rising over a six-year period to approximately \$200,000,000. These funds would enable many schools that now have few or no recreational activities to meet a portion of their responsibility for the leisure of their pupils.

Financial aid to libraries is another form of federal assistance that is desirable and necessary if there is to be reasonably rapid progress toward making library service available to all the people. The President's Advisory Committee on Education recommended that grants be made to the states specifically for developing rural public library service, and that grants for schools be available for library service in schools. These recommendations have been embodied in proposed legislation that has been introduced into Congress. If adopted, it will represent a net gain in the leisure opportunities open to large numbers of youth.

Limited federal funds now go to the states for purposes of public health and child care. At present they are reserved for specific uses offering little scope for recreational service. There has been placed before Congress, however, a National Health Bill that would enlarge the purposes to which the financial aid of the national government might be applied and substantially increase the government's contribution. Although the probability of action on this particular measure now seems remote, the issue is likely to remain a live one.

It seems inevitable that sooner or later we shall embark upon a vigorous national health program. Such a program should embrace every suitable approach to the desired end of raising the general level of the health of the American public. Wholesome outdoor recreation is one excellent means of doing this. There is every reason why local health departments and departments of social welfare should exert themselves to assure all the youth of the community opportunity for physical training, outdoor sports, and camp life. No plan for revising and enlarging the federal government's contribution to general health and youth welfare services should ignore recreation.

Park service in states where national parks are situated already receives a form of subsidy from the national government. These parks, the whole cost of which is borne by the nation, are naturally most accessible to the people living near by. States with national parks thus have, without cost to themselves, some provision for the leisure of their citizens. It does not wholly relieve them from the obligation of developing state parks, which are still likely to be necessary, but it does ease the burden of providing adequate park service.

Although the national parks are not intended in the nature of a state subsidy, they do operate that way with respect to certain states. It is worth considering whether the effect should not in some way be equalized. The acquisition of additional national parks in the East, accessible to the large centers of population, has already been recommended. Where this cannot be done, it may be that a direct cash subsidy to state park systems would be an acceptable way of meeting the situation.

#### GENERAL ADVISORY SERVICES

There is a second type of general assistance that the national government may appropriately offer states and local communities in their effort to bring more and better recreation to young people. It is comprised of consultation, advice, research, demonstration, and other forms of promotion. The chief federal agencies that would be concerned in rendering these services have already

been mentioned. Every branch of the national government paralleled by a state agency that provides or could provide recreational services has opportunities to advance the wholesome use of leisure in the United States through stimulating activity at other levels of government.

The Office of Education and the Public Health Service already perform some or all of these functions in their respective fields. When they have developed their programs to the point where due weight is given recreation, they will be in a position to extend their services of research, consultation, and the like to cover this important phase of their subjects. The Forest Service has a Division of Cooperation with States, whose function is to make available to other levels of government the experience built up by the Service in the administration of public forest lands, including their recreational use. The Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture is a vast cooperative system working through the state land-grant colleges and the state agricultural experiment stations to raise the standard of living in rural areas. In twenty-nine states it assists in maintaining specialists in rural organization, recreation, and sociology. A great part of the labors of these individuals benefits rural youth in their use of leisure.

One of the most comprehensive plans of service to state and local authorities that the federal government can show has been put into operation by the National Park Service. In 1936 Congress authorized the Department of the Interior to create an extension service in matters relating to the planning, establishment, and operation of public recreation systems. It is a service for states, their subdivisions, and semipublic agencies. The chief activities that have so far been developed as part of this service are the recreation demonstration areas; the park, parkway, and recreational area study; and the study of municipal and metropolitan park systems. These have already been described. The first is being conducted in cooperation with state and local park authorities, the second with state planning boards and other state agencies, and the third with the assistance of the National Recreation Association.

The Park Service also provides assistance to states in drafting and interpreting legislation. It maintains an information service on recreation programs and other matters relating to the recreational development of public lands. It conducts research on problems of planning and administering recreational facilities. In these and other ways it works with the states in setting up and operating their park and recreation systems.

The inclusion among federal activities of advisory services and the related responsibilities of research and promotion is based on a definite theory. It is the theory that other levels of government and other types of organization whose limited resources must all be devoted to direct service to the individual will respect findings from an impartial agency able to test methods and procedures and recommend standards. In practice this theory has proved to be sound. States, local governments, and private agencies are coming more and more to welcome assistance of this nature. That they should do so does not in any degree challenge the right of the state to go about solving its problems in its own way. Nor does it alter the fact that the primary responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of young people rests with the local community. What can reasonably be claimed is that willingness to accept the leadership of the federal government opens a broad vista of opportunities for nation-wide action to bring a better recreational life to the youth of America.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- CLINE, DOROTHY I. *Training for Recreation: An Account of the In-Service Training Program, Division of Recreation, Works Progress Administration, October 1935-October 1937.* Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1939. 130 pp.
- Forest Outings.* U. S. Forest Service. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1940. 311 pp.
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- MAUGHAN, KENNETH O. *Recreational Development in the National Forests,* Technical Publication No. 45. Syracuse: New York State College of Forestry, 1934. 172 pp.
- Recreational Use of Land in the United States,* Part XI of the Report on Land Planning, National Park Service for the National Resources Committee. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1938. 280 pp.
- Report of the Technical Committee on Recreation.* Interdepartmental Committee to Coordinate Health and Welfare Activities [Washington], 1937. 26 pp. Mimeo.
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## MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECREATION PLANNING

THE AIM of this report has been to establish a basis for policy-making and planning in recreation for youth. The significance of leisure in modern life has been discussed, the more pressing recreational needs of young people have been analyzed, and the current condition of public and private recreation has been examined. The present chapter is concerned with the objectives that grow out of the previous discussion. All of them have already been stated or implied. In the following section they are set forth in summary form for convenience of study. Each of the objectives is supported by specific recommendations, to be presented subsequently, suggesting its implications and indicating the direct action that the authors believe may be taken.

### MAJOR OBJECTIVES

A. Accept recreation as a major youth need, paralleling education and employment in importance, a necessity in a democracy, and vital to adequate planning for national security.

B. Encourage each local community to accept the primary responsibility for providing an adequate leisure-time program for its own youth.

C. Strengthen and expand the community's provision for organized recreation.

D. Recognize the close relationship between education and recreation and bring the schools to accept a major responsibility for the recreation of youth and of the whole family.

E. Improve the recreational services that can be rendered youth by organized action at the state level.

F. Conserve the recreational values of public lands, increase their extent, render them accessible to larger numbers of people, and develop their full recreational potentialities.

G. Plan for the development of all the recreational resources of the nation; coordinate present federal recreation services and clarify their future status.

H. Increase the nonemergency assistance the federal government renders states and local communities in developing their recreation programs; this to be done by extending certain financial aid and by expanding the functions the federal government can perform better than any state agency—planning, research, demonstration, and consultation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that follow are grouped under the objectives, already stated, which they expand or implement. These recommendations are not intended to be either exhaustive or definitive. The authors recognize that other measures for compassing the same general ends could be proposed and that such alternatives might appear of equal or even greater desirability. The present recommendations simply represent a suggested blueprint for filling out in detail the general framework the report has tried to establish. The authors regard the objectives as the important thing and are willing that there should be considerable latitude in the manner in which they are approached.

It ought also to be made plain that the outline presented here is in the nature of a long-term plan. To carry out the recommendations, or any alternative set implying similar ends, will obviously require the cooperation of many interests that cannot easily or quickly be persuaded to make common cause. It will also involve extensive expenditure of public funds at all levels of government,

though we may be confident that the benefits will far outweigh the expense. The authors regard the suggested plan as essentially practicable, but they do not suppose that it will be adopted overnight. They will be content if the public greet it as did Macbeth his air-borne dagger:

Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,  
And such an instrument I was to use.

*A. Accept recreation as a major youth need, paralleling education and employment in importance, a necessity in a democracy, and vital to adequate planning for national security.*

To this end it is recommended that:

1. Recreation be acknowledged as good in itself and worthy of being sought for the satisfaction it gives.

2. Recreation be understood to have a further utilitarian value to the individual in contributing to his mental health and physical fitness and to his social competence, and in providing him with creative and cultural experiences.

3. Recreation be understood to be of value to society in that the welfare of society is the sum of the welfare of its members and also that it promotes marriage, reduces delinquency, mitigates the effects of unemployment, and heightens national strength and security.

4. The part of our recreational expenditure absorbed by commercial interests be recognized as disproportionate to the role these agencies play in promoting the worth-while use of leisure, and that the scope of nonprofit-seeking recreation, private as well as public, ought therefore to be expanded.

*B. Encourage each local community to accept the primary responsibility for providing an adequate leisure-time program for its own youth.*

The following recommendations are made:

1. Each community should make a study of the recreational needs of its youth, using accepted survey techniques, to determine which types of recreational need are uppermost. This study may

be part of a larger investigation of the condition and needs of its young people.

2. A survey of existing recreation programs and of community recreation facilities ought also to be made.

3. The unused resources of the community, both in material and in personnel, should be studied to determine which types of volunteer programs can be most readily developed.

4. A long-range recreation program for the youth of the community ought to be formulated, particular care being taken that (a) it meets the situation revealed in the survey of youth recreation needs; (b) adequate responsibility is accepted by the public schools; and (c) all available sources of support are drawn upon, including volunteer leadership, state and federal advisory services, and, where appropriate, outside financial assistance.

5. This program should endeavor to raise at least to an acceptable minimum the recreational facilities available to such of the following disadvantaged groups as may be included in the community: rural youth, youth of low-income families, girls, older adolescents, Negro youth, and other minority races.

6. The autonomy of existing organizations ought to be preserved so far as may be consistent with the principle that the recreational needs of no class of young people shall be neglected.

7. Youth should be given a share in community planning for recreation, either through direct representation upon all major boards and councils or through special advisory committees of young people.

8. "Cellar clubs" might well be furnished with adult guidance and such other minimum assistance as will mitigate the difficulties of these organizations and help to develop their potential contribution to the leisure life of young people.

*C. Strengthen and expand the community's provision for organized recreation.*

To accomplish this objective:

1. Cities should create or designate a suitable authority to organize and administer public recreation. Communities of smaller size should support any existing social agency or agent that may be willing to organize recreational services.

2. Every effort should be made to meet the standards recommended by the National Recreation Association with reference to the facilities and financial support of public recreation programs; in particular, the dearth of children's playgrounds and playfields should be remedied.

3. Control of the public program of recreation ought to rest primarily in lay hands, but administrative responsibility should rest with persons professionally trained; extensive use might be made of volunteer workers under proper supervision.

4. Communities should take an active interest in the professional education and training of their recreation workers of all grades, urging upon colleges and universities the necessity for providing adequate training opportunities; the possibility of offering professional training for employment in commercial recreation might also be investigated.

5. Public library service must be organized in or extended to communities where it is not now available, meeting as nearly as possible standards of support recommended by the American Library Association.

6. Public libraries ought to pay more attention to attracting and holding the interest of young people and adopt the administrative practices which have proved effective toward this end.

7. The important functions and unique advantages of private agencies with recreational interests should be kept clearly in mind and the immense amount of good will and voluntary effort they represent should be recognized.

8. The need for voluntary support of private agencies ought not to be obscured by the necessary expansion of tax-supported recreational services; private agencies should be urged to coordinate their efforts and simplify their structure, in order that they may more effectively meet the recreational needs of youth and that they may be better understood by the public.

9. Private agencies should redouble their efforts to bring leisure services to the great mass of young people in the underprivileged sections of our population, with whom they may have had relatively little contact.

*D. Recognize the close relationship between education and recreation and bring the schools to accept a major responsibility for the recreation of youth and of the whole family.*

It is recommended that:

1. The schools accept recreation as being in reality a form of education and that they minimize the distinction between classroom and extraclassroom activities.

2. A well-rounded program of recreation be developed for youth in school, with emphasis upon creative and social activities but also affording every school youth the opportunity to cultivate physical fitness through games, sports, and outdoor activities.

3. The schools provide guidance in the proper use of the three great forms of commercial recreation—reading, radio, and motion pictures.

4. The schools encourage their pupils to form recreational interests which will carry over into adult life.

5. The schools make some provision for the vacation-time recreation of youth by keeping the school playgrounds open during the summer and, where possible, by conducting summer camps. The cooperation of other public and private agencies should be welcomed in providing a planned summer program.

6. The schools accept a measure of responsibility toward out-of-school youth and toward all members of the community by keeping in touch with former students and conducting a program to meet their special needs, by encouraging the development of the family as a recreational unit, and by securing the maximum community use of the school recreational facilities.

7. Communities consider the possibility of establishing a single public educational authority to administer the schools, libraries, and public recreation and to unify the recreational activities of all these agencies.

*E. Improve the recreational services that can be rendered youth by organized action at the state level.*

The following measures are recommended:

1. Governors, legislatures, and planning boards should give more attention to the conservation of human resources and to

the contribution toward this end which can be made by appropriate recreation facilities and programs for youth.

2. State-wide conferences on social work should be asked to consider how the recreational needs of youth can be more effectively provided for through voluntary coordination of the activities of private and public agencies.

3. State governments which may be experimentally inclined could well investigate the possibility of improving services to youth through the establishment of state youth commissions with functions consisting of research, consultation, and the voluntary coordination of youth-serving agencies throughout the state.

4. Educational opportunity for youth ought to be equalized throughout the state by state grants-in-aid to local communities. In the use of these funds, school administrators should have particular regard to enriching the school program through developing leisure activities and services.

5. State departments of education should employ supervisors of recreation with duties analogous to those of the supervisors for other special subjects; state departments might also certify trained education-recreation workers for employment by local school authorities.

6. Declaratory statutes should be enacted making plain the authority of local school districts to spend educational funds for promoting recreation among all youth, whether in or out of school. Further, such legislation might well enable schools to conduct or contribute to a recreation program for all members of the community.

7. State grants to assist local governmental units to maintain public libraries should be made at least as generally available as state grants for school purposes, and states should provide all other practicable assistance to local communities in bringing libraries to all their members, particularly services of advice and promotion.

*F. Conserve the recreational values of public lands, increase their extent, render them accessible to larger numbers of people, and develop their full recreational potentialities.*

To do so:

1. Public forests must be rigorously guarded against abuse by commercial interests.
  2. The United States Forest Service should continue its program of establishing "wilderness areas."
  3. More local parks should be created; more state parks and, if necessary, more national parks ought to be established within reach of the large centers of population; the present deficiency in public beaches and coast areas should be remedied as rapidly as possible.
  4. Measures ought to be developed of enabling low-income families to make low-cost visits to state and national parks, with transportation brought within the means of such families and the cost of staying in these areas reduced to a minimum through constructing permanent camps to be rented at low rates to private and public agencies.
  5. Facilities for recreation and guidance in their use should be generally provided on public lands having recreational possibilities, and the staff of these areas should be enabled to take special measures to encourage the use of such facilities among organized groups in communities within effective range.
  6. The federal government should make a particular effort to promote the use of the national parks and forests by youth groups, special financial assistance and facilities to be provided.
  7. The place of commercial interests in developing recreational facilities on public lands must be determined and a policy embodying this finding adopted for the national parks and forests.
- G. *Plan for the development of all the recreational resources of the nation; coordinate present federal recreation services and clarify their future status.*

The following steps are urged:

1. A comprehensive, long-range plan for the development of the recreational resources of the nation should be prepared. This plan should give special consideration to the following points:
  - a. The pioneer work in large-scale recreational planning done by the Tennessee Valley Authority.



- b. The cooperative study of state parks and recreation areas now being conducted by the National Park Service.
  - c. The relative share in the task of assuring suitable recreation to all classes of the population which should be assumed by federal, state, and local governments.
2. Some federal agency, possibly the Technical Committee on Recreation of the Interdepartmental Committee to Coordinate Health and Welfare Activities, should be established on a permanent basis to serve as an agency for the voluntary coordination of the recreational activities of the federal government.
3. Steps ought to be taken to assure the continuation under the appropriate authorities of essential recreational services now conducted by the federal government as emergency measures, such steps to include:
- a. A study of the program assistance to local communities rendered by the WPA, to determine how far it can be taken over by the present beneficiaries and what provision should be made for continued aid.
  - b. Recognition that federal assistance to the arts, now administered through the WPA as an unemployment palliative, is primarily desirable for its contribution to our recreational resources and should be placed on a permanent basis.
  - c. In the CCC camps, greater emphasis to be placed upon recreation as a technique of education; sufficient staff and facilities to be provided to give the boys the individualized attention necessary to meet their recreational needs, both now and later.

H. *Increase the nonemergency assistance the federal government renders states and local communities in developing their recreation programs; this to be done by extending certain financial aid and by expanding the functions the federal government can perform better than any state agency—planning, research, demonstration, and consultation.*

The following steps appear highly desirable:

1. Federal aid to the states for general education ought to be enacted. In the use of these funds, school administrators

should have particular regard to enriching the school program through developing leisure activities and services.

2. Federal aid to the states for the development of libraries in rural areas ought to be enacted.

3. Continued and increased support should be given the National Park Service's cooperative program of establishing demonstration recreation areas on state park lands.

4. The United States Office of Education should develop a program of research in recreation activities both for in-school and out-of-school youth and provide advisory service in this field to state and local school authorities.

5. The United States Public Health Service should institute similar activities with reference to the recreational implications of services which state and local authorities might provide.

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