

Family Security and National Defense

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FAMILY SECURITY is essential not only to the morale of the armed forces but to the morale of the entire civilian population in the midst of a period of national emergency. Security is more than a condition of material well-being, but without some material foundation there can be no family security. Freedom from anxiety about the physical safety of a member of the armed forces may be impossible in a nation at war, but freedom from anxiety about how the family is making ends meet when the breadwinner is in the army or has lost his employment in a nonessential industry is a form of security that any civilized nation must provide for its citizens.

A period of preparation for national defense is inevitably a period of social and economic dislocation. Not only have family groups faced separation by induction of men into the armed forces and departures of men and women to take special training or to accept defense employment, but whole families have migrated from one section of the country to another in search of the work that makes defense seem to them a golden opportunity. In other areas the threatened closing of plants producing goods that are now considered nonessential throws families into a panic of uncertainty about future income. Those who are thoughtful about social and economic problems of the family know, too, that the present emergency, no matter how long or how short the period, will be followed inevitably by a reconstruction period in which unemployment may be the most acute family problem.

Social services organized to meet the incidental inadequacies of the social and economic system under which we live—public assistance agencies, voluntary family welfare societies, hospitals and health agencies, child welfare organizations—are suddenly confronted with a new series of family problems often most acute in the areas in which organized social forces have been least adequate in the past.

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Organization and Purpose of the Family Security Committee

For these reasons and to advise him in the discharge of his duties as Coordinator of Health, Welfare, and Related Defense Activities, the Federal Security Administrator authorized the creation of the Family Security Committee on February 12, 1941, and appointed Jane M. Hoey, Director of the Bureau of Public Assistance, as chairman. At the first meeting of the Committee on February 27, 1941, the following purposes were stated to the Committee:

1. To act in an advisory capacity in the field of family security to the Coordinator of Health, Welfare, and Related Activities affecting National Defense.
2. To bring to the attention of the Coordinator existing or anticipated problems in this field, and to suggest plans for obtaining additional information and for keeping currently informed of developments.
3. To review existing resources, public and private, for meeting general and special needs for family security in relation to national defense, to plan coordination of such services, and to suggest their extension or adaptation.
4. To present facts showing the need for any new program proposed.

The Committee has been organized on a representative basis to include all Federal agencies and all national private social agencies whose function includes service or supervision in the field of family welfare. The membership of the Committee is thus composed of persons designated by the following Federal agencies or bureaus: Children's Bureau, Civilian Conservation Corps, Farm Security Administration, National Youth Administration, Public Health Service, Railroad Retirement Board, Social Security Board (Bureaus of Public Assistance, Employment Security, and Old-Age and Survivors Insurance), Surplus Marketing Administration, Veterans Administration, and Work Projects Administration (Family Life

Education and Intake and Certification Programs); and representatives of the following national social work agencies: American Red Cross, American Association of Schools of Social Work, American Association of Social Workers, American Association of Medical Social Workers, American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, American Public Welfare Association, Child Welfare League of America, Community Chests and Councils, Inc., Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, Family Welfare Association of America, National Conference of Catholic Charities, National Catholic Welfare Conference, National Social Work Council, National Travelers Aid Association, National Urban League, and Salvation Army.

On September 3, 1941, by Executive Order, the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services was created in the Office for Emergency Management of the Executive Office of the President, and the Federal Security Administrator was designated as Director. The Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services thus replaces the Coordinator's office and continues to be operated within the Federal Security Agency. Within the Office two divisions have been established under two assistant directors, one on nutrition under the direction of M. L. Wilson, the other on health and welfare under the direction of Charles P. Taft. Within the Division of Health and Welfare, two sections have been created, one on recreation directed by Mark McCloskey, the other on social protection directed by Elliott Ness. The Executive Order of September 3 also established a Health and Medical Committee within the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services, composed of the Surgeon General of the Army, the Surgeon General of the Navy, the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, the Chairman of the Committee on Medical Research of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, and other persons to be appointed by the President.

The Family Security Committee continues as an advisory committee to the Director, while any administrative operations in the field of family security are expected for the present to be carried out through the constituent agencies of the Federal Security Agency—the Social Security Board; the National Youth Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps—through other Fed-

eral agencies such as the Children's Bureau, the Farm Security Administration, the Work Projects Administration, the Surplus Marketing Administration, the Veterans Administration, and through national private social agencies such as the American Red Cross, the constituent agencies of the United Service Organizations, and other operating agencies.

The Committee has been called together in Washington at approximately quarterly intervals and has functioned between sessions through subcommittees and through staff members of the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1942, three professional staff members have been provided to act as secretaries of the Committee and of its subcommittees.

Organization of Regional Family Security Committees

On August 1, 1941, the Assistant Director of Defense Health and Welfare Services requested each of the twelve regional directors to establish in connection with each regional advisory council a regional family security committee. Such committees now have been appointed in Region I (Boston), Region II (New York), Region IV (Washington), Region V (Cleveland), Region VI (Chicago), Region VII (Birmingham), Region IX (Kansas City), Region X (San Antonio), Region XI (Denver), and Region XII (San Francisco).

While the regional advisory councils are composed entirely of representatives of Federal agencies, the family security committees in several regions include representatives of State and public or private local agencies. The chairmen in ten regions are representatives of the Bureau of Public Assistance of the Social Security Board; in one region the State Commissioner of Social Welfare has been appointed chairman.

It is expected that regional family security committees will assist in coordination of Federal, State, and local services for family security in relation to defense, that they will initiate recommendations for needed State and Federal legislation and administration, and that they will supply information on local conditions in support of recommendations for action of various kinds.

Problems Presented to the Family Security Committee

Discussion at the first meeting of the Family

Security Committee and subsequent correspondence with members have revealed a need for information on family security in defense communities that is not available in any one agency, that is not regularly reported from local to national and Federal agencies, and that is not available through periodic reporting.

There is already some evidence of financial needs of families growing out of military and industrial developments. These financial needs result from a number of conditions, among which are increases in rents and other items of the family budget; migration of families and individuals in search of work to areas in which they have no legal settlement or in which there is no adequate public or private relief organization; dislocation of farm families through purchase of large tracts for military or industrial purposes; and enlistment of men with dependents or changes in the family situations after men have been inducted into military service. There is some indication that the tax base in certain local communities is greatly affected by Federal purchase of land and that relief funds may be decreased. There may be a need for allotments and allowances to the families of men inducted into military service. There is danger of considerable unemployment and need for relief resulting from the closing of plants manufacturing nonessential products.

Because of increased opportunities for women to work, there are increasing demands for the day care of children, and there is a shortage of foster homes because foster mothers also are going to work.

Some of the problems of family security are problems of definition of function, development of relationships among existing local social agencies, such as the Red Cross and local welfare departments, and need for the full utilization of existing community resources.

Some problems arise in connection with the Selective Service System. There is great variation in the extent to which local public welfare agencies have contributed to the investigation of dependency for local Selective Service Boards and questions as to how such service by a public welfare agency can be financed.

There are indications that social workers with particular kinds of training, such as medical and psychiatric, are already in demand for defense welfare positions, and there is need to consider

the entire question of the supply of and the training needed for social workers.

There is need for well-planned and coordinated attack upon problems of family security through sound community organization in local areas with full cooperation of State and Federal agencies.

There is need for long-range planning to meet widespread unemployment and other social problems in the post-emergency period.

A problem still confronting the Family Security Committee and the several regional committees is the problem of obtaining information on the incidence of family problems that is adequate enough and specific enough to support the general recommendations of the Committee. An effort has been made to exchange all available information among Committee members through an informal bulletin. The chief sources of the information so exchanged are the following: national social work agencies that receive reports from their member agencies; State departments of public welfare; regular reports of field representatives of the Children's Bureau, the Social Security Board, the United States Public Health Service, and the Recreation and Social Protection Sections of the Federal Security Agency; regional defense news letters and correspondence with regional directors; minutes and reports of regional family security committees; and special studies by the Work Projects Administration, the Bureau of Employment Security, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the National Resources Planning Board.

In addition to the compilation of this incidental information, it is proposed that comprehensive studies of family security problems and the resources and organizations to meet them be undertaken by regional, State, or local agencies in selected areas. Tentative suggestions for such studies have been drawn up by the Family Security Committee and will be made available to any interested person or agency.

Recommendation for General Public Assistance

The Family Security Committee turned its attention first to the problem of providing a basic public welfare structure throughout the United States that will be comprehensive enough and flexible enough to meet problems of human need that arise suddenly. To this end it recommended on May 15, 1941, an addition to the Social Security Act to provide for general public assistance

through Federal grants to the States to be administered without discrimination as to the residence or legal settlement of recipients. A brief in support of this recommendation was published in September 1941. In making this recommendation, the Committee pointed out that present Federal provisions for assistance to persons in need omit several categories for which many States have also made no provision or very inadequate provision. To meet the possibilities of unemployment in non-essential industries during the defense period, temporary dislocations of population through Government purchase of land, shifting of centers of employment, and eventual reconstruction problems after the defense period, a basic public welfare structure throughout the United States financed in part by Federal funds is essential. Such a structure could be used also to meet more nearly than at present the needs of the Selective Service System for facts about dependency and for other services to families of men in the armed forces.

Other Recommendations

In addition to this recommendation for a general assistance program, the Family Security Committee has recommended a plan for increased pay of men in the armed forces and for a system of allotments and supplementary allowances to families.

The problems of obtaining trained personnel and of the use of volunteers in public and private organizations that are attempting to meet family problems growing out of the defense program have

also been subjects of discussion in the Family Security Committee.

Relationships With Other Agencies

In the discharge of his functions and responsibilities, it is the policy of the Director of Defense Health and Welfare Services to utilize insofar as practicable the facilities and services of existing departments and agencies that perform related functions. Therefore, wherever possible, family security problems arising out of defense are being met by existing local and State agencies that have already established relationships with the Social Security Board, the Children's Bureau, and other Federal agencies. The Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services is bringing to the attention of these agencies their present responsibilities through the medium of regional directors, regional family security committees, and regional representatives of the several Federal agencies in this field. In areas in which no public agencies have an established function, such as in the investigation of dependency at the direct request of commanding officers of the Army and Navy, investigations for Selective Service Boards, problems of transiency, or problems of family separation in which no economic questions arise, the Family Security Committee is discussing with the American Red Cross, the National Travelers Aid Association, the Family Welfare Association of America, Community Chests and Councils, and other national voluntary agencies the volume of demand for service and the adequacy of existing methods of service.