

# Bolstering of Family Life Held Public-Private Task

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New York

Nothing can take the place of family life—but there are many outside aids that can help make it a better unit of world security.

Specialists representing 137 professional organizations came to this view at a four-day meeting held here recently under the banner of the National Council on Family Relations.

They agreed that, while each of the specialized agencies for which they spoke has an individual contribution to make, the concept of the "whole man" must be kept sharply in mind by all.

For example, law-making bodies and the courts have a responsibility in revising laws and procedures governing divorce and child custody, speakers said. Schools can do a better job if the curriculum embraces specific preparation for home living in its content; the church can exercise "inspirational" vitality in helping solve family problems; parents of maladjusted youths can go to

school and learn how to avoid serious, sometimes tragic, difficulties.

## Numerous Discussions

Professors, a judge, a minister, and numerous consultants appeared before the sessions to discuss how to integrate their various services.

While evidencing an eagerness to adapt professional skill to alleviating discordant home conditions, many of these specialists stressed that there should be no attempt to usurp the family prerogative of self adjustment. Rather than superimpose assistance, the various services want merely to make themselves available in as helpful a way as possible.

Frank J. Hertel, director of the Family Service Association, called attention to the amazing growth of specialists during the last 25 years. He reiterated, however, the need for unification of effort.

"What is called professional teamwork, a willingness to see the 'whole fabric,' not just a small part of it, is necessary in appraising and readjusting our social welfare structure and procedures to the end that there is an effective meshing of needs and services," he said.

## Realism Urged

Several of those who addressed the conference pointed to the need for a more realistic and enlightened attitude on the part of courts and law makers.

Jacob Zukerman, director of the National Desertion Bureau, said that the 1,000,000 deserted wives and children in this country cost society approximately \$180,000,000 per year.

"Ninety per cent of the cases involving annulment, divorce, and custody of children are decided in law offices and are undefended in the courts," according to William M. Wherry, chairman of the Committee on Socio-Legal Jurisprudence of the New York County Lawyers Association. Mr. Wherry stressed that the above situation "emphasizes the importance of educating the lawyers to treat such cases as social problems."

The pastor's role with the family is often that of intelligent listening rather than judging or advising when trying to smooth out domestic relationships, the Rev. Otis R. Rice, chaplain of St. Luke's Hospital (Protestant Episcopal), declared at the luncheon.

He urged that the church help preserve the "richness and creativity" of the family unit by cultivating new insights and understandings.

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# AID TO 'WHOLE MAN' URGED BY EXPERTS

## Specialists, Agencies Must Pool Knowledge, Speakers at Family Council Say

The various specialists and agencies now trying to treat the ills of individuals and families must pool their knowledge and work together for the good of the "whole man," speakers emphasized yesterday at the annual meeting of the National Council on Family Relations. The conference, at the Park Sheraton Hotel, will end today with executive meetings of the participating groups.

Four hundred leaders in religion, education, medicine, psychiatry, social work, sociology, anthropology and the law took part in yesterday's sessions on "the unique contributions of the professions to the family." The council, made up of 137 separate groups, has a national membership of 3,000.

If the family did no more than teach youngsters to love it would still be worth the best efforts of all groups to preserve it, according to Dr. O. Spurgeon English of Temple University. Discussing psychiatry's contribution to family life, Dr. English declared that, sentimentally and sensuality aside, research had proved that love is not "a cultural luxury" but "a scientific necessity."

Family life should act as a shock absorber for the difficulties of growing up, he said, "but helping one another gain stature as individuals is a great strain. It does not always work out." A great deal more is known about achieving good family relationships than "we have ways and means to communicate," he went on. Part of the difficulty is caused by the criticism within a profession of members who try to popularize such knowledge.

### Defines Pastor's Role

The Rev. Otis R. Rice, chaplain of St. Luke's Hospital, speaking on the pastor's contribution said: "One difficulty is we are trained to preach or pray at the drop of a hat but to sit quietly by and listen is a tremendous sacrifice. However, it is one we are beginning to realize is extremely worthwhile." He emphasized the importance of a minister's knowing the community's resources and the proper procedure for making referrals to social agencies.

The pooling of knowledge and skills advocated by the group has been blocked in the past by various obstacles, according to Frank J. Hertel, general director of the Family Service Association of America. These included, he said, resistance to change, certain professional biases, prejudices and strong leanings to tradition.

Chairman of the luncheon meeting was Magr. John O'Grady, National Conference of Catholic Charities.

At the morning session the contributions of public health, education, home economics, the law and pediatrics were described by Dr. Leona Baumgartner, associate chief, the United States Children's Bureau; Dean Ernest O. Melby, New York University; Flora M. Thurston, New York State College of Home Economics; Jacob Zukerman, director, National Desertion Bureau; and Dr. Milton I. Levin, Cornell University College of Medicine-New York Hospital.

Make your bath a shower and take it as quickly as possible. Turn the water on only for rinsing. Turn it off for soaping.

# DIVORCE REMEDIES AIM OF LAW GROUP

## Conference Here Also to Seek Uniform Regulations Among States as Ultimate Goal

A group of lawyers representing mainly the American Bar Association and the National Council on Family Relations will meet today at the Park Sheraton Hotel to consider reform of divorce laws. The objective will be to "eliminate grounds, thereby making divorce courts remedial rather than punitive," with nation-wide uniformity as a long-range goal.

The meeting represents a decision not to wait for official action by President Truman, who last April was asked to appoint a presidential commission, recommended in 1948, by the legal section of the National Conference on Family Life, to make a nation-wide study of laws and courts dealing with divorce and family problems.

The group was called together by Judge Paul W. Alexander of the Court of Common Pleas in Toledo, Ohio, chairman of the American Bar Association's special committee on divorce and marriage laws and family courts. Judge Alexander said yesterday that the President wrote him on Dec. 4 that he had decided against appointing the commission, at least in the foreseeable future.

### Family Council in Session

The lawyers' meeting is concurrent, though not officially connected, with the annual conference at the Park Sheraton of the National Council on Family Relations. Yesterday the council's panel discussion on cooperation between family and marriage counselors and the legal profession also heard criticism of divorce laws and procedures in family courts.

Although there was disagreement within the panel on the extent to which lawyers themselves should function as counselors in divorce and family cases, there was agreement that most were not adequately prepared by law schools for the field of domestic relations and did not take sufficient advantage of counsel from other professions, even where it is available.

A concept of "preventive law"—encouraging persons to consult lawyers early enough to stay out of actual litigation—was advanced by William M. Wherry, chairman of the committee on socio-legal jurisprudence of the New York County Lawyers' Association.

"Too many lawyers regard themselves as 'advocates' even in this pre-court stage, working for their clients' immediate interests instead of long-term social advantage," he said.

### Laws Ignore Reality

"There is not a single law regarding sexual mores in the United States that has any relation to reality," declared Morris L. Ernst. "We are living in a phantom world, and the leaders of the bar are continuing the pretense. The Kinsey Report has begun to give us the first scientific basis for bringing our law into keeping with our mores.

"I do not mean that law must always be the exact concomitant of prevailing customs. But the lag cannot continue as it is today. So long as it does, it will be necessary for lawyers to be counselors."

The legal group that meets today will consider the formation of a non-official, privately financed national commission to study divorce. Charlton Ogburn, counsel and a trustee of the National Conference on Family Life, said yesterday that his executive committee favored joint sponsorship with the American Bar Association and probably such other organizations as the General Federation of Women's Clubs and various professional groups.

After perhaps two years of consideration, proposals will be presented to the semi-official National Council of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, which has volunteered to draft a model law for presentation to state legislatures.

# How to Get Junior to Bed Without a Fuss

## Shown in New Movie, 'The Baby Sitter'

Getting a youngster into night-clothes before his supper and following the meal with a little quiet play and story-telling will help to get him into bed with a minimum of fuss, according to "The Baby Sitter," an educational film for girls previewed yesterday at Finch College, 52 East Seventy-eighth Street.

The fourteen-minute movie, produced by Young America Films, was directed by Lewis S. Baer in collaboration with Mrs. Gladys Witt Romanoff, instructor and vocational guidance counselor at Finch. Mrs. Romanoff has been giving courses in baby-sitting for five years.

Dr. Irwin Sobel, associate pediatrician at the Lenox Hill Hospital and Assistant Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at New York University, spoke briefly after the showing. Instruction in baby-sitting, he said, has the double value of preparing a girl to do a good job in someone else's home while schooling her for future motherhood and family life.

To be really good at taking care of babies, Dr. Sobel said, a girl must be endowed with a genuine

love for children, must find real gratification in watching them grow and develop, and must be able to maintain an amused tolerance of their shenanigans.

In addition, he said, baby sitters should have sound training in the mechanics of baby care—how to pick an infant up, put it down, support its head, dress and undress, and diaper it. "These techniques are not acquired by osmosis," he said.

He also advocated training in first aid, what to do and what not to do in emergencies, and some education in the modern psychiatric approach to child rearing. "The idea could be put across very simply that what a baby needs is love, a feeling of security, kindly firm discipline and as few unnecessary frustrations as possible," he explained.

The film brought out the importance of the mother's instructions to the baby sitter on the evening routine; safety precautions of kitchen and bathroom; the need for noting the doctor's telephone number and a number where the parents may be reached; and the baby sitter's personal conduct.

# PARENTAL CLINICS AID PROBLEM CHILD

80% of Youngsters Improved Greatly, 50% Were Wholly Cured, Convention Is Told

A short-term low-cost method of helping problem children by conducting group therapy with their parents was described yesterday by Dr. Margaret C. L. Gildea of the Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis. Dr. Gildea spoke at a meeting arranged by the National Committee for Parent Education as part of the annual conference of the National Council on Family Relations at the Park Sheraton Hotel.

Working through the schools, Dr. Gildea explained, psychiatric social workers were put in touch with the parents of problem children before their difficulties brought them into court. One-third of the parents denied there was trouble or refused responsibility for it; one-third, because of their own problems, were not suited to the program. The remaining group attended discussion meetings once a week during the school year.

After two years 80 per cent of the youngsters whose mothers had attended the sessions had greatly improved. Fifty per cent were no longer problems at all. Of the other two-thirds, whose mothers did not take part, only 20 per cent showed any improvement.

The program was carried out at a cost of about \$40 a child, compared to the expense of individual child guidance referrals of \$75 to \$150.

Judging from observation of teachers and children in one nursery school, it is possible that "children don't get as much bossing as we originally thought," said Miss Helen C. Dawe, Professor of Home Economics, College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin.

## Family Diagnoses Reported

In psychiatry there are no diagnostic criteria for use in working with children 2 to 5, said Dr. Raymond Sobel, chief psychiatrist, Hawthorne Cedar Knolls School. He described the experimental work being conducted through the

Left: ... the all-over design. Lord & Taylor. Right: In "Rubai" paper mill. Through decorators a

Council and Development Center of the Jewish Board of Guardians to undertake the little child's difficulties. Diagnosing the family's problem. The child's personality at this early stage is incomplete, he said, and reflects the influence of the family group.

In trying to diagnose the family, he said, the personality of each member is studied. The "patterns of interaction" of both parents are investigated, starting with the first date—what attracted them to each other, what their ideas of marriage and children were, and so forth. In some cases entire families were studied together and group therapy conducted. The work is still experimental, Dr. Sobel emphasized.

In another session meeting, Prof. Robert A. Harper, director of the marriage counseling clinic at Ohio State University, attacked the use of "marriage prediction scales" for anything but research. These tables, worked out for individuals from their responses to questionnaires, cannot predict marriage success or failure, he held, although they have been used for years in counseling for gauging the chances for married happiness.

Dr. Earl Lonon Koos, of the University of Rochester, said that the great number of parents turning in today to specialists for advice in rearing children did not indicate an abdication of responsibility. Rather, he said, it showed they were aware how complex their task was.