

Survey Backs Part-Time Jobs for Mothers: They're Better Adjusted to Their Children

SEP 7 1950

By DOROTHY BARCLAY

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES

DENVER, Sept. 6—Advocates of part-time jobs for housewives gained support from an unexpected source yesterday when Ivan Nye of Ohio State University reported a study on adolescent-parent adjustment to the National Council on Family Relations, meeting on the University of Denver campus.

Although results of research covering 1,456 Michigan teen-agers showed that parent-child adjustment in homes where mothers worked full time averaged a little lower than for non-workers, the relationship where mothers held part-time jobs rated at the very top, significantly better than for families where mothers had no outside interests.

Findings of the same research indicate that city youngsters are better adjusted to their parents than those living in rural areas. And the situation is better in small families than in large. The study, which covered eighth and eleventh graders, showed too that adolescent boys are in greater conflict with their mothers and fathers than are girls.

"In the years between 13 and 16," Dr. Nye declared, "something seems to happen to the relationship between parents and sons which makes it less democratic, less affectionate and less secure. The boys lose the warmth of the family and are not yet ready to find affection outside. As youth leaders, counselors and teachers, we should encourage parents to keep their boys integrated closely in the family until they are perhaps 18 or 19."

Ralph G. Eckert, consultant in parent education for the California Division of Public Instruction, said that providing state-supported classes for adults in child development, family management and the like was preferable to loading up youngsters' school curriculums with material for which they have not yet realized the need.

In California, he reported, classes have been organized for new and expectant parents, referred by family physicians and doctors in well-baby clinics "who have found the courses save them time by explaining principles of health, nutrition and child development." Nearly 1,000,000 adults took part in these and various other classes in California last year, he said.

Even programs that appear to be 99 per cent talk and 1 per cent accomplishment are valuable if they start parents thinking of ways they can work together to improve conditions for children, Dr. Regina Westcott, consultant in family and community development, Milwaukee, declared. After a period of what may look like aimless discussion, parents will take the initiative in setting up projects that will be doubly effective because of solid community support, she said.

The theory that the first few years of marriage are the hardest was attacked by Charles E. Bowerman, University of Washington. On the basis of research he reported that adjustment is at its worst from the fifth to the twentieth years. It improves thereafter.

FAMILY SPECIALISTS CAUTIONED ON TALK

Dr. Osborne Says Experts on
Family Life Use Terms Too
Complicated for Public

SEP 9 1950

By DOROTHY BARCLAY

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

DENVER, Sept. 8—The tendency of many sociologists and specialists in family-life education to talk too much and to use terms the public cannot understand was criticized last night by Dr. Ernest G. Osborne, president of the National Council on Family Relations.

In giving in to their "compulsion to develop a complicated verbiage," experts ran the risk of alienating the very persons they were anxious to help, he said.

Dr. Osborne spoke at a dinner closing the annual conference of the national council and opening the forty-fifth annual meeting of the American Sociological Society. His criticism was one of a series voiced throughout the week.

Dr. Robert G. Foster of the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas, raised the possibility that experts might be confusing families with their various demands. The idea that many specialists were trying to establish their own "middle-class ideals" as "absolute standards" was voiced repeatedly.

Home Economists Discussed

Home economists came up for discussion at the second "Family Views The Expert" session. Instead of looking at housekeeping as an end in itself, Dr. Lena Levine, New York psychiatrist, recommended that it be thought of as "the everyday doing and undoing necessary to make a comfortable, wholesome, stimulating environment for rearing children as mature individuals."

Thought of that way, she said, it became "less irksome and can be handled more efficiently."

After repeated questions from husbands on the panel as to what home economists were doing to "adjust women to their changing role in a changing society," a Denver housewife cited the steady reduction of working hours and asked: "What about the role of the man in a society where he is going to have more and more time to be a real father and homemaker?" Her question drew applause from the audience but no clear-cut replies from the experts.

In answer to the comment that many girls forgot what they had learned about cooking and housekeeping by the time they were ready to use such knowledge, Dr. Letitia Walsh, Professor of Home Economic Education at the University of Illinois, agreed that many high school courses attempted to solve problems that had no meaning to teen-agers. Increased opportunity for adult education were needed, she said.

Officers Elected by Council

Newly-elected officers of the National Council include Dr. Nadina Kavinoky, Los Angeles gynecologist, president; Dr. Foster, Dr. Levine and Msgr. John O'Grady of Washington, vice presidents; Dr. Ralph Eckert, California Department of Education, secretary, and Dr. Max Rheinstein, treasurer.

In his Presidential address, Dr. Osborne also criticized the tendency of experts to separate themselves from the actual life of the community.

"Many a youth council has no member under 35," he said.

Some 500 sociologists heard technical reports today on such varied matters as "The Interrelations between Bolshevik Ideology and Structure of Soviet Society" and "Public Attitudes Toward the Roles of Older People."

According to a study of 847 adults in the Middle West, oldsters are "strongly approved" when they taper off their activities in reasonable fashion and play specific "old-people's roles." Those who are inactive, socially isolated or act much younger than their age are strongly disapproved.

MOTHERS CRITICIZE WELFARE SET-UP

Tell Family Relations Experts
They Dislike Strict Inquiries,
'Attitude' of Workers

SEP 8 1950

By DOROTHY BARCLAY

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

DENVER, Col., Sept. 7—Delegates to the annual conference of the National Council on Family Relations heard first-hand yesterday what one segment of Denver families thought of social welfare workers, the regulation of relief funds and progressive education.

Carrying out the conference theme, "The Family Looks at the Expert," two women—one with six children, the other with seven, and both on relief—along with an automobile mechanic and his wife, took part in a panel discussion of the welfare set-up, the Juvenile Court and the schools.

Both women objected to the need for strict investigation before paying relief allowances, a "superior" attitude on the part of social workers and the smallness of welfare budgets. "I was led to understand by one worker," the mother of six said, "that it was charity we were getting but when I said 'get me a job' they said I had to stay home and take care of the kids."

Both mothers attacked progressive education as "trying to cover too much." Stick to "good old reading, spelling and arithmetic," they recommended.

"The teachers ought to sit down and talk with the children once in a while and learn just how very little they do know," said one. The other suggested "educating us parents on the way they are going to educate the children or else educate the children the way they taught us."

Speaking for the experts, Dr. Maurice Karpf, president of the Southern California Council on Family Relations; Philip B. Gilliam, Judge of Denver's Juvenile Court, and Ralph Eckert of the California Department of Education, tried to explain briefly the principles of good social work, the necessity for strict regulation of welfare funds and the aims of progressive education.

Both mothers placed responsibility for their children's difficulties on the fact that their homes were broken. Dr. Eckert agreed that a secure home with two loving parents was the finest environment for a child. However he said, a study of several thousand autobiographies of California college students from broken homes disclosed that a high percentage found their lives "far happier, more stable and tranquil" after their parents had separated.

The national council held a joint dinner tonight with the American Sociological Society, which opened its forty-fifth annual meeting here today on the topic, "Social Psychological Theory and Method in Sociology."

CONFERENCE OPENS ON FAMILY AFFAIRS

SEE 6 1950
**Experts to Consider Problems
From Sex Education to
High Cost of Living**

By DOROTHY BARCLAY

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES

DENVER, Sept. 5.—More than 400 specialists in the study of family life—social workers, home economists, sociologists, psychologists, educators—have gathered on the University of Denver campus for the annual conference of the National Council on Family Relations. The conference theme is "The Family Looks at the Expert."

Two general sessions have been scheduled for tomorrow and Thursday at which westerners—including relief clients, small business men, a college professor, an advertising executive and their wives—will tell the specialists what they think of current theories and how much, or how little, their everyday lives are affected by the study and research aimed at improving their lot.

Other meetings will consider problems from how best to handle sex education in schools to the effect of high living costs on family life.

Cyril Bibby of the Institute of Education, London University, principal speaker this afternoon, said the special assistance measures to British families instituted by the Labor Government in the last five years were not "purely partisan policies" but generally accepted measures which probably would be continued even if the Government changed.

Payment of weekly family allowances to wives rather than husbands constituted, he said, the first clear legal recognition of the principle that where children are concerned "mother, not father, is number one." To further this trend, an association of married women has now been formed to change the common law which decrees that any sums saved by a wife from money her husband gives her remain his property.

Contrasts Britain, America

By British standards, Mr. Bibby reported, divorcees in England and Wales have skyrocketed. In 1928, he said, 3,927 divorces were granted. In 1948 the figure had risen to 42,711. This change does not necessarily represent "increased marriage failure," he said, because in 1937 grounds for divorce were greatly widened and legal costs have been greatly reduced. Discussions are now underway, he reported, for a national legal service, similar to the National Health Service, which would make legal assistance available to all.

Mr. Bibby was unwilling to generalize about Americans. However, he admitted, it did appear that many Americans are more concerned over "what the experts say" than Britshers and tend more to elevate scientific theories to the status of a creed.

"In Britain," he said, "I think the expert is more or less regarded as a useful person to listen to and then not take too much notice of."

English mothers are concerned about many of the same matters that upset their American counterparts, he reported; television is not yet widely enough distributed to be a problem, but "Dick Barton, Detective," a rough-and-ready (by British standards) radio program for older children, has caused numerous complaints. As a result of these the British Broadcasting Company has appointed a child development expert to pass on the scripts. As for comics, complaints about them are usually based on the fact that "they are not good