

Unwed Mother Another Aspect Of Social Problem, Officials Say

(This is the fifth and last of a series of five articles dealing with family desertion—its problems, and suggested remedies. The first three dealt with the subject in general. The fourth article discusses another phase. It also suggests possible remedies for the entire problem.)

By **JOE COWLEY**
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

Another aspect of the pressing social problem is the unwed mother. Welfare Administrator James Pullman said.

Some people think that a girl will gain financially by deliberately having an illegitimate child. Payments from welfare funds after the baby is born amount to \$11 to \$15 extra a month, the administrator pointed out.

This only pays for the child's food and clothing. It does not provide mother's necessities. Some unwed mothers make better parents than the divorced ones, a case-worker remarked. This case-worker does not see an increase of unwed mothers in this area, contrary to what the national statistics show.

Does Not Have Problem

Jackson county does not have the serious problems in the aid to dependent children (ADC) field that some other counties have. Klamath county's problem is complicated by the number of minority race members, including Indians.

Migrant families such as those who work in this area's orchards stay close together, Pullman said. A family must have established residence in the state to obtain ADC. Migrant families move around too much for that. They may be picked up on the general assistance rolls as family units, however.

Complicating the picture further is the regulation which requires the removal from welfare rolls during the summer months all children 16 to 18 years old. These children are in the upper age brackets of the ADC program. They are thought to be old enough to work during the summer and help themselves.

Wages Handicap

Since part-time jobs are scarce, this regulation often works a hardship. The fruit season starts too late in this valley to provide much help in this direction. When families live many miles from town, a transportation problem sets another handicap.

"Then, too, we don't always feel that the 16-year-old child is mature enough to take a

job," a case-worker commented. "Some are and some aren't."

The ADC mother may face additional problems if all her children are in the teenage category. Often it is extremely difficult for a woman with limited education and employment experience to find a job. Many times she has never worked outside the home, a case-worker added.

This means the welfare commission often will have to help. General assistance funds must be provided during the summer.

One of the goals of the ADC program is to help these women become self-sufficient and self-supporting. However, they face competition from younger, better trained persons.

Mothers "Panic"

Sometimes caseworkers see these women almost panic when their children begin to leave the home. Faced with being alone they develop what seem real physical ailments, the case-worker pointed out. These ailments also may be a reaction to being forced into competition for employment. Such women often are unprepared emotionally, physically and mentally for such competition.

The social welfare worker is anxious over this problem. Many mothers would be willing, they point out, even enthusiastic, if vocational training were available to them. Money is needed to finance the training. However, this area is blessed with many school training institutions, business schools, beauty schools, and high quality public high schools.

Training Funds Lacking

Many efforts to retrain capable mothers for employment have fallen flat. The state has no funds for this except for the physically handicapped, he explained.

There is one civic group which does sponsor women for re-training but they are limited financially. So, only a few can retrain yearly under this group's program.

"It is the earnest hope of the welfare department that church groups, civic organizations or other interested persons might accept this challenge," a case worker said. "It is an area of social service in Oregon which has not been adequately pioneered within by legislation or by service groups. It is not only a matter of helping mothers to be

come socially and financially independent, it is a matter of dollars and cents to the taxpayers. Inactive people could be made productive."

Several Suggestions

Asked how this problem could be grasped by the roots, welfare workers interviewed here had a number of suggestions.

"This program was started in the 1930's," the administrator said. "We are now getting some of the sons and daughters of ADC people. This means a group of basically unhappy people are spreading their unhappiness to the second generation. Extensive mental health programs are needed for young people."

Pullman proposed a one-two-three punch to knock the problem down to size. Teachers should be trained to spot disturbed children. Visiting teachers could follow up with a visit to the home if the child shows problems at school. Then, if further work is needed, the problem could be referred to a public agency. Portland has 15 to 20 such visiting teachers, he added.

Pension System

A pension system for fathers with large families and adoption of birth control program were advocated by one case-worker. Pre-marital counseling in the schools and outside is an "idealistic solution," a case-worker said. The young

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people who absorb such lectures are not the ones who will have their families on the ADC rolls later, it was pointed out.

This worker strongly advocated more funds for a mental health clinic. A total of \$10,000 invested here saves the tax-payer \$20,000 later, she said. ADC children are frequently products of mentally disturbed unhappy people, she said.

An unhappy marriage cannot always be solved by divorce. Minimum costs for divorces is \$150. The lower income families cannot afford this. If divorced, the support payments to a mother are too small to do much good and to meet the entire needs of her family. A divorced father in the lower income groups cannot afford to pay much support, either, it was pointed out.

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Chicago—(UPI)—Ambassador Abba Eban of Israel said Thursday night the nations of the Middle East are threatened with becoming "provinces" of President Abdel Nasser's United Arab Republic. Eban spoke before the Central Conference of American Rabbis. He said the Middle East will come out of its present difficulties as either "a region where separate nations can live free from domination by each other... or it will be an area in which Nasser is the source of regional power and other states are his provinces or protectorates."

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