

County Welfare Head Discusses Criticisms of State Commission

(Editor's note: Since early in the 1959 session of the Oregon legislature, the administration of the Oregon public welfare program has come in for considerable discussion. One recent criticism was voiced by Judge Virgil Langtry of the Portland municipal court. In the following article, James Pullman, administrator of the Jackson county public welfare commission, discusses the criticisms, and also points out some additional facts concerning the problems of welfare administration.)

By JAMES PULLMAN

In the past two months many comments, accusations and criticisms have been leveled at the public welfare commission. The amount of money spent is huge, the problems are complex, and the numbers of individuals affected are many.

The commission's policies have been attacked by prominent persons. It is said that our policies promote immorality. While it may be true that an occasional mother receiving an Aid to Dependent Children grant may be promiscuous, the majority are honest and sincere mothers in financial need because of desertion, death or incapacity of the father.

Some in Trouble

Certainly some of their children are in trouble but consider the fatherless family and the problems this must create. In the Jackson county juvenile court a very small percentage of children accused of delinquent acts are children from ADC families, but one prominent juror implies that most of these children are from ADC families.

The great majority of these children who are in trouble are from families who earn their own way in this community - some may be from wealthy families. The judge pointed out that the welfare could stop immorality if armed with rules, regulations and policies from the commission. This seems almost absurd when one realizes that courts of law throughout the world have not succeeded.

Nothing prevents the juvenile court from dictating to the mother what morals she may have. However, it is a popular idea that if the welfare office cuts the ADC grant money off the mother will behave herself. The judge admits their highly skilled and specialized staff in Multnomah county juvenile court would be unable to place these children who might be removed permanently because the mother is immoral.

Finding Homes

The welfare commission with its own problems in finding good foster homes which meet the needs of the children and finding funds with which

to finance such a program is faced with the same difficulties as the court. Contrary to many people's opinion the staff of the public welfare commission are not soft-hearted "do-gooders" nor impersonal robots handing out checks or taking delight in refusing assistance. We are realistic people with a job to do in providing money for people in need and who are eligible, and working toward a goal of self support of our recipients.

Certainly it is true that some of our applicants and recipients are chiselers. Staff members do not appreciate chiselers any more than the public. We have a conviction that this is wrong and it reflects on our ability and integrity. In Jackson county, we refer all cases of fraud to the District Attorney for him to consider legal action. The percentage of chiselers is small. Occasionally the error has been made by the department. Our caseworkers carry caseloads which are beyond their ability to handle properly.

Number of Chiselers

Lest someone think that all chiselers are recipients let me assure you that the numbers of chiselers among the vendors of medical care, grocers, landlords, and relatives is very high and appalling. We are armed with enough rules, laws and community backing we could regulate the morals of this group of upstanding citizens.

The Jackson county public welfare commission is currently operating with a very limited budget. The money is allocated by the month and we have no authority to exceed these allocations. The funds available meet the regular cash grants for Old Age Assistance, Aid to the Blind, Aid to the Disabled and Aid to Dependent Children. Medical allocations are sharply reduced. This includes money for drugs, hospitalization,

Comedian Loses Furs, Jewelry

West Los Angeles - (UPI) - Comedian Joe E. Brown reported to police Wednesday the theft of \$17,635 worth of furs, jewelry and cash from his home. The thieves passed up \$24,000 worth of furs and other jewels, he said.

He listed as articles stolen a \$3,700 bracelet, a \$3,000 cape, a \$1,000 lapel watch set with diamonds and rubies and \$860 in cash.

Among items left behind by the burglars was a \$6,000 mink coat and \$15,000 worth of jewels.

"Some of the jewels stolen were gifts from friends and are irreplaceable," said Brown's wife, Kathryn. "There's no understanding why they took a piggy bank and two bottles of bourbon while leaving so many jewels and furs."

Brown said he and his wife spent Tuesday night in downtown Los Angeles with their son, Joe L., general manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team. He said all the valuables were insured.

Forest Animals Kill Young Trees

Portland - (UPI) - The Forest Service says that forest animals are destroying their own homes by killing young trees at an alarming rate.

Deer, elk, bear, porcupines, rabbits and mice have been chewing, eating, and killing young sprouts.

The Forest Service said that about 24,387,000 stems are being damaged in Oregon and Washington national forests. The problem was discussed here today at a meeting of the Pacific Northwest Forest Research Advisory Committee.

nursing homes, and doctor's services.

We have established priority treatment and have issued authorizations for payment accordingly until each month's funds are exhausted. This is a very difficult task to reduce expenditures. Oregon has spent nearly five times the monthly average for medical care for Old Age Assistance recipients as the national average.

For those who criticize the commission, keep in mind the Oregon legislature has written laws which obligate the commission to pay for the medical care for eligible persons. The physicians of the community recommend the type of treatment they feel is necessary and the patient insists he must have this treatment. Basically, our expenditures for medical care have been determined by the attending physician.

Forced Reduction

The forced reduction of medical care expenditures has caused ambivalent reactions from the medical vendors. Most physicians recognize that the overall cost is high but find it difficult to recommend less expensive treatment. Some of the operators purchase limited amounts of drugs from their own income when we have been unable to pay.

Next year's allocation of funds for public assistance for Jackson county is \$1,491,057. The commission requested \$1,841,344 as an estimate of the need to carry out the programs. It is obvious that some restrictions will be necessary. We know from experience that the first reaction of the community will be "cut off the chiselers."

We are committed to do the best job possible to prevent chiseling, whether the chiseler is a recipient, a business man, or a professional person. It is foolish to believe our staff can be 100 per cent effective though since our staff cannot live with 1,500 families to verify all facts. Other alternatives will be a restricted medical care program with all the difficulties and hostilities this involves.

We hope that with more information people will be more tolerant and understanding of the less fortunate persons in the community and of the welfare staff which is dedicated to helping the indigent and dedicated to making best use of tax money. In our society today we are our brother's keepers and our brother's welfare affects our own.

Hayden Project Said Too Costly

Portland - (UPI) - Parks superintendent Harry Buckley Wednesday told the city of Portland to get out of the controversy over the Hayden Island property in the Columbia river.

He said that in addition to the purchase price it would take a minimum of \$700,000 to make it fit for recreation purposes.

In a report to City Commissioner O. M. and Bean, Buckley urged that "Portland give the acquisition and development no further consideration."

The northeast tip of the island which covers 37 acres was offered for sale by the state a month ago, then sale was postponed to see if either the city or Multnomah county wanted it.

A controversy has arisen since over legal ownership.

Loyalty Dinner Set At Methodist Church

The annual loyalty dinner of St. Luke's Methodist church, 2940 Siskiyou blvd., will be held Friday, May 15, at 7 p.m. at the church.

Jim Whipple, Eugene district lay leader will be the dinner speaker. The annual budget of the church will be presented to the congregation at that time.

Members attending are to take a hot dish, salad or dessert and table service. Members and friends of the church are invited to attend, according to the pastor, the Rev. Melvin Dixon.

Andrew Jackson, who retired at 69, was the oldest man to hold the office of President. If Eisenhower serves his full term, he will walk out at the age of 70 years plus 3 months.

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Satchmo Armstrong Plays at Geneva

Geneva - (UPI) - Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong came to Geneva for a one-night stand and concluded that if all the diplomats here could dig his music they wouldn't even think about politics.

Satchmo, 58, blew into town on Wednesday with his golden horn but said it was just an accident that he coincided with the foreign ministers' conference.

"To show you how ignorant I am - what's this conference about, anyway?" he asked. "You know we don't get many newspapers while we are traveling."

Told what the meeting was all about he said:

"Those diplomats speak a language all their own. I don't understand the big words they use. But I know that if they listen to my music, they don't even think about politics."

Gov. Mark Hatfield Gives Views On Shortage of Welfare Funds

A letter from Gov. Mark Hatfield to a local welfare nursing home patient gives the governor's views on the current shortage of funds for the state welfare commission.

The governor's letter to Miss Marjorie De Vall in the Milledge nursing home, answered one written by a friend of Miss De Vall inquiring particularly into the cut in medical allocations under the welfare program, resulting from a deficit in state funds.

"I am very concerned about the present deficiency of the previous administration's welfare budget and want you to know I am doing everything possible to correct the problem," Governor Hatfield wrote.

'Inherited Mess'

"Please understand that I inherited this mess since I was not governor at the time the budget was made and members appointed to the welfare commission, I am taking definite steps to correct the situation," he continued.

"I have urged the legislature to make appropriations necessary to finish the fiscal year," he added.

"I have instructed the welfare commission that I will not tolerate a cut in categories of aged, blind and handicapped. Any cuts necessary should be made in general assistance which generally includes the employable people."

"I have met with nursing home owners and promised to give complete support in maintaining the standards of the care of those who are in their responsibility."

Look Into Organization

"I am looking very seriously into the organization of the state welfare commission. I am doing my best to alleviate the immediate problem and to plan for long range needs," the governor concluded.

The state legislature appropriated \$1,400,000 in two separate bills to meet the

deficiency for the rest of this biennium. This is a half million dollars more than what the governor requested, according to Bob Duncan (D-Medford), speaker of the house of representatives.

Governor Hatfield, through the state director of finance, Freeman Holmer, requested a \$900,000 appropriation from the state legislature to meet the deficiency for the current biennium ending June 30.

Bring Out Bill

The house ways and means committee brought out a bill for \$1,200,000, or \$300,000 more than Hatfield's request. This was passed by the legislature. A bill by Rep. Grace O. Peck (D-Multnomah county) requested \$700,000 in an additional appropriation. The ways and means committee cut this to \$200,000 and it was later passed by the state legislature, to make the total appropriation \$1,400,000, or \$500,000 more than the governor's request.

Miss Jeanne Jewett, state public welfare administrator, states that the commission advised the state emergency board that the "revised budget could well be insufficient," as early as June, 1958. "It was indicated in this report that there would be a possible deficit of state funds of \$856,107," Miss Jewett reported recently.

Her statement added:

"The state public welfare commission determined to make every effort to contain the expenditures of public assistance within the available funds, and accordingly concluded to not request funds from the emergency board until circumstances dictated that

such a request be made." "It was not apparent until the end of February, 1959, that the commission's proposed reductions in costs of medical care and reductions in general assistance occasioned through transfers of eligible cases to the federal matching program would not meet the situation with respect to assistance requirements as obtaining in December, 1958, and February, 1959." Duncan supported her viewpoint, by stating, "It is difficult for any state agency to project its fund requirements 2 1/2 years ahead accurately, as it is required to do with biennial sessions of the legislature."



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