

(A list of the delegates of this section is available in the Press Room)

CONFERENCE ON AGING

August 13-15, 1950

The Shoreham Hotel

Washington, D. C.

Russell, Ex. 6300 Ext. 4625

Digest of Proceedings

Section V

Education for an Aging

Population

Morning session, Aug. 15

Approved by Wilma Donahue, Chairman

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Donald O. Cowgill, reporting to the full Section the recommendations of a subcommittee on colleges, said that the institutions of higher education should accept responsibility on education for an aging population in four areas: Leadership in research; leadership training for all professional groups; programs for the aged themselves, as part of a total community effort; and undergraduate general education.

Another special interest subcommittee, the adult education group, reported that ad hoc arrangements had been made to send anecdotal accounts of local programs in the interest of the aged to E. J. Soop, for transmittal to all interested persons. A similar plan was developed by the library group, working through the American Library Association. The Association will compile a list of libraries now conducting programs which involve the aged. This group stated that libraries, like other mass media, "cannot be expected to take the initiative but always to assist in the solution of this and other community problems."

The subcommittee specially concerned with health problems reported the need for education of the clinical physicians on all aspects of the aging population. Speaking for that group, Dr. A. J. Tuttle, recommended the offering of courses on diseases of the aged by such community organizations as the Red Cross. Representatives of business and industry felt that industry, trade organizations and unions should further promote research and experiments on retirement policies, and urged that good beginnings already made should be further studied and extended. Speaking for social workers, Manfred Lilliefors, saw several ways in which social workers could and should work closely with educators in dealing with problems of the aging.

Henry S. Curtis, urged that institutions of higher education establish colleges especially for aged persons. These would have their own campuses, sororities and fraternities, and athletic fields, for shuffle board and bowling on the green. Only persons would be admitted who otherwise met college requirements, such as high school graduation.

Everett C. Preston, said that in view of the small proportion of persons who are high school graduates, especially among older groups, the community college, in which all segments of the population might attend together, seemed to offer better possibilities. Other persons felt that facilities of institutions not now being used could be employed for expanding programs for the aged. Mr. Cowgill stated his impression that older students resented segregation. This discussion was concluded with the view that in addition to the large proportion of services for the aged that should be offered on an integrated basis, some special services were also needed.

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Following the suggestion made at yesterday's afternoon session by Dr. Martin Gumpert, New York physician, the section adopted a resolution calling for the Federal Security Agency to set up a unit to encourage study and action on the problems of the aging. The resolution called for this unit to serve as a clearinghouse of information by various methods, including the calling of periodic conferences. Another resolution passed by the section, called for the conference director to establish, in the words of its author, John Powell, an "interim consultative committee of an advisory nature."

"The American people" should develop a broad program of education to meet the needs of an aging population, according to the final report accepted by this section. Based on recommendations and reports of all subsections, the report was prepared by a committee of six delegates, Hugh Masters, Educational Director, Kellogg Foundation, acting as chairman. This report was accepted, to be considered as adopted, pending revisions made in light of any comments made by delegates within a month. The final report called for the development of programs "to help each person regardless of age to share up to his capacity ..." It said, "Opportunities should therefore be provided for older people to contribute to and share in the total community processes affecting education and the general welfare."

It called for inclusion of information in elementary and secondary school programs on the "changes that occur with age and upon the development of favorable attitudes toward older persons."

Educational programs for the aging should be designed to promote continuous learning throughout maturity, continues the report, and include these areas:

- 1 early preparation for economic security
- 2 development of secondary skills of vocational value
- 3 physical health
- 4 personal adjustment and mental health
- 5 satisfactory family and group membership
- 6 recreational satisfaction and leisure-time activities
- 7 social participation and civic responsibility
- 8 religion

In general, the report called for, in the development of educational activities, integration with the total community group, including all agencies, and making use of all media of communication.