

CONFERENCE ON AGING

August 13-15, 1950

The Shoreham Hotel

Washington, D.C.

Russell, EX, 6300, Ext. 4625

Digest of Proceedings

Section VII

Creative and Recreational
Activities

Morning Session, Aug. 15

Approved by Helen H. Brunot, Chairman

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Summarizing at the last general session of the Conference on Aging for Section VII, Creative and Recreational Activities, Dwight Cook, Conference Moderator, said Section VII concluded that creative ability does not disappear with age, and that creative and recreational techniques and facilities should be made more widely available to older people.

The Section VII delegates, Mr. Cook pointed out, agreed that not enough is known as to the needs of the aging in the creative and recreational area to fulfill the satisfactions older people require. He said also, the Section VII conferees decided that methods of getting communities to provide more for the creative and recreational needs of the aging need further exploration. Steps must be taken to give such activities higher prestige in the community.

Following Moderator Cooke's summary, Mrs. Helen Hardy Brunot, Chairman of Section VII, said that this Section stressed the social and psychological values of creative and recreational activities for older people. She said Section VII delegates sensed deeply the basic human need for participation and doing which creative and recreational activity satisfies, but opportunities for which seem to lessen as one grows older. Such opportunities for expression and participation by older people in all aspects of living in the home and in the community should be given greater consideration, the Chairman explained. She emphasized, however, that Section VII delegates asked for a sharing of such opportunities by both young and old alike. They should be regarded, she said, not as a substitute for work opportunities but as supplemental to them.

Subsection II-B, taking up Social and Physical Activities for the aging, reported that "the homebound older people who cannot take advantage of social centers and the like are frequently overlooked in recreation planning." In meeting this situation, the delegates explained, older people can often be of help.

"Church organizations can make a contribution to recreation for the physically handicapped who are not completely homebound," the Subsection concluded. This can be done "by collecting the physically handicapped persons in cars or busses and bringing them to social gatherings, suppers and the like."

The Subsection concluded that "the average community center is serving only a small percent of the community," and that progressive leadership is needed to reach larger numbers of older people. Such leadership should be shared, bringing into the program as many people, both young and old, who are interested and capable and willing to help.

Subsection III-A, Rural and Agricultural, concluded that "there is a need for better interpretation of what recreation is -- that such interpretation would place recreation along with education, health and other public services as an essential human need for people of all ages."

Subsection III-C, Urban and Industrial, called for a "great deal more attention to be given to planning for older people who do not participate in any program," for the "alumni" of labor, the professions, and industry. This group pointed to the need for more activities in which larger numbers of the aged may participate or share enjoyment.

In discussing the provision of creative and recreational activities for older persons in urban and industrial areas, the delegates said communities should find out what is available to serve local needs, make use of what is available, coordinate all programs as much as necessary and possible, make new facilities available or revise those now available to meet current needs.

Section VII expressed appreciation to the Federal Security Agency for its sponsorship of the Conference on Aging. The Section voted in favor of the establishment of a national council on aging, and asked that a message be sent to President Truman asking that consideration of the problems of the aging be made a continuing responsibility of the Federal Government.