BOARDING HOME CARE FOR THE AGED

A Study of the Social Welfare Aspects of Licensed Homes in Vancouver

by

Bernice Rae Leydier

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Social Work

in the Department of Social Work

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

1948
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**PART I - SETTING OF THE PROBLEM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>The Growing Problem of the Aged</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present day population trends. Pressures on the aged; from society;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from the family. Some of the needs of old people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Concern with the Aged in Vancouver</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Committee on the Care of the Aged, 1945. Available accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for old people, Special housing needs of the old. Study of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>The Licensing and Supervision of Boarding Homes</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Terms of the Licensing Act. Regulations of the Act. The process of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>licensing a home. Reasons for refusing applications for license.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role of inspector as an educator.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART II -- THE BOARDING HOMES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Scope of the Study</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The nature of the boarding home. How many aged need boarding home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>care in Vancouver? Populations of the homes visited. Method of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collecting material. The facts sought for the study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>General facilities of Boarding Homes</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classification according to persons or groups sponsoring the homes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods of paying by residents. Property settlements. Locations of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the boarding homes. Descriptions of four representative homes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Bedroom and Bathroom Facilities</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic needs met in all homes. Lighting in bedrooms. Furnishings in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bedrooms. Privacy for the occupants of wards. Bathing facilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toilet facilities. General Observations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>The Serving of Meals</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The multiple importance of food. Types of food served. Between-meal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter VIII  Use of Leisure Time in Boarding Homes
The problem of unlimited leisure. Common rooms in the boarding homes. Recreation indoors; reading, radio, hobbies, others. Recreation outdoors. Activities brought into the homes. The problem of the apathetic old people. Summary. 91

Chapter IX  Relationships within boarding homes
Old people are people grown old. Genesis of some personality problems. Attitudes of operators to old age. Attitudes of operators to their residents. A new inmate. Specific problems in adjustments. Rules, regulations and participation. The problem of the family. General observations. 112

PART III  - SOME IMPLICATIONS

Chapter X  Adventures in Planning
Local efforts in planning. Danish apartment houses for the aged. Villages for the aged. Visiting housekeeper services. Foster homes for the aged. The need for a diversity of resources. 134

Chapter XI  Conclusions
Financial provision is not enough. Physical comforts are important. The personal element. Plans for the immediate future. 144

APPENDICES

A - Bibliography - Specific References.

B - Bibliography - General References.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following for their help during the preparation of this study: West Unit of City Social Service Department; the Old Age Pensions Board, especially Miss Edwards; Hospitals and Institutions, particularly Mrs. Page, whose valuable assistance has been referred to in the study; the Committee on the Care of the Aged, which made its records available, and which showed so much interest in this work; the Rotary Club, whose financial help made the study possible; and Dr. L. C. Marsh, who gave invaluable guidance and advice throughout the preparation of this report.

Special thanks are due to all the matrons and operators of boarding homes who willingly and kindly gave of their time and experience whenever it was asked of them. Finally, I am grateful to the many old people who discussed their problems and desires with me and gave me encouragement.
ABSTRACT

This study attempts to explore some of the social aspects of boarding homes for the aged in order to learn what problems are met in operating such homes and what adjustments can be made to solve them.

Sixteen boarding homes in Vancouver were visited and the operators were interviewed. These interviews were the basis of the chapters on the boarding homes themselves. In addition other types of institutions were considered, with one or two being visited and investigated. The study made by the Committee on the Care of the Aged was used for background as were two other studies made by the writer in order to determine where old people in one area of the city were living. Supplementary material was of course drawn from reference reading.

The study includes chapters on general facilities offered in boarding homes, on bedroom and bathroom facilities and on the serving of meals. The use of leisure time was considered to be vitally important. Perhaps the most significant factor in successful operation of a boarding home is the personal relationships involved.

A very deliberate effort was made to keep conclusions and recommendations at a practical level. It was recognized that private rooms and a comprehensive, well-planned recreation program are desirable, but no such sweeping changes from the present accommodations were even suggested. The licensing system has had a major role in raising standards and improving practices, and will continue to do so in the future.

One inescapable conclusion is that there is a serious shortage of boarding homes for old people, as well as of all other types of accommodation geared for their needs. No attempt has been made in the present survey to assess the extent of this shortage nor to propose how or by whom the shortage could be rectified. It is hoped only that this study might be helpful to persons who are dealing directly with boarding homes for the aged.
PART I

SETTING OF THE PROBLEM
Chapter I
THE GROWING PROBLEMS OF THE AGED

The traditional picture of the aged person sitting in the chimney corner, the pampered and venerated patriarch or matriarch, to whom children and grandchildren look for kindly guidance, may never have been a true picture save for a fortunate few. There is perhaps still a popular conception - or misconception - that old age is the time when the work of a lifetime is gratefully laid aside for a contented leisure which is to last for the rest of one's life. Browning's too-often-quoted first lines of Rabbi Ben Ezra ring falsely in the ears of anyone who has visited old people in their desolate rooms or watched the old men dully waiting for the day to pass on benches in Victory Square or on the steps of the Public Library.

Population Trends

The focus of this study is on the social aspects involved in providing boarding home care for aged persons, but this focus would be altogether too narrow if the general situation which faces the aged today were not first considered. It is only too true that, while the numbers of old people in the population are increasing every year, there is less place for them than ever before in a social and industrial system which places a premium on youth. On the other hand with shorter hours and years of labour, better living conditions than in former times, and medical and scientific advances prolonging life, we can look forward to many more
years of living than ever before.

It is striking to consider the increase in average life expectancy over the centuries, and particularly over the last century which has seen the greatest increase. In the days of the Roman Empire one could hope to live only to twenty-three years, while in ancient Greece the average age at death was twenty-nine years five months. By 1800 in Massachusetts, people were dying at the average age of thirty-five years; by 1850, at forty years; and by 1890, at forty-three years. In 1935 in the United States a man could expect to live until he was fifty-nine years four months, and a woman until she was sixty-two years nine months, and the most recent figure given for average life expectancy in British Columbia (based on 1947 statistics) was a little over sixty-three years. Every year then, a slightly higher proportion of the population is reaching old age, living past their productive years into the time when, unable to work, they must depend upon savings or investments for their livelihood - if they are fortunate - or else are dependent upon their children, private charity, or public funds.

Some of the less optimistic of the sociologists, in studying population trends, have gloomily predicted that if the present trend continues in another quarter century or so one half of the population will be working to support the other half, unless employment practices regarding the older workers are drastically changed.

The problem of financial support for the aged would appear to be far easier of solution than such pressing prob-
lems as where and with whom, in this era of apartments and bungalows in urban areas, the old people will live, and how, where and by whom chronic care will be supplied for the infirm old people. A recent estimate placed the number of persons over 65 years in the United States at 5.4 per cent of the total population, and stated that almost certainly by 1980 this would have increased to 14.3 per cent of the total population aged sixty-five or over. In round numbers this means that probably close to nine million people in the United States will have reached what is almost universally regarded as being old age. It seems valid to assume that the population trends in the next thirty years in Canada will follow closely those in the United States, since the conditions in these two countries are as similar as they are. The annual report on old age pensions for 1947 showed that of the total population of Canada 4.5 per cent, or approximately five hundred thousand persons, are over seventy years of age; 7 per cent, or approximately eight hundred and fifty thousand persons, are over sixty-five years; and 11 per cent, or about one million, three hundred and ten thousand persons, are over sixty years of age. It cannot be denied, therefore, that such a large group of the population should be considered and planned for, so that their special needs may be served adequately and sensibly.

Pressures on the Aged

The aged are subjected to pressures that have perhaps always faced the old, but which certainly have been acutely reinforced in the last century. Far more people
than at the time of Confederation, and a great majority of
the city dwellers, now earn a living in the form of a wage-
paid job, and the living stops when work stops; whereas in
former days, when the family income came from work on the
land or in the home, with failing physical powers the income
depended but did not stop. As the older generation became
unable to carry on, the next generation took over control of
the family industry and continued to support the old person,
who was now enjoying the leisure he had earned by his life-
time of toil. In today's highly urbanized society, with
smaller family units living in smaller homes, and families
widely separated because of the ease of transportation and
the mobility of labour, it is rather the exception than the
rule that the old person has a secure home to retire to when
his income ends with the end of his working days.

Social Pressures

As the numbers of old people have been increasing,
their general position in later life has been becoming less
and less secure. An ever-growing proportion of the working
population has been finding employment in highly organized
industries, away from the rural areas where the arrangements
and perhaps pace of life will be better geared to their abili-
ties when they reach old age. Mechanized industry wears out
workers at a greater speed today, and discards them when they
are no longer able to keep up. There is a sudden stoppage
of work as early as forty years in some cases, and too often
the person as let out because of age is forced to obtain a
less attractive job at lower wages, if, indeed, he is able
to obtain work at all. The mere task of meeting day to day needs will take all his energies and he is unable to make adequate provision for later years. Some industries are beginning to take the view that the wearing out of labour is as much a charge on industry as is the depreciation of plant and machinery, and as a result are retraining older workers for a change of work better adapted to their lowered physical strength and coordination. The "laissez-faire" attitude is still to be met with in some unenlightened quarters. This attitude holds that the individual who finds himself destitute in his old age is at fault; those who work hard and are not wasteful can maintain their independence, and they lose their independence only through personal inadequacies or through shiftlessness and wastefulness. The recognition that the capacity to save depends upon one's income during working life, and that the incomes of many are inadequate for proper provision for health, old age and other normal economic risks, is more in keeping with the facts and with the current acceptance of "Beveridge"-type planning.

The adoption of old age pensions in most of the more modern countries testifies to the fact that the obligation of the State to provide at least minimum maintenance to its citizens is slowly being recognized, although it has taken more than forty years for the obligation to be brought up to date in some countries. Canada only came into line in 1927, and that only partially since there is still a stigma attached to having to accept such maintenance, expressed through pensions being based on need as determined by a
means test. Old age insurance, toward which the recipient has contributed through payroll or other deductions, comes to the person when he reaches the required age, and carries with it no implication of his inadequacy to be self-maintaining. The value Canadian society places on independence, particularly financial independence, means that for many the act of applying for pension is an admission of personal failure. Yet the social structure and general income level is such that for a great number of people such independence is impossible. Even where a man has been able to work until a fairly advanced age, if he has raised a family he will have had little opportunity to accumulate savings. The same industrialization which tends to deprive him of his livelihood at any time after he has reached middle age, has developed a progressively higher standard of living so that wages never really stretch far enough. In addition the worker is dependent upon the shifting economic fortunes of the whole country to a far greater extent than he was even fifty years ago. Personal disasters such as illness or death, can wipe out a lifetime's savings; so can a national disaster such as severe or prolonged depression. The fact that 35.4 per cent of all persons 70 or over in Canada in 1947 were in receipt of old age pensions underlines the impossibility of most persons in "average" circumstances being able to provide financially for their old age.

**Family Pressures on the Aged**

At the same time as the economic position of the
individual has been becoming such that financially independent old age is difficult if not impossible of achievement. The way of life has been changing rapidly, and, to a large extent excluding the old person. As the family has changed from a "producing rural unit" with a place in the family business for every member, to a "consuming urban unit" there have been rapid and radical changes in manners, dress, and social codes, as well as in the more obvious matter of housing. The smaller families of today are living in small houses or in suites where there is quite literally no room for one or more old persons. If they are crowded into the home the differences mentioned above, in manners, dress, etc., lead to dissension, even to chronic hostility. There is no limit to the possible reasons for contention between members of the "present generation" and their parents where there is overcrowding of small quarters, lack of privacy and constant tension. Taking an old person into the home today may well mean disruption in that home, yet the facilities to which the old person can turn in the community are few and inadequate, and may leave no alternative to making room for him.

Age brings with it many ills, too often including hardening of the attitudes, and the old person who does find there is a place for him in one of the homes of his children, may be unable to accept the changing fashions of living, and become a focus of complaint and criticism. Youngsters are

---

1. This terminology is used by E.R. Graves in his Social Problems of the Family, (Lippincott, Chicago, 1927) p.297
given a degree of freedom today that the grandmother or grandfather might well, if they cling to the standards of their own day, feel is dangerous and foolhardy in the extreme, and will only lead to the children having no training in steady work-a-day habits. Women do not show the modesty of an earlier day, they complain, or they may feel that men fail to treat them with the respect they did in "their day". Many manners and customs that are different, in fact, can disturb an older person who has lost his elasticity, and so lead to complaints and arguments.

Even where the old person is accepted in the home as a respected guest there can be a great deal of unhappiness, unless he or she is given the opportunity of participating in the family life. The protest touched on briefly above can often be due in large measure to a feeling of uselessness, of not belonging, which is being met by an attitude that says in effect, "Well, I don't belong because this is such a wicked, inconsiderate age (or whatever other adjectives fit the pattern of the complaints) - my own day was a much finer and better one". There is no longer any real niche for him, or her. This is in effect true even of the old person who is being coddled and protected by his children, and kept from any active share in the business of living. No one wants to be shelved, even in a kind and loving fashion, because he is no longer young.

If the old person who still has a family to live with can be lonely, discontented and unhappy, how much more
unfortunate is the old person who is all alone for one reason or another. He may be unwanted by his children and actually shoved out of the family group - even when nominally and physically still a member of a household. He may never have had a family, or he may survive the family he once had. An old man or woman with perhaps an inadequate income, and no place of his own anywhere, in a world that is moving at a fast pace and is full of bewildering gadgets and new ways of doing things that seem to be beyond his failing strength and ability to adapt, is in a position of the greatest insecurity. He needs a maximum of understanding from the people he meets and lives with, but too often he receives all varieties of rejection and misunderstanding and impatience in a world that has ceased to need him or even to want him.

The Needs of the Aged

The needs of old people are really just the needs of all people, with some modifications to allow for their lessened strength and speed and sureness of movement, and possibly their decreased ability to adjust and adapt. They need to feel wanted and useful, to belong; this is true whatever the realistic, physical situation may happen to be. Like all other humans of whatever age they need affection and recognition. Given emotional security, they can do a pretty fair job, on the whole, of adjusting themselves to all kinds of cramped and inconvenient living arrangements.

On a more practical level, the old person needs at least a minimum of physical comfort and security. He needs
the financial security and independence that the pension gives him if he has not accumulated means privately. He will feel better about the pension and more secure as a person, probably, in the future golden age when his pension will come to him automatically as a right with no terms of eligibility other than that of age. Independence is very important, and he should have the opportunity to choose for himself where and how he will live, within the realistic limitations the environment imposes; this must be further qualified of course, wherever personal limitations due to illness and failing faculties, because of age, make it necessary to change an old person's way of life against his own wishes. But while he is able to do so the old person should participate in plans being made for him.

The above are generalized needs. Old people also need living accommodation planned to their specific needs. There should be all kinds and degrees of accommodation for them, from that which is suitable for the spry and independent person, through accommodation offering varying degrees of protection, to that designed for the helpless person. In planning for housing needs for the future old people must not be forgotten, since they represent a relatively large proportion of the population. It should be remembered too in planning that no one type of accommodation offers the satisfactory answer to all old people's needs any more than a limited standardization of housing would meet all the needs of the general population. They need a choice of cot-
tages with or without gardens, suites for single and married persons, boarding or light-housekeeping arrangements; a variety of homes and nursing homes. There have even been experiments in some countries with whole villages of old people, as well as with foster homes for old people, and housekeeper services within their own homes. Their needs are as various, and need as varied answers, as those of many other population group, and reach accordingly into as many areas of life.

The old therefore, have the same needs for food, shelter, comforts and emotional satisfactions that other adults have, with certain handicaps such as are due to failing strength and lack of employment to complicate the business of meeting their needs. Canada has almost one and a half million persons sixty years and over to whom the problems that come with old age are very real. Many of these aged persons are in Vancouver and therefore the task of planning for the aged is a local as well as a national responsibility.

Vancouver is growing rapidly year by year, and would in the normal course of events have a large number of persons who can be considered to be aged. It has been a matter of popular knowledge that many Canadians on reaching retirement age come to the Pacific Coast to spend their remaining years, thereby swelling the numbers of aged persons out of proportion to the remainder of the population. While the imaginary picture of Vancouver and other British Columbia towns and cities being composed of fifty or more per cent of
aged people is somewhat exaggerated, nevertheless the 1947 figures released by the Old Age Pension Board give support to the "common knowledge" that people do retire to the coast. As has been recorded earlier, 4.5 per cent of Canada's total population are seventy years of age or older. British Columbia has 5.1 per cent of its population seventy years or over. More significantly still, 35.4 per cent of this age group are on pension in British Columbia, while 40 per cent are on pension in all of Canada. This apparent discrepancy is probably explained by the fact that many persons upon retiring seek the more moderate climate found on the West coast, and those with independent means are more able to make such a move than are those who must look to the government for support.

Vancouver has a more pressing need to plan intelligently for old people than other cities since, as the following table demonstrates, Vancouver has a higher proportion of old people in its population than have other Canadian cities, probably with the exception of Victoria, British Columbia.
### Table 1.

**PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IN MAJOR AGE GROUPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>'0-14 yrs.'</th>
<th>15-19 yrs.</th>
<th>20-44 yrs.</th>
<th>45 &amp; over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Montreal</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winnipeg</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rochester</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Louisville</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic background and population growth, Vancouver Town Planning Commission, October, 1945, p. 25.

This need for planning will increase as time goes on if population trends follow the patterns predicted by sociologists. Certainly the make-up of the population of the city, in age groups as well as other such groups as ethnic and occupation groups, must be taken into account if housing and other facilities are to be adequate in kind as well as in numbers to meet the needs of the city's inhabitants.
It is impossible to be even approximately accurate in estimating the numbers of the aged living in Vancouver. Certain figures do give a rough estimate. In 1941, the year of the last census, approximately 1 per cent of Vancouver's population had reached the age of eighty years or over - nearly three thousand persons at the present time if this percentage is valid. The recent figures issued by the Old Age Pension Board in their annual report show that five per cent of Vancouver's citizens are at least seventy, and probably more than double that number are sixty and over.

That the matter of planning for the aged in Canada is one which is becoming larger and will continue to do so is graphically shown by the table below in which the total population increases for Canada are estimated, as well as for the individual province. Even a casual examination of these figures shows that the actual and forecast increases in the numbers of persons from sixty-five years of age on, is much higher proportionately than is the increase in the numbers of the total population. More careful perusal of the table will further show that British Columbia has a higher proportion of aged persons to the general population than most other provinces, and that her aged population is, and can be expected to in the future, increasing more rapidly, in proportion, than is true for other provinces.
Table 11

FORECAST OF TOTAL POPULATION, NUMBER OF PERSONS AGED 65-69, AND NUMBER OF PERSONS AGED 70 AND OVER, BY PROVINCES
(in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>1941 Census</th>
<th>1948 (est.) Forecast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total '65-69</td>
<td>70 plus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. C.</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man.</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sask.</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alta.</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>3,788</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>3,332</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.E.I.</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. S.</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. B.</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>11,490</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


With these facts in mind, it can be pointed out that Vancouver emphatically needs intelligent and foresighted planning in the future. Exhaustive local population surveys should indicate how many hospital beds are needed for the chronically ill old person, how many boarding homes are necessary to adequately serve those who are semi-active, and how
many homes of various kinds are needed for the active old people. Modern knowledge of personal and emotional needs as well as of architectural methods should be used to guide builders of the future. The old people have not had any really intelligent concern shown for their needs as a group of the general population.
Chapter II

CONCERN WITH THE AGED IN VANCOUVER

As a background for the more specific discussion of the subject of this study, it will be helpful to review some of the recent studies on this problem made within the last three years in Vancouver. These will serve to make more graphic the situation facing the aged in Vancouver.

Study of the Committee on the Care of the Aged

The Committee on the Care of the Aged functions as a sub-committee of the Family Division of the Welfare Council of Greater Vancouver. It is composed of interested persons from the various social agencies in the city, from churches and other community bodies such as the National Employment Service. They began meeting in 1943, and have grown to be an active and effective group. In December, 1945 they submitted a report on a survey made by the Committee on the Care of the Aged in Vancouver. The field was reviewed by the members of this committee, with particular reference to the legislation applicable to the aged, its effectiveness, and the community facilities then available to Vancouver's senior citizens. The study was made for the purpose of clarifying the situation of the aged to enable the Committee to plan more intelligently; it was therefore broad in its coverage, but not very exhaustive.

The Committee developed the survey under six general headings. These were: maintenance for the aged, care
and accommodation, housing, medical care, other health requirements, and recreational facilities.

Under "Maintenance", the Old Age Pensions Act, the Social Assistance Act, the War Veterans' Allowance Act, the Parents' Maintenance Act and the Residence and Responsibility Act are reviewed briefly, with a short summary of the method of administration of each Act. The eligibility rules are outlined in each case, and the amounts paid to the recipients given. Supplementary services provided in each case are named. At the time the report was made there had been several amendments to some of the Acts, particularly to the Old Age Pensions Act, and also significant changes in policy, all made with the objective of a more generous interpretation of the provisions of the acts. Since that time the terms of eligibility for the Old Age Pension have been liberalized, particularly with regard to the responsibility of children for maintenance of their parents, and two increases of $5.00 each have been added to the pension.

In the second section dealing with care and accommodation, the Committee divides the types of care needed into four categories, in order to simplify a complicated problem. They describe these groups as follows:

A. Active- These are the people capable of doing their own housekeeping, and otherwise looking after themselves in reasonably convenient quarters.

B. Semi-active- People who are up and about, but unable to perform household tasks such as keeping a room clean and preparing meals. These persons require protection and a certain amount of personal care.

C. Inactive- These are incapacitated people usually requiring nursing care.
D. **Senile**—This group requires custodial care.

It is worth while to note briefly the accommodations available for these other groups. The situation facing those who are active, and whose greatest need is for what the Committee termed "reasonably convenient quarters", is very serious and will be discussed in some detail later.

The semi-active aged, the principal concern of the present study, are protected by the Welfare Institutions Licensing Act which provides that any person who uses his or her home for the care of two or more aged persons who are in receipt of some form of social assistance, must secure a license under this Act, whether the service is charged for or not. Large institutions offering similar care are also subject to this supervision. This includes the Vancouver Old People's Home, now known as Taylor Manor, which can accommodate up to fifty men and seven women, (described later). It is financed by the City of Vancouver, and admissions to it are made by the City Social Service Department. There is also a Provincial Home situated at Kamloops which will accommodate one hundred old men, who obtain admission through the Deputy Provincial Secretary at Victoria.

Within Vancouver there are also at present more than twenty-five boarding homes which come under the Welfare Institutions Licensing Act and which have accommodation for something under five hundred persons. Since these form the main subject matter of this study, no more will be said of them here, except that they cater particularly to old people.
in need of a somewhat protective environment and this kind of accommodation is not nearly adequate enough, in point of numbers, to meet the need. For the most part the proprietors do not keep waiting lists for they would soon become so long as to be quite ridiculous.

Some of the people in group C, inactive persons who are incapacitated, requiring nursing care, are accommodated in the three units of the Provincial Infirmary. They were established after 1937 to provide care for approximately five hundred and twenty people who, being chronically ill with some bodily disease or infirmity, do not require care or treatment in acute general hospital or are not likely to benefit from it. Both men and women are admitted to the Marpole Infirmary, and most are bed cases. Allco, near Haney, B. C., is made up of a number of cabins with a central administration office, and has room for eighty men. Persons must be ambulatory to be accepted here. The third unit, Mount St. Mary at Victoria, B. C., admits bed-ridden men and women.

Further needs of the bed-ridden are partially met by private nursing homes, which are supervised under the Hospitals Act, which offer care to two or more bed patients. The matron must be a graduate nurse and must live on the premises. Each patient must have at least eight hundred cubic feet of air space. Since these are privately operated institutions the cost of care is set by the owner, which places it beyond the means of persons on pensions. The average charge has been approximately $75.00 per month. There is accommodation in them for about five hundred people in
Vancouver, and much the same situation obtains regarding the keeping of waiting lists, as with boarding homes for semi-active persons.

Finally, for the aged with special disabilities requiring institutional care there is the Provincial Home for the Aged at Port Coquitlam, which was built in 1936. Regulations state that patients must be 70 years or over and "suffering from physical abnormalities, senile dementia or other disabling conditions as to need institutional care." Applications for admission must be signed by the person or his agent and be accompanied by a certificate from his physician, and is then subject to the approval of the Superintendent of the Home. Prospective patients are sent to Essondale Provincial Hospital for examination, and are then discharged and sent on to the Home for the Aged. Usually they are suffering from some degree of senility.

The charge at the Provincial Home is low enough to be met completely by pensioners, who are allowed $5.00 from their monthly cheques for personal spending. The home has been full to capacity since it was opened and there is always a waiting list. The writer has seen a number of residents in private boarding homes who have become senile since moving into them, and who have had to wait periods up to a year before there was a bed for them in this one Home designed to meet their needs. While it is an institution, and necessarily conducted as such, close contact with family is encouraged and there are daily visiting hours from two to four p.m. As much individual attention as is possible is
given the patients by the staff, which is selected as carefully for their interest in people as for their ability to do the work.

All in all, the situation facing old people in need of protected environments is not too good. While the quality of accommodation offered is of a reasonably high standard, and in some cases excellent, there is not nearly enough of it. Families must go on caring for old people who need special care in their own homes, for lack of proper accommodation elsewhere, and in many cases this involves a great deal of inconvenience and sacrifice for children and grandchildren. Social agencies, particularly the City Social Service Department, are keenly aware of the numbers of old people eking out a drab existence in undesirable surroundings. Where conditions deteriorate to the point that the old person living alone can no longer look after himself he must sometimes be placed in one or the other of the available homes, while families are forced to go on struggling with situations they are scarcely equipped to deal with, because there at least the person is receiving adequate care. There is a terrible dearth of apartments and light-housekeeping rooms with conveniences geared to the needs of elderly people and with the protection of supervision by interested people.

The Active Aged

The first group listed by the Committee on the Care of the Aged, the active old people still able to look after themselves, came in for special study by the Committee.
They face the housing shortage which is so acute in Vancouver, as it is elsewhere, just as do other groups in the general population, but with additional handicaps. One of these is that for the most part, whether on pension or independent, the old people have very limited incomes and must therefore seek rooms at a very low rental. Aggravating this is the fact that old people on the whole need, and look for, specialized types of housing - they need to be on the ground floor or at least not above the second floor; they need warm rooms; and it is desirable that they be on the same floor as a bathroom.

Old people, moreover, are past the peak of their energies, and house hunting in these days calls for almost unlimited energy and stamina. Finally, they face a prejudice on the part of landlords against old people as lodgers, that is perhaps only equalled by the reluctance to take children. Old people are looked upon as being undesirable tenants because of their need for extra heat and often extra services in keeping rooms cleaned and so on. Other tenants object to them often because they are apt to be "fussy" neighbours who dislike noise and activity. Landlords are often annoyed because the old person is putting about the house all day. Finally, and this is a very sound reason, there is the danger that the elderly tenant will later become incapacitated because of advancing age and helplessness, and become a serious problem to the landlord.

In order to obtain some idea as to where old people
were living, and where they would like to live, answers to a questionnaire were obtained from ninety-four old people picked at random. They were interviewed by volunteers. Special attention was paid to the kind of housing at present occupied by each person, and each was asked what his first preference would be if there were enough housing available to make some choice possible. Seventy-eight of the people interviewed were women, and only sixteen were men. Seventy were without marital partner, and twenty-four were living with spouse. Following is the list of places where the ninety-four were living:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Accommodation</th>
<th>No. of persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own home</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented house</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suite</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping room</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding house</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with relatives</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with friends</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In answer to the question about where they would like to live, the following answers were given:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Accommodation</th>
<th>No. of persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping room</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own house</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative house</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With relatives</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suite</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No report</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A desire for privacy was the one thing most stressed by the old people interviewed in this survey. Their hopes were modest, but they each wanted above all a room of their own. A warm comfortable room at a low rental appears to be the dream of all dependent old people, and if a kindly landlady could be thrown in “it would be near the Ideal!” (p.13) The actual situation is that most old people living alone lack most of the conveniences they would ask for, and do need, and in addition in most cases the aged lodger is only tolerated. The Housing Registry reported at that time that there were as many as twenty-five applications per week for assistance in finding rooms from persons who were judged to be seventy or over. The larger portion of these applicants were women, who were more difficult to place than were men of the same ages. Almost all requests were for housekeeping rooms.

From this report it is obvious that there is real need for some provision in housing plans to meet the special requirements of the aged. A sample survey of fifteen hundred old age pensioners served by Centre Unit of City Social Service Department at that time showed that 72.6 per cent lived in single rooms – approximately one thousand and ninety persons. These paid an average of $10.00 per month rent (about one-third of their total income), some paying as high as $15.00 or $18.00 a month.

Study of the Housing of a Selected Group

A different kind of study was made in February, 1947, by the present writer, of one hundred selected cases.
Interest was particularly centred on the kind of housing old people completely dependent upon their pensions were able to obtain. For this reason only those pensioners living entirely alone and having no supplementary incomes and having no relations whatever living within the Greater Vancouver area were selected. The data were collected from the records on file in the West Unit office of the City Social Service Department. The first result of this examination of records was the high ratio of old people living entirely alone. It is shocking to consider that over ten per cent of the pensioners living in one of the more favoured units are without family in the city and entirely dependent upon their pensions. Moreover, this figure is probably conservative since wherever the record was not clear as to the pensioners' status in these respects, the record was not used.

Based on the opinion of the City visitor, this sample hundred showed that the housing occupied by eleven per cent was of excellent quality, offering comfort and convenience to the occupants. Fifteen per cent were living in what visitors considered to be good housing. Forty-two per cent were in housing of only fair quality; and thirty-two per cent were in housing characterized as poor. Nearly three-quarters, therefore, were in housing that fell below reasonably good standards. It must be pointed out that

1. Almost nine hundred and fifty records were examined to collect the required hundred— they were taken alphabetically beginning with "A" and working through to somewhere in the "G's", so that the sample can be assumed to be fairly representative of West Unit cases at least.
a city worker's diagnosis of excellent, good, fair or poor, is not based on the luxuriousness or beauty of a room, but on the convenience and comfort and perhaps, cheerfulness. They are quite used to evaluating threadbare but bright and comfortable surroundings as excellent: the description in other words, may be interpreted in terms of general "livability" of the accommodation.

Detailed account of the houses in which these people lived was available in forty-nine cases. Three of the worst had been condemned by city officials and were scheduled to be demolished. Other persons lived in old run-down rooming houses, some with improvised facilities for light-housekeeping, some in fairly well equipped rooms. Some few were in houses of good standard. Four lived in tiny cottages, two owning these, the other two rented. Of the thirty-four cases where the floor they were living on was reported, ten were in basement suites, another ten on the second floor, six were on the first floor and eight on the third floor or in attic rooms.

The relations between the old people and the landlords or other tenants were reported on in over half of the cases, apparently wherever the degree of these relations seemed important enough to note. Approximately one-third of the fifty-odd reported had extremely friendly contacts with others in the house, little kindnesses were exchanged and a great deal of visiting went on. The remaining two-thirds were on very bad terms with others in the house and complaints were plentiful.
The hundred persons were spotted on a map of the district, and, as might be expected, were found to be living in the main in the poorer housing areas below Broadway between Granville and Main St., and between Granville and Burrard St. The few who were scattered through the better districts, when rechecked, were all found to be paying higher rents; it follows that, since these were all persons with no resources aside from the pension, they were sacrificing diet for the advantages of better rooms in more desirable districts.

The rents paid are very high in proportion to the income — alarmingly high in a few cases. The average rent of the hundred persons was $9.30 per month. However, the eighty-two paying straight cash for rent (omitting the home owners, and the five, all men, who worked for their rent) paid an average rent of $10.77 per month. This varied from the $2.00 paid by one old lady for a tumble-down shack, to the $20.00 per month paid by two persons. Thirty-seven paid over $10.00, while nineteen paid $10.00 per month. More than one record showed that pensioners had told their visitors that in order to save on food they stayed in bed until noon, thus avoiding breakfast, and there were numerous comments to the effect that all but one meal each day consisted of bread and tea. This seems inevitable when one considers that sixty-two of this sample group were paying well over the one-fifth of the income which is generally regarded as the maximum which should be used for rent.
The ages of these people, it may be noted, ranged from seventy to ninety-two years, with an average of seventy-six years nine months. A great many of them, (as will be clearly shown by the following information) had health problems to add to the difficulties of daily living, and it is to be remembered that everyone of them was living alone and had no relatives, even distant relatives, in Vancouver. While thirty of the old people were reported to be in good health, and four in excellent health, ten (which is ten percent) were blind; two of these also had diabetes, and one of the blind diabetics was deaf in addition. (The number of blind in this sample may be abnormally high and is perhaps well over the average ratio of pensioner-population) Six showed definite signs of senility, reported as being eccentric, querelous, suffering from loss of memory, or being very confused mentally. Only four reported heart conditions, one had had a stroke; three had high blood pressure, which after all is an allied condition. Two suffered from arthritis, two more from swollen feet and ankles. One each had the following—eczema, cancer, neuritis, crippled leg. In addition, eight were said to be either frail or feeble.

Naturally this is a limited survey but one is forced to conclude that in view of the extreme difficulties old people meet when trying to live alone under the present housing conditions, those who have found their way into the twenty-eight or thirty boarding homes and rest homes in the city are fortunate indeed. They no longer are struggling
on alone, (indeed unfortunately, many have given up doing anything but wait for death) but they are assured of three meals a day in warm houses, and care for their needs whether they are well or ill.

The same writer made a second less detailed survey in May 1948, to find where pensioners in the same area are living. In this instance the first thousand files of Old Age Pensioners were examined consecutively, and a count made, under nine categories, of where the pensioners are making their homes. No attention was given to the quality of the accommodation or the amount of comfort the pensioners enjoyed. The following page shows the tabulated results of this count. It must be remembered in considering the results shown in this table, that, as in the previous survey, the area under survey consists mainly of residential sections. A similar count at the other Unit Offices of the City Social Service Department would show very different results.

Two hundred and eighteen of the one thousand files examined actually represented two people each, since in each case they were opened for a man and his wife. One hundred and twenty-two couples were both in receipt of pension. Seventy-two married men were pensioned while their wives were not, and fourteen women were pensioned while their husbands were not. Of these the majority are living in their own homes or in rented houses or suites, while the remaining couples (fifty-four) live in the homes of relatives.

Almost exactly one-half of the files examined re-
## HOUSING AND FAMILY SITUATION OF AGED PERSONS

(Sample of 1000 Social Assistance cases, Vancouver, mid 1948)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Accommodation</th>
<th>Married Couples</th>
<th>Single Men</th>
<th>Single Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living with relatives</td>
<td>'both on husband on' 'wife on' 'pension' 'pension' 'pension'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with relatives</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In own home</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In rented house</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In rented suite</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding in private house</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room, light housekeeping</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single room, eating out</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In boarding home</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In institution</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (c)</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Special tabulation from records of City Social Service Department, West Unit (Vancouver). Judging from this sample, couples constitute about 40 per cent of all cases.

(a) With relatives in Vancouver. (b) Of these, 65 were living with unmarried sons or daughters. (c) The thousand cases comprised 1208 persons, of whom 1122 were pensioners: 213 (11 per cent) were unable to care for themselves, because of failing health, handicaps, etc. (including 17 completely bedridden, 54 blind).
presented pensioners living in the homes of relatives. It is interesting that, of these, sixty-five are making their homes with unmarried sons or daughters. One file noted that two unmarried daughters cared for their aged mother, who had had both legs amputated, and who was also blind. Eighteen of the old people living with relatives were blind. One is inclined, of course, to think of the old people who are able to live with relatives as being fortunate indeed, since they are sheltered and cared for in the bosoms of their families. How many are in fact happy with their families could only be learned by a careful and continuing study of a number of such situations, done by a skilled person.

Sixteen per cent of the files examined showed old people living in light-housekeeping rooms. Over a third of these had no relatives living in Vancouver. Only thirty-nine pensioners were found to be living in boarding homes for aged persons, less than four per cent of the pensioners whose files were seen. When this point was mentioned to a worker from City Social Service Department, it was learned that all those pensioners whose pensions are supplemented to bring them up to the boarding-home rates, are given social assistance files; accordingly these are not included in the survey under discussion.

That the thousand files represented eight hundred and ninety-four women, and only three hundred and twenty-four men only confirms popular knowledge that women outlive men. These figures, interesting as they are, must be applied only to a limited area of Vancouver. Another area might
reasonably be expected to show a preponderance of men, with the overall figure for the city itself lying somewhere between the two.

These surveys are all thought-provoking, and point up the need for community planning for old people, but they do not in any real sense measure the amounts and kinds of accommodation needed. It may be taken for granted that a great many more of a variety of kinds of housing are necessary before old people will have adequate choice of homes suited to their desires and their special needs. Some approximately accurate estimate of the need for boarding-home care might be arrived at through relatively long-term study of applications made to all such homes in the city. It is justifiable to say at least that not as many boarding homes as are needed are available.
Chapter 111

THE LICENSING AND SUPERVISION
OF BOARDING HOMES

British Columbia is the only Canadian province that has codified its provisions for licensing and supervision of Welfare Institutions into a single piece of legislation. A survey of the legislation in this respect in the other provinces reveals that provision for licensing and inspection is very spotty, and machinery for enforcement is inadequate. Children's homes are more often covered than any other type of home, with such legislation as there is incorporated into a Child Welfare Act or Protection of Children Act, or some other comparable act. Where an institution is operated by the government it is covered by an act of its own which guarantees standards for that particular home, without giving any protection to inmates in other privately operated homes.

Alberta has passed an enabling act making it possible for any municipality or union of two or more municipalities to set up an inspection and licensing body. This is not compulsory upon the municipalities, and performance therefore depends upon the social thinking and probably finances available in the individual municipalities; it can mean that while homes in one area of the province are required to meet specific standards, similar homes in other areas are completely without supervision. None of the remaining provinces have gone even this far in recognizing the need for
the setting of legal standards of care in boarding homes, and proper enforcement of them.

**The Welfare Institutions Licensing Act**

British Columbia's *Act Respecting Private Welfare Institutions* was assented to on December 10th, 1937. "Welfare institution" is defined so as to include any kind of building used as a boarding home for two or more children, two or more pregnant women, two or more aged or infirm persons, or fifteen or more able-bodied unemployed. In each case the phrase "with or without charge" is used in the definition. Part (c) of the definition which relates directly to the homes with which this study is concerned, is worthy of reproduction in full.

"Welfare institution" means a building or part of a building, or a tent, or any other structure, conducted or operated by any person and which is used, in whole or in part:

(c) As a refuge, shelter, poor house, infirmary, nursing-home, boarding-home, or other institution to serve destitute, defective, delinquent, or other under-privileged persons, wherein food and lodging are furnished, with or without charge, for five or more persons, who, on account of age, infirmity, physical or mental defect, or other disability, are unemployable and who are destitute or are in receipt of old-age pension, poor relief, or some other form of public assistance granted only to persons who are destitute, excepting any home maintained by a person to whom such inmates are related by blood or marriage."

This section was amended in March 1943, by striking out "five" and substituting "two", so that the smaller boarding homes were brought under the Act.

The Provincial Secretary is charged with the
administration of this Act, which provides that for the purpose of administering and carrying out the provisions, a "Welfare Institutions Board" of not more than five persons is to be appointed. One member of the board, the Superintendent of Child Welfare is named, and a second is to be a member of the Provincial Board of Health. The three remaining members are all members of the Civil Service of British Columbia. All members of the board serve without remuneration, except for such expenses as are incurred by them in carrying out their official duties.

Supervision and inspection under the Act are carried out by a staff of four, of whom three are inspectors. They are charged with making an investigation of, and a report to the Board upon, every application for a license to operate a welfare institution, and also with annual inspection of every welfare institution in the Province. Operation of a welfare institution without license is prohibited, subject to penalty of from $25.00 to $300.00.

Subject to these provisions, the Board may issue a license to any person to conduct and operate a welfare institution if it is satisfied that:

(a) The applicant is a fit and proper person to operate a welfare institution.

(b) The premises to be used are in a clean and sanitary condition and in good repair and are reasonably secure against the hazard of fire.

(c) The applicant is likely to conduct and operate a welfare institution in a manner that will not be detrimental to the welfare of the inmates or to the general public interest.
The Board has the power to cancel the license if the licensee or any of his employees violates any provisions of the Act or the regulations, and can refuse to reissue a license until it is satisfied that he and his employees are likely to abide by the said provisions. Every licensed welfare institution is open at all times to visitation and inspection by any member of the Board or any authorized representative of the Board, and these representatives may also examine all books and records, and enquire into all matters concerning the institution, its employees, and its inmates.

Among the things which the Act forbids proprietors of institutions to do is to bring or encourage in any way to be brought, persons from other provinces to enter institutions here. They cannot solicit funds from the public without first informing the Board in writing. The Act does not apply to private institutions which are covered by the Hospital Act, nor to hotels so licensed by any municipality, nor to homes operated by any duly incorporated Children's aid society, nor to any detention home.

With regard to the Board's power to make regulations, the Act states that:

"The lieutenant-Governor in Council may make such regulations as he considers necessary or advisable for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of this Act according to their true intent and supplying any deficiency therein."

1. The inspectors also have full rights, under the Act, to enter and investigate any building where it is suspected that such building is being used as a welfare institution.
Such power to make regulations is extended to cover the following, without however, limiting the generality of the clauses quoted above.

(a) Prescribing the manner in which licenses shall be applied for, and the form and content of such applications.

(b) Prescribing the fees to be paid for such licenses.

(c) Prescribing the conditions with which any applicant for a license must comply in order to become eligible for a license.

(d) Prescribing the conduct, management, appointments, and general standards of operation to be required of licensed welfare institutions.

(e) Prescribing the keeping of records and the submission of reports to the Board.

(f) Generally for the better carrying out of the provision of this Act.

The Board is required to report annually to the Provincial Secretary on the administration of the Act, giving such information as he shall require.

Evaluation of the Act

Clearly this Act carefully defines the jurisdiction of the powers of the licensing Board and its officers so that they are able to act effectively and so that every type of Welfare Institution not covered by other specific acts is covered here. Having done this, it leaves the writing of regulations which such institutions must follow up to the government department, so that standards may be set, and raised, without the necessity of going through the slow process of bringing each desirable change to the legislature for its approval. The quality of administra-
tion under such an Act depends, of course, on the quality of the personnel who are administering it, and could conceivably result in all kinds of laxity and abuses. The Act itself provides a safeguard against this by requiring that the Superintendent of Neglected Children (now the Superintendent of Child Welfare) and a senior official of the Department of Health sit on the Board, along with three others who are employed in the Civil Service. Such responsible people, it can be assumed, will see to it that the regulations under which licensing and supervision take place are sound and reasonable, and that the personnel employed to carry out the actual work are competent, interested persons who will turn in a high level of performance.

Such an Act guards men, women, and children of all ages, who must live in private welfare institutions, against exploitation by the proprietors, and guarantees a certain minimum of physical care and comfort. It enables the individuals who administer it to enforce a good standard now and work towards enforcement of a higher standard in the future, without limiting their power in any way to put into practice new and more progressive regulations. This type of Act perhaps needs a higher quality of personnel in order to be well administered than does an act outlining all regulations specifically, but given good personnel, it frees them to do a better job.

**Regulations Under the Act**

The regulations set up under the Welfare Institutions Licensing Act clearly place more importance on
standards and their inspection than upon license fees. The fee to be paid for a license is only $1.00, and there is no fee for renewal of licenses. The applicant is required to make application for a license to the Board in a prescribed form, and every licensee undertakes to set up a book-keeping system that is satisfactory to the Chief Inspector.

The regulations state that "no applicant shall be granted a license who is in receipt of public relief", and elsewhere, that "any licensee in receipt of public relief (excluding hospital or medical relief) shall have his license rescinded". This is designed as a protection against exploitation of old people and other dependent groups, since it is the feeling of the licensing administrators that the making of money should not be the primary motive of anyone who conducts a welfare institution. Exception has been made to this clause in one instance where the Inspector and the Board felt the woman concerned was of exceptionally fine character.

The regulations further require that each licensee must keep a written record in a book or card index in a form satisfactory to the Chief Inspector and the record should contain the following information: the date of admission, full name, birth date and birthplace, marital status, the address from which he or she came, as well as such other information as the source and amount of maintenance and the full name and address of next of kin. A record must also be kept of departures, giving date of
discharge, and the reason for leaving.

The remaining regulations pertain to the length of time within which a licensee must report a change of his own or a manager's address to the Board, the date upon which the Chief Inspector must make his annual report, and one or two other regulations not relevant to a welfare institution giving care to the aged.

The Process of Issuing a License

A sample report on the licensing of a home for old people was prepared for presentation at the 1947 Conference of the Canadian Association of Social Work by the Assistant Inspector, showing the steps through which an applicant must go before being granted a license by the licensing Board. Careful inspection of the proposed premises were made in order to ascertain that they were suitable for accommodation for aged persons. The applicant in this particular instance was a widow with some means, and appeared to be a pleasant, capable person of good reputation. She redecorated the house, bearing in mind the advice of the inspector. After approval of the home in writing had been forwarded to the inspector by the zoning authorities, the fire warden, the building inspector, the inspector visited the home. Judging from the accommodation, including the required five hundred cubic feet of space per person, the cooking and dining facilities, and the bathroom facilities, the inspector's advice to the Board was that the home could accommodate twelve aged persons. On the
basis of the good accommodation and the favourable impres-
sion of the applicant as a person, a license was issued to
her for this purpose.

Reasons for refusal to License

The Annual Reports of the Welfare Institutions
licensing Board indicate that approximately two applica-
tions for licensing are received for every license issued.
Actually nearly four investigations of new applications
are made for each new license issued since most of the
licenses are renewals. Most licenses are refused because
the applicant does not appear to those concerned to be a
fit and proper person to operate an institution. Some
are refused because of unsuitable accommodation for the
purpose for which the license is asked, and just a few
are refused because the financial situation is such that
there would be danger of exploitation of inmates, or of
the venture failing because of financial insecurity. In
most cases the Inspector is able to give the applicant a
reasonable explanation for refusal on the grounds that
the accommodation is unsuitable, but where this is mani-
festly impossible, and the reason for refusal is based on
personality, the situation must be handled with understand-
ing and sympathy. In such instances a great deal of time
is often devoted to helping the applicant accept the fact
that he or she is not suited to this type of work and
should instead turn to some other field of endeavour.

John J. Griffin in an article entitled "Shel-
tered Care for the Aged," has outlined the factors that his long experience (as Supervisor of the Bureau of Old Age Assistance at Somerville, Massachusetts) has shown are most important in the licensing and supervision of boarding homes for the aged. The legislation controlling it should be definite in giving the power of inspecting and enforcing regulations, but should leave the setting of standards to the administrators. As already indicated, the British Columbia legislation measures up well in this regard. Physical standards should be high, and certain regulations as to amount of air space per person, the numbers of persons to a bathroom, the provision of handrails on all stairs, and many more, should be insisted on as minimum standards in all homes. The most important factor he felt to be, however, that the operator of the home be a fit and proper person, and that the legislation should include a clause enabling the administrators of the Act to refuse license to a person who otherwise meets all requirements if that person does not seem to possess the type of personality that would make for contented inmates in the boarding home. It is evident that this opinion is shared by the administrators charged with carrying out the terms of the Welfare Institutions Licensing Act.

A number of the old people's boarding homes now in operation do not meet the desired standards set up by the licensing Board. These were homes that were already in existence at the time the Act was passed. They have presented a special problem, since they provide badly needed accommodation, and, to the operators, they represent a big investment in time, work and money. Therefore the Inspectors have worked with these homes, endeavouring to raise standards slowly where changes seemed necessary and possible. This has involved a long-term educational job for the inspectors, and a very difficult one. That it has been done well is indicated by the appreciative way in which all the proprietors of homes, in interviews, spoke of the licensing personnel.

The educational work done by the inspectors is not confined to those operators who are running homes established before the advent of licensing and inspection. Much is done, and a great deal more needs to be done, to help the operators of homes to appreciate the needs and capabilities of the aged, and to help them to meet the former and to help develop the latter to the full. The volume of work at present facing the staff is too great to allow for the intensive work with individuals that would probably be necessary to help operators of such homes give the finest possible service to the aged inmates.
PART II

THE BOARDING HOMES
Chapter IV.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The Boarding Homes with which this study is concerned, are those which offer "room and board" to old people in a relatively protected environment; this simply means that their meals are prepared for them and their quarters cared for by others, and there is a matron or some responsible person in the position of supervising them. Such boarding homes are designed only for old people who are still able to be up and about and to look after their own personal needs, but who are no longer so active or so strong that they can care for all their own physical needs in an unprotected setting. It was felt by this writer at the outset that old persons' needs would in all probability fall into two broad general categories, the physical and the social. The physical needs of the aged are no different from the basic needs of all people, for food, shelter and clothing. However, it seems highly probable that, due to the physical limitations and even disabilities imposed on the individual by advancing age, some modifications in the environment would be needed to afford the highest degree of comfort to the aged - modifications possibly in building structure, furniture, and food, for instance.

The term "social needs" is vague enough to cover any phase of a person's life, and, indeed, the writer found
it impossible to make a clear division between a person's need for a good diet, for example, and his need for pleasant surroundings at his meal. The physical adjustments are of great importance, and should not be minimized, but of much greater importance is the atmosphere of the home. The old person, like people of all ages, needs warmth and acceptance, a feeling of independence and a sense of his own worth as an individual. He needs security and status just as he did in his youth and middle years. The fact that he is now living in a boarding home implies that he has lost his closest family ties in one way or another, and he is no longer at work at a job, and has given up, for whatever reasons, the task of caring for most of his personal needs. The boarding home has become to a greater or lesser degree (depending on the individual and his own circumstances) his home, and must offer, in part or in whole, to take the place formerly occupied by friends, family, work, and other activities.

It was realized that much more intensive study would be necessary if a valid evaluation were to be made of how the boarding homes which were surveyed are meeting the social and personal needs of their residents. However, the content of the conversations of the matrons with the writer, and their observable behaviour when talking of the old people, could be expected to give some indication of their attitudes towards the aged. The study is not intended to be a critical report geared to exposing
faults and lacks in existing homes. It was certainly a learning process for the writer, who hoped to learn, from the positive elements found in a number of boarding homes, what is both desirable and possible in any such home; negative and unfavourable impressions are used in the study for what may be learned from them that might benefit guests in old people's homes. It was felt that attitudes and relationships within the home can be critical factors in creating a happy or an unhappy environment for old people, and the study accordingly paid particular attention to the awareness of the matrons to these factors.

How many Aged need Boarding Home care?

Vancouver has about thirty old people's homes which offer protected care to ambulatory old people. These homes have beds for approximately five hundred persons, two-thirds of them men and the remaining third for women. In view of the fact that a substantial proportion of old age pensioners in the city are entirely without relatives living within Greater Vancouver, (as indicated in the preceding chapter) it is obvious that a number vastly greater than five hundred could use boarding home care with advantage if it were available. There were no means by which even a reasonably accurate estimate could be obtained of the numbers of aged persons who could profit by a boarding home placement— and would accept such placement. Operators and matrons of the homes in existence have found it impossible to keep waiting lists because the lists became so fantastically
long. One operator said that almost every day applicants or their friends came to his home hoping to find a vacancy.

A rough and admittedly very inaccurate estimate of the number of old people—aged sixty-five years and over—who are living alone in single rooms might be reached by using the figures arrived at by the 1945 Survey of the Committee on the Care of the Aged. Of the Vancouver population, probably between twenty-four and twenty-five thousands are sixty-five or over. (Seven per cent of the British Columbia population is of this age group) The survey recorded that 72.6 per cent of a sample of fifteen hundred old age pensioners served by the Centre Unit of City Social Service Department were living in light-housekeeping rooms. If this sample is representative, then between seventeen and eighteen thousand persons of sixty-five and over, are probably living alone in housekeeping rooms in the city. There is no way of estimating even very roughly the numbers of persons of that age group who are living with family or friends, and for whom the boarding home placement would be desirable.

Social workers are very much aware of the shortage of such facilities, as are a great many lay people through their contacts with old people who are relatives or acquaintances. This study is concerned not with the problem of the extreme shortage of boarding homes, but with the welfare aspects of such homes, and special attention will be given in the chapters following to such matters as
provision for privacy of persons who must share rooms, and facilities for recreation within boarding homes. It is not out of place however to remark here that a variety of kinds of housing are needed now and for the future for the aged members of the population. Cottages, apartments for couples and single persons, cooperative houses and boarding homes all should have their place - and their provision would not lighten greatly the existing shortage of boarding homes for the "second category" of the aged.

Population of the Homes Visited

It is a very significant fact that only about one-third of the five hundred beds available in Vancouver are for women, in spite of the fact that there are at least as many women in the older age range as there are men. It was generally agreed by the matrons, when they were questioned on this preponderance of accommodation offered for men, that the women left alone in their old age are better able to look after their own needs than are men, most of whom have never learned to keep house and cook. Possibly, too, they thought, older women more often find a place for themselves in the homes of children than do older men who are not so likely to be able to help with the housekeeping and the care of the children. Some matrons expressed a preference for men guests who, they said, are not as critical of services in a home, and are much less likely to quarrel among themselves. At least one matron felt that aged women "poke and pry" and fuss continually and are al-
ways "underfoot". However other matrons preferred women guests because they make less work, are more self-reliant, and on the whole much more pleasant and easy to get along with, than are men. It would appear therefore that there is more accommodation offered for men than women because more of the individual matrons and operators happen to prefer having male guests, rather than that there is actually greater need for such accommodation for men. It is to be further observed that homes for old men only are apt to be rather plainer and less pretentious than are homes for old women, and possibly the persons opening such homes have felt that women would not accept uncritically rather unattractive surroundings, even though facilities might be excellent.

A high proportion, probably well over half, of the persons in the boarding homes are in receipt of social allowance, old age pension or other assistance, and the City Social Service Department or their families make up the difference between the board rate and their pension rate. The remainder are supported by their own investments or by their families, or in a very few instances, by friends.

The populations of the boarding homes seem to be drawn from all economic levels and from every variety of family situation. No two homes reported anything like the same proportion of married, widowed and single persons, or persons with, as against persons without, family members still in contact with them. Whereas, for instance, one home
with twenty men living in it reported that with one exception all the inmates were either single or had lost the marital partner and had no relatives interested in them, a second home sheltering twenty-five men reported that nearly all have some family or relatives living in or near Vancouver with whom contact is maintained. In the former home most of the men were ex-loggers or labourers, the majority on pension; in the latter home over half are now in receipt of pension, but some inmates had been professional men or white-collar workers and a number have private means. Standards in the two homes are quite similar, but the board rate charged in the second home is considerably lower than that charged in the first.

Similarly, one matron of a home serving fifteen women said most of her guests are without living relatives, while a few have children or others who help to support and who visit them from time to time. A second matron of a home of similar size reported that most of her aged guests have families who have pushed the ladies out of their homes and lives, and who grudge every penny and every moment of time or effort the old people cost them. These homes again have comparable standards, while the second charges the higher board rate.

Regarding the make-up of the population of the boarding homes, then, it is only safe to say that they come from all income levels and all kinds of family situ-
ations. A good many of course are alone in the world, ei-
ther because they have never married, or because for one
reason or another spouses and other relatives are gone.
Others have families who cannot keep them at home because
of practical considerations, or because of unhappy rela-
tionships. This much is certain, however, wherever the
old people have come from, and however much or little they
may now have in money or in relationships, they need to
find security, acceptance and understanding, and a chance
to live to the extent of their capacities, in the boarding
home which has now become their home.

Method of Collecting Material

In the course of this study, field trips were
made to sixteen old people's homes. In all but one home
the writer was shown over the entire establishment, in-
cluding basements and attics, if there were any attics.
These tours of inspection were interesting and valuable,
but the most important information was gained from inter-
views with the matrons or owners of the homes, with some
additional material obtained from interviews with inmates
of the homes. Appointments were made in advance by tele-
phone in fifteen instances, with some explanation being
given of the study that was being undertaken. (1)

(1) Three homes so contacted were not visited because the ma-
trons were unwilling to see the visitor; one said she could
not possibly spare the time, the second could not be per-
suaded she could give any information the visitor couldn't
get by calling the Inspector and making inquiries, and
the third said bluntly that she 'wanted no one messing about
in her boarding home'.

-52-
Each of the matrons expressed some degree of interest in the study, some becoming quite enthusiastic and eager not only to give the writer any help they could, but also to get from her any suggestions she might have, based on what she had seen in other homes visited. They all seemed to grasp at once that the writer was there to learn from them, and not to ferret out matters for criticism or even for special praise. Four of them—one-quarter of the group—went out of their way to ensure the writer an opportunity for fairly lengthy talks with at least a few of the inmates. Two made the visit an occasion for tea in the livingroom with all the guests, before giving a personal interview. At Soroptomist House all the ladies had been told of the purpose of the visit and more than an hour was spent with them, over a very attractive lunch, in discussing various aspects of boarding homes for old people. A number of interesting and constructive suggestions were offered by the ladies, who had obviously been talking the matter over during the preceding four or five days.

Of the remaining homes in the city which have not been visited, three were ruled out because, catering as they do to special groups such as blind persons or tubercular patients, they present problems needing very special adjustments, and could not be considered to belong to the general group of homes offering boarding care to ambulatory old persons. Two more were not visited because of the illness of the matrons, although in both cases the
writer was invited to call when the matron had recovered. Another was not visited because, in spite of a careful check of the correct address, and three separate attempts to locate it, the writer has to date been unable to find it. The remaining three were not visited because of a combination of distance, inclement weather, and an attack of influenza suffered by the writer.

The Facts Sought for the Study

Before the field trips to the homes were made, a rough questionnaire was drawn up covering the information the writer hoped to obtain on each trip, for her own guidance in carrying out the interviews. Mrs. Page, Assistant Inspector of the Welfare Institutions' Licensing Office, gave extremely valuable help in this preliminary work, as well as at intervals throughout the year whenever such help was needed. Experimental visits were made to the Icelandic Old Folks' Home, with the cooperation of the matron, Mrs. Thompson, to test out the tentative question outline. These visits showed clearly that it would be necessary to collect a good deal more material regarding the physical plant than had been at first anticipated in view of the high standards required by the licensing act and the excellent supervision given the homes.

The final outline of questions to be used as a guide in the interviews included the following rather broad headings

(1) The physical set-up.
The routine and house rules.

The inmates; their ages, sex, characteristics and background.

Recreation and activities pursued by the inmates.

Personal adjustments; to the routine of the home, to the other inmates, to the matron.

Participation of the old people in the conduct of the home.

In most instances it was unnecessary for the writer to pose the questions since the matrons demonstrated their willingness to help by discussing their own boarding homes and the problems they meet in them, and their ideas as to what features they feel are most important in such homes, with little need for prompting or directing.

The information so gathered covered all phases of life in boarding homes, and showed some differences in points of view on specific matters among proprietors of homes as to what old people want and need. However, several principles emerged upon which there was general agreement amongst proprietors, and a number of interesting means of modifying the environment to adjust to the needs of the aged were observed which were of great interest.
Chapter V

GENERAL FACILITIES OF BOARDING HOMES

The sixteen homes visited group naturally under four classifications according to the persons or groups operating them. Two, the Icelandic Old People's Home and the Jewish Old People's Home, were opened by the respective national groups which they are intended to serve, and are supported in part by the contributions from the group, and partly by payments made by the old people, with some additional help from the provincial government. Three more are non-profit undertakings, two being subsidized by service clubs, and the third by the operator. Taylor Manor, situated on Boundary Road, is operated by the City of Vancouver, with admissions all being made through the City Social Service Department. Finally, the fourth and by far the largest group of homes, ten in all, are run by private individuals on a business basis.

The majority of the homes accept persons on pension or social assistance, usually under agreements with the City Social Service Department. In such cases the pension cheque is paid over to the city, with a ten per cent return made to the individual for spending money, and the City pays the home the rate which has been set by the City Social Service Department. At present (1948) this rate is $55.00 per month, having been raised to this amount during the past years in recognition of the increased costs of food.
and other operating expenses. A few accept only private patients, some of whom are on pensions; in these cases the family of the patient pays the difference between the pension and the board rate and supplies all clothing and other personal needs. Mrs. Fowler's home, which is run on a non-profit basis, is almost unique in that she charges her guests only $27.50 per month, which enables pensioners living in her home to support themselves on their pensions without reference to the City department. The Icelandic Old People's Home charges $30.00 per month except where a pensioner is in receipt of a pension of only $30.00, (e.g. , if he applied for his pension in Manitoba this is the rate he receives) in which case the charge is $25.00.

Because the writer was interested in the matter of property settlements made to homes by people on entering, she discussed this with most of the matrons interviewed. Several had had some experience with them although only one home in Vancouver was mentioned as making such a settlement of property compulsory. A second home has accepted small settlements where the resident has expressed a desire to bequeath his estate to the home, but this is rarely done and only at the request of the individual.

Among the matrons who had had experience with property settlements there seemed to be general agreement on the effect these arrangements had on the residents and the relationships in the home. Where old people had been required to make over their assets to the proprietors of
a home, whether these were individual or boards, the ar-
nangements did have the advantage that persons with very
small estates ensured themselves a comfortable home for
the remainder of their lives when they possibly could not
have done so outside the home. Under such an arrangement
also they felt a certain proprietary interest in the home.
On the other hand there was always a risk that someone who
had concluded such an arrangement might feel that he had
done badly, and even that the persons in charge of the home
had been guilty of dishonesty. The act of signing away
one's property in this manner, even though in fact they re-
cieve a quid pro quo, seemed to reduce the person to a de-
pendent position, perhaps for the first time in his life,
and could give rise to all kinds of resentment. Once the
agreement had been made, the old person might with some
reason feel that he was now irrevocably trapped and must
spend the rest of his days in this house, even if he should
later desire to move out of it. Finally, such arrangements
can be a cause of much dissension in a home where someone
who has signed over a large estate receives the same treat-
ment in all respects as another person who has contributed
little if anything to the assets of the Board running the
home. The more equitable kind of arrangement by which in-
mates pay as they go, whether the source of their payment
is private or public funds, results in easier and less com-
plicated relations between proprietors and inmates, as well
as between inmates themselves.

-58-
The matrons whose opinions were asked concerning such arrangements with inmates of boarding homes all expressed the view that the persons who pay their board by the month at a set rate retain a valuable feeling of independence, and are more ready to make every effort to adjust to the home and to other persons in it. They do not feel, as do some who have signed over property, that they need not bother to do their part in helping the home run smoothly since they cannot be asked to move. One matron with almost twenty years of experience in boarding and nursing home work said that old people are far too easily exploited, and are only protected against exploitation if there are clear-cut contractual arrangements. She felt that while the administrators of the homes which accepted deeds of property from the old people going into the homes, might be scrupulously honest and in point of fact even giving such old people "more than their money's worth," such transactions could lead to real abuses if future administrators should happen not to be honest. She further felt that there should at no time be agreements by which inmates would will their property to the boarding home, for much the same reasons that they should not be required to sign/over on entering the home. Whatever arrangements might be concluded in these respects should be done only on the inmate's own request.

Opinions on this subject were sought from several operators and the consensus of opinion was that they felt
strongly such arrangements only create problems with the homes. Most have not directly had experience with them, but they all agreed they preferred a month by month payment of board at an agreed rate since both inmate and operator then know exactly where they stand in relation to one another.

**Locations of the Boarding Homes**

All but two of the homes visited are within a block or two of shopping centres, and over half are also close to parks or beaches. Only one is so far from bus or street car routes that the old people cannot easily reach them. These facts are important to the happiness of the old people, almost all of whom want to get about a little, to visit friends or family, go to stores and perhaps movies, and spend quiet times in parks or on the beaches. They do not want to be cut off from the active life of the city around them, and enjoy being able to watch traffic and movement from the windows of their homes, as well as going out on walks, shopping tours and visits. A centrally located boarding home offers them both the quiet security of the home itself, and the opportunity to keep up some interest in affairs outside the home.

Taylor Manor is farther from shopping and other facilities than any other home, and this appears to have most to do with the fact that until quite recently it has not been full to capacity. In compensation it
has peasant, spacious grounds, and anyone desiring to share in gardening or caring for the grounds is encouraged to do so and may be given a plot of his own if he desires. Their own private park gives the old people a chance to enjoy being out of doors, and a few out-door games are supplied to give them further interests. Several other homes, including Mrs. Fowler's and Mrs. Bailey's, as well as The King's Daughters' Rest Home have quite spacious grounds. Mrs. Fowler's home seems to have the ideal location for the old men who live there, since Stanley Park, Coal Harbour, and the central part of the city are all within walking distance, and the rather heavy traffic past the home is always a source of interest to the men. Other groups of old people prefer quieter locations with little traffic passing by, but all save the few who are recluses by nature, wish to live within easy reach of stores and parks and other facilities.

Size of the Homes

The majority of the homes have been converted to the present use from family homes. Taylor Manor, which can accommodate fifty-nine persons, and The Mayfair Nursing Home, with room for forty-two, are institutions, although only Taylor Manor was originally built as one. Some of the homes, for instance, the Icelandic and the Jewish homes, and some of the private homes, have luxurious appointments, with fine wood panelling, beautiful staircases and massive fire places. Others, such as Mrs. Bailey's and Mrs. Deal's, are quite ordinary family homes. Mrs. Fowler's home appears
to be very old and rather run down as a building, although it offers comfortable quarters to the inmates. Cheerful surroundings that give adequate attention to physical comfort can be achieved in houses of quite unpretentious proportions as well as in the luxurious houses.

A Recently Opened Boarding Home

It will perhaps be more rewarding to describe the facilities in three or four homes than to endeavor to make general statements regarding facilities in all the homes visited. The first one to be discussed was opened during the past year by a national group for its aged citizens, and was of course required to meet the standards now demanded by the licensing body.

This home is located in the Shaughnessy district close to a street-car line. It has a large lawn in front and a two-car garage and roomy garden at the back. The verandah can be used by quite a number of persons during the summer months. A small park is located one block away and it is not more than four blocks to one of the largest of the city's shopping centres. The house, while weatherbeaten, looks attractive from the outside, and the large front door opens into a beautiful hall. The hall is panelled in oak and the wide staircase has a railing around three sides of it on the second floor, so that there appears to be a balcony at that level. The coloured skylight above the stairs adds dignity to the large hall. The hall opens into a spacious drawing room which is very comfortably fur-
nished and has a radio and some books for the use of the residents. The first floor also has the matron's quarters, a big cheerful kitchen, well equipped, and the dining room where the old people take their meals. There is a complete bathroom on this floor.

The second floor has five rooms in which sixteen persons are living; one room has two, a married couple, sharing it, two rooms each have three persons in them, and two more rooms have four in them. There are three complete bathrooms, including tubs and showers, on this floor. The third floor has five rooms also, one of which is occupied by the housekeeping staff. One man has a single room, two live in a second room, with three in each of the remaining two rooms. There is only one bath on this floor, with the toilet separate, and the matron agrees there should be at least another bathroom plus a second toilet for the number of persons on this floor. She agreed also that no home for the aged should have more than two storeys. She tries to make sure those living on the third floor are the healthiest and spryest in the home, but two flights of stairs are hard on any aged person.

The rooms are all equipped with single beds for each person, bedside tables and bed lamps for each. Usually two share a dresser, but the women have a dressing table of their own. The clothes closets are all very roomy and have lights in them so that they can be - and are - used as dressing rooms, giving some privacy to people who must share
their room with one or more persons.

The basement has one single room for a man, and two men sharing a second room. These are much plainer and simpler rooms than those upstairs. There is a library and sitting room in the basement also, not yet properly furnished. The library of the sponsoring national group has been moved into this room and is a point of contact for the members with the community outside the home. There is a well-equipped laundry and ironing room where the laundry for the home is done, and where inmates can do their personal washing if they wish to. There is a complete bathroom and a second toilet and wash basin in the basement. There is a rough partially equipped workshop in the basement which the men are free to use.

Fire escapes from the second and third floors and a fire door in the basement were built in order to meet licensing requirements, and exit lights put above the doors leading to these escapes. The stairs throughout the house, including those leading down into the basement, are broad, rise gently, and have new handrails where there were not already bannisters. The generous linen supplies and much of the furniture were acquired when the house, which was previously used as a guest house, was purchased. The whole house is well lit by large windows and by generously distributed electric lights.

An Older Established Boarding Home

The second boarding home to be described is very
different in type. It is one which accepts both private and city patients, all of whom must be ambulatory. The population here is mixed, since some come for a convalescent period following operations, and leave again after a short time. Others, particularly the older persons, stay in the home for several years.

The home is a large, attractive looking building set in quite extensive grounds which adjoin a public park. The verandah is used by some for sitting out of doors, but the majority go out to the park or down to the beach. A new bus route passes very close by and makes downtown Vancouver available to the patients.

The home accommodates about forty persons; the men's rooms are always filled and there is a waiting list for them, but there are frequently vacancies in the Women's wards. The charge at the time this home was visited was $45.00 per month, but an increase to probably $55.00 was anticipated.

The main floor has room for over twenty men, most of whom are in two rooms which adjoin one another and in the day time are made one by opening the curtained French doors. These rooms are well lighted by large windows, but are bare and unattractive. Each room contains six or seven hospital-style beds, straight wooden chairs and bedside tables. There are two full tiled bathrooms on this floor. The kitchen is well-equipped, including tray racks which hold the individual trays for each inmate. Closet space
is almost entirely lacking. The matron expressed great regret that there is no common room for the patients' use, and feels that this is one of the most serious lacks in the home.

The stairs are wide and equipped with both banisters and handrails. The rooms upstairs, occupied by the women patients, are more convenient and attractive than are those on the main floor. One room contains three beds, another contains four, and the remaining two have five beds each. These rooms are somewhat crowded, but have wicker easy chairs and more colourful decoration, and there are more personal belongings of the patients in evidence. These rooms do not look as much like hospital wards as do the downstairs rooms. There is one full bathroom and a separate toilet on this floor. The closet space is more nearly adequate.

This home has been in operation for a number of years, and fails to meet present licensing requirements in many respects, but over the past four years some improvements have been made by the operators.

A Boarding Home for Men

Boarding Home No. 3 is situated close to the junction of Broadway and Granville and accommodates fourteen men. Like the last home discussed, it is operated by a private family on a profit basis. It is an old house, rather faded-looking from the outside, but in excellent repair. The grounds are sufficiently large to allow the men adequate
room out-of-doors, and they almost live on the lawn during the summer months. The South Granville shopping centre is very close by, and several street car routes converge near by.

Eight of the rooms in this house are single rooms, and three are double rooms. The house has bright linoleum, laid wall to wall throughout, so that there is a clean well-kept air about it all. Each single room has a closet, a single bed, and easy chair and a dresser, in addition to whatever personal furniture the person may have added. The double rooms have similar furnishings for each man, except that one has a table shared by the two occupants. All are well-lit and cheery in appearance. There are two full baths, one on each floor, and the manager and his family occupy a suite on the main floor.

The kitchen is roomy and well fitted, with block linoleum on the floor and other attractive home-like touches. There is no common sitting room or dining room, but this is regarded by the manager as an advantage on the grounds that it eliminates many arguments! The rooms are comfortable and offer privacy to those who desire it, while others are free to visit in their rooms. They can dine alone, or seek company by the simple expedient of carrying their dinner trays into a friend's room.

The men pay $45.00 per month if they share a room, $55.00 for a single room, and $60.00 for a single room with running water. A separate side entrance for the
inmates gives them a greater measure of privacy than the front entrance would do.

A Boarding Home for Women

The fourth is a house operated as a boarding home for women only, by one of the service clubs. It also is centrally located, close to the South Granville shopping district. It has a very small yard which cannot be used a great deal by the inmates, but there is quite a roomy verandah where the ladies take their chairs in theummer. Fifteen women and the matron occupy this three-story building. Though old, it is in good repair, with some rather fine panelling inside.

The main floor contains the matron's quarters and two single rooms in addition to the dining room and living room, which are shared by all the occupants, and the smallish, but convenient kitchen. The second and third floors accommodate thirteen women in one triple and five double rooms. Only one bathroom serves both floors. The service club plans to build a new home for about the same number of women, using their experience in this home to guide them in giving the most comfortable and suitable accommodation to their clients. However, wartime building restrictions made this impossible, and the present high costs of construction are further delaying the new home.

The furniture in the bedrooms is utilitarian but comfortable, the beds being of tube steel, and the dressers roomy. Each bed has its own bed light, and all
the women have brought in some of their own furniture and numbers of personal articles. The atmosphere of the boarding home is extremely homelike and friendly.

These examples are sufficient to give some idea of conditions. It is impossible to generalize on the types and qualities of accommodation offered in boarding homes, since, as has been shown, the accommodation varies from that offering the bare necessities for reasonable comfort, through quite ordinary accommodation to that with a high degree of luxury. In reality there are a number of elements in a boarding home that are more important to the contentment of the guests than the luxury of the appointments. A home offering only a minimum of physical comforts can give the guests a great deal more in actual happiness than a beautiful, pretentious home might, if his needs as an individual are overlooked.

It is very important that a minimum standard of accommodation be insisted upon; and this appears to be reasonably well done in British Columbia. Suitable housing forms the necessary background for the kind of program and adaptations within a boarding home that can give an old person a sense of belonging in a setting that is suitable for him.
Chapter VI

BEDROOM AND BATHROOM FACILITIES

Every boarding home provides the old person with a bed of his own, some storage place of his own, a chair of his own, and other basic needs. It is very unfortunate that each elderly man or woman cannot have a room of his or her own, and that there are not enough rooms for married couples to share. The majority of inmates of boarding homes in the city have to share a room with from one to nine or more persons, almost all of whom are at the outset complete strangers. Without exception matrons and operators of homes were of the opinion that old people's homes should provide single rooms for the majority, and double rooms only for those who wished to share a room with spouse or friend.

Lighting in the Bedrooms

Surprisingly, in view of this unanimous opinion, most homes do not make some of the relatively minor adjustments in their rooms and wards which would give the guests at least some privacy within the limitations of a shared room. Most persons do have their own bedlamps, belonging either to themselves or to the home itself, so that they can read or work on their own beds in comfort. These do not shed enough light to disturb others in the room who choose to sleep earlier, unless the individual happens to be unusually easy to disturb.
Being unable to turn off their own lights when they choose must be for some a source of great irritation, and a real infringement on their personal freedom. In only one of the homes visited in which the old people have bedlamps and live no more than four or five to a room is there a set lights-out time which applies to all the old people, even those in single rooms. Not even all the homes with only overhead lighting find it necessary to enforce such a rigid rule. Yet those sleeping in dormitories or rooms lighted only by an overhead light must of necessity be subjected to a common "lights-out" time. If there is positively no alternative to throwing the switch and blacking out the whole room, the time for doing so should be arrived at by agreement among the persons sharing the room, if possible, rather than by the matron setting an arbitrary time. It would seem obvious also that before the matron and her guests accepted as inevitable that there should be only overhead lights, every possible means for providing individual lights should be canvassed. Plain utilitarian bedlamps which hook to the head of the bed, or wall-bracket lamps where the former are not practicable, are relatively inexpensive. If the persons operating the home were unable to meet the cost, a service club might help to do so, or the inmates might be able to help themselves in some measure in this respect.

The greater obstacle to providing such lamps might well be the lack of wall-plugs and the necessity of
complying with the requirements of the electric installation by-laws. Necessary changes in wiring might be prohibitive in cost, or even be impossible because of other factors in the building, but these matters certainly should be investigated. Service clubs which were interested could perhaps be helpful in meeting costs of necessary changes as well as in supplying the bedroom lamps themselves.

The matron of the Icelandic Old People's Home said she found that old people need stronger and more direct lights than do younger people with their stronger vision. Few light bulbs in that home are under 100 w., except in bedlamps where the person can be quite close under the light. Experience in the homes where each guest has his own lamp varies so much that it points up the need for this personal touch in all homes. Mrs. Blaney reports that her fifteen ladies are almost always ready for sleep at nine in the evening and rarely use the bedlamps, whereas other matrons found some guests reading late, or very early in the morning if they could not sleep. The bedlamps are a great convenience at night to any old person who must get up in the night, whether they are ever used otherwise or not.

Furniture in the Bedrooms

It goes without saying that the beds occupied by the old people should be comfortable, with good springs and mattresses. For the most part mattresses should be
fairly hard; too soft mattresses make old bones ache and leave the person a little stiff in the morning. This was the opinion of the majority of the matrons interviewed, and was confirmed by several of the old people themselves. Bedding, in the view of the same authorities, should be light and warm and adjustable to changing temperatures in one night. A few homes, fortunately the minority of those seen, have some beds with sagging springs or lumpy mattresses, and too often bedding was heavy enough to be a burden instead of a comfort.

Bedrooms should be attractive as well as comfortable. Many are brightened by figured wall paper or chintz curtains and bedspreads. In a few instances bare walls, undraped windows and beds covered only by dark blankets give the rooms occupied by the old people a drab, uninteresting appearance that must be most depressing to the spirit. One home, where there is no common sitting room, and few comfortable chairs in the dormitories, has its beds covered with dark grey blankets. The men spend a good portion of their time sitting on their beds, their feet on newspapers. Washable, figured bedspreads and bright curtains at the windows, plus a few inexpensive but well chosen pictures on the walls, could change the appearance of the rooms very materially, and might spur the owners of the home towards obtaining enough easy chairs to go around. Here again, service clubs might be interested in helping to finance such relatively inexpensive improvements.
Church clubs and similar groups might well be glad to sew bedspreads for such homes.

Bedside tables are provided to practically all guests in boarding homes; their absence would be a real privation. They are valuable for the comfort of a person when in bed, and for storing small personal possessions. Many keep family pictures and other small treasures on them, and they serve to give the only homelike touch in some rooms. Those homes not using a common dining room usually serve trays at the bedside table, in which case the low type with no knee space is a source of real discomfort at mealtimes, and some more suitable arrangement might be made by an alert matron.

Most homes provide a comfortably furnished common sitting room, or an easy chair for each inmate in their rooms, or both. At least two homes do not adequately supply either sitting room or chair with the result that the guests have to sit on their beds or on straight chairs. This is a serious lack, since old people are in need of comfort in the homes in which they spend the greater part - if not all - of their time. The chairs that old people appear to find most comfortable are firm well padded chairs that allow them to relax but which give them good support while they do so. Deep overstuffed chairs accordingly are not so suitable as lighter types of chairs, such as for example, wicker chairs.

In some of the rooms occupied by three or
more persons' closet space was sadly lacking. Some homes have met this problem by installing wardrobes or building closets in corners. For the most part rooms having two or even three persons in them have adequate closets, even if these are of necessity shared. Two homes do not even supply sufficient dresser space for the guests, but most do manage to have one dresser for each two persons, so that each has at least one large drawer for his own clothing. One matron suggested that if her home were not well supplied in this regard, she would encourage the two or three men in her home who are interested in woodwork to build units of drawers in each room. In two or three of the homes the women have small dressing tables in their rooms. Most matrons thought that all rooms should have quite large mirrors, for men as well as for women.

A number of the more pretentious homes have carpeted bedrooms, while others have either bare floors or linoleum. One or two of the latter have small rugs by each bed so that the aged person's feet do not strike cold floor when he gets out of bed. Such mats add greatly to the appearance of a room, and if they are firm enough not to slide easily under an unsteady step, they are a great comfort. They need not be expensive: hooked and braided rag mats can even be made by interested old people, and can be very pretty if a little colour and imagination is used.

Privacy for the Occupants of Wards

For the individual in the larger rooms and wards
privacy practically does not exist. Among the women particularly the need for privacy when dressing seems important. Some women in one or two homes either turn out all lights in order to undress, or take turns in using the bathroom as a dressing room. Yet a measure of privacy is very easily secured by the use of screens. The King's Daughters' Restholme, which has up to five women in a room, supplies a folding screen for each woman, and these serve to make the space around each bed into a small cubicle. The women use them extensively when dressing, sleeping, entertaining visitors - or when they merely wish to be alone. The screens are dark wood frames with plain or figured cotton curtains, and are quite attractive. At the Icelandic Old People's Home the clothes closets are very roomy, and since they are lighted, are often used as dressing rooms by the guests living there.

Bathing Facilities

Regulations under the Welfare Institutions Licensing Act require that an old people's boarding home have one complete bathroom to every ten persons, with one at least on each floor where bedrooms are located. Where possible the inmates are better served by having the toilet separate from the rest of the bathroom. Bathroom facilities in all the homes visited were adequately fitted, some of them being tiled and quite modern. Several matrons said they found rubber mats in the bottom of the tub invaluable. Some aged persons need to be helped into and out of the tub,
but others are quite able to look after themselves, especially if the rubber mat is there to give them added safety.

A second quite simple addition to the bathroom which is found to be a real aid to the old person when using the tub, is a hand rail above the tub. One or more extra towel racks firmly fastened to the wall can serve very well as supports when entering and leaving the tub. Indeed these are simple precautions that could be used in any home, which would be instrumental in cutting down home accidents materially. They are not expensive and could conceivably be insisted upon for every boarding home by the licensing authority.

One matron with experience has replaced baths with showers to everybody's satisfaction. She found that bathing for most of the twenty old men in her home was very difficult. She had to help most of them into and out of the tub, and this often meant heavy lifting for her. At no little expense she had the bath tubs taken out, and tiled showers installed. Rubber matting was installed on the floor and benches built into each, so that the men now, however feeble, are able to look after themselves and bathe in comfort and security. She finds they bathe much more willingly and regularly than previously, and hot water is more plentiful for their showers as well. The men like the arrangement immensely. Women, however, would probably find that such a shower was unsatisfactory since they do not wish to get their hair wet when bathing.
Toilet Facilities

One owner of an old people's home puts a low-power bulb into both bathrooms and leaves them all night so that the men can find their way to the bathroom on their night trips. He has also installed a light-weight gate at the top of the stairs as an extra precaution at night. Most aged persons seem to need to urinate during the night, and several matrons and operators of homes reported some special arrangements they have made for this reason. In the majority of homes halls are dimly lighted at night. Several homes supply chambers in each room so that the guests do not need to leave their rooms. One matron passes bottles out to each man at night, empties and sterilizes these each morning.

In one home the matron has provided most thoughtfully and effectively for the nightly needs of her aged women guests. She has had chambers set into light, hardwood arm chairs. The chairs have draped floor-length skirts and seat-cushions of chintz, so that they make rather pretty bedroom furniture. The chairs are taken from each room in the morning and returned in the evening. She has been seriously considering having chair-arms added to the regular toilets, or at least placing handrails on the walls beside the toilets, since most of her old ladies find sitting down and getting up rather awkward work. The commode chairs would not be as comfortable and safe for the old women if they did not have chair arms for their support.
General Observations

It cannot be too emphatically stated that boarding homes for old people should offer private rooms, with double rooms as the exceptions, for those who prefer them. Any person or group planning such a home, if the happiness of the old people is the primary consideration, should make every effort to meet this standard. It would be impractical to make any such suggestion regarding the homes already in operation, but a number of simple and relatively inexpensive adjustments might be made to give the inmates as much privacy as possible and to give them added comforts. Some of these adjustments might be provision of bed lamps, floor mats, bedroom screens, and handrails and rubber mats in bathrooms. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that attractive washable bedspreads and curtains, and pictures for the walls, should be supplied. Cheerful surroundings have a very happy effect on the matron and other employees of a home as well as the old people in it.
The "Multiple" Importance of Food

Food is of course essential to the maintenance of life, but it is also the source of a great deal of pleasure. Old people who are no longer able to experience a number of the physical satisfactions enjoyed by younger persons, seem to focus much of the other lost pleasures in eating. Indeed, so true is this that matrons report that there are some who merely exist from meal to meal and take little interest in anything else. For most people food is also of great importance socially, and this is equally true for most old people. They can enjoy a lunch with friends, and also a quiet "cup of tea" alone if they are resting or otherwise feeling like being alone. Because of its significance, special attention was paid to the kinds of food served, how, when and where, as well as to items such as evening lunches allowed to the old people.

Types of Food Served

While most matrons said that they felt old people can and do eat "just about anything", more detailed discussion made it clear that the matrons make several considerate adaptations in their meals for the old people perhaps without being actually aware of doing so. Raw vegetables, which are troublesome to persons with dentures (often ill-fitting) or without teeth at all, are avoided by most matrons.
The same is generally true for fried foods and heavy pastries, both of which are quite difficult to digest.

It is impossible to give an "average" menu, but it is interesting to note one or two sample menus. One home reported that each man is served a bowl of oatmeal or cream of wheat, two or three slices of toast, marmalade, and tea or coffee, for breakfast, poached eggs being added on Sunday mornings. Two homes add boiled or poached eggs to this basic menu every day, and others add fruit or fruit juice, usually the latter. One matron serves bread because she felt unable to get toast to all the guests while it was still fresh, and she felt the harder toast was more difficult for old people to eat than bread. Other matrons however believed the old people should have toast for breakfast for the same reason that most other people do - they prefer it to bread. Mrs. Fowler toasts bread for the men's breakfasts on racks in the oven, producing crisp toast which does not get soggy with standing. The men tell her they like the toast made in this manner. Apparently the present generation of old persons, at least, are almost universally fond of cooked cereal in the morning, if it is well made. Breakfast is a meal which is easily made tasty and enjoyable. As is true with other meals, matrons and their staffs should, where they can, make adjustments in the morning menu to suit individual tastes.

The noon meal in about half the homes is the heavy meal of the day, whereas in the other half the day's
heavy meal is served at night. The standard menu of meat, two vegetables, and a pudding or stewed fruit appears to be served in all homes. Most matrons agreed that fried meats and potatoes are to be avoided; they bake or boil or cook them in casserole for the most part. The desserts are most often milk or rice puddings served with or without bread or cake, and always accompanied by tea or coffee. Several pointed out that pastries are not easily enough digested to be good for old people.

The third meal, whether at noon or at night, very often includes soup, pudding or fruit and cake or other desserts. A number of luncheon dishes were named as well, such as spaghetti and cold meat with salads composed mostly of tomatoes and lettuce (when they were available) which old people are able to chew. Several told the visitor that their soup kettle was always on the stove, and that their guests, particularly the men, are extremely fond of home-made vegetable soups made with meat stock.

From all quarters the writer heard that the aged persons living in boarding homes have magnificent appetites and will clean up every plate, however heaped it is. Few appear to have any digestive upsets as far as the matrons are aware, but they usually feel the need of a nap or rest for a period following each meal. Matrons might be given some help in planning meals for the aged and some information as to what type of meals, and what quantities are best suited to the aged. The meals as described seem to be
for the most part somewhat heavy, and lacking in some items — especially in fresh fruit, milk and vegetables. Possibly some investigation needs to be made into the problem of menus and cooking methods most suited to aged persons. It must not, however, be forgotten that many old people will have no desire to be fed correctly balanced meals. The matrons, particularly those caring for men, reported their experience as being that the old people want above all "meat-and-potato" meals, really "solid meals", in spite of their sedentary existence. Their meals seem to afford them the greatest enjoyment of their lives. Nevertheless, it seems that further investigation and experimentation would be rewarding.

Between-meal Snacks

Several homes serve lunches or tea to their guests either in the afternoon or the evening, or both. At the Soroptomist House tea and small cakes or biscuits are served to the group in the dining room or living room in the afternoons and evenings. Mrs. Deal, who has six men in her home, has either/or tea on the stove all the time, and the men take this whenever they wish, especially, Mrs. Deal says, after they have been out walking. She serves either cocoa or milk every evening, with bread and butter for those who wish it. Other homes serve similar lunches. In a few homes these are occasions for chatting and visiting, while in others the old people take their snacks alone in their rooms.
Methods of Serving Meals

Six of the homes visited serve all meals in a common dining room, six serve all meals on trays in the guests' rooms, while the remaining four combine the two methods. Both have their advantages, of course, but how pleasant either method is for the inmates depends very much upon the extra efforts the staffs of the homes are prepared to make. Meals served to the group in a common dining room can be pleasant social events if the setting is made attractive and time is allowed for some talking over meals. The Soroptomist House mealtimes appear to be of this nature. It is worth noting in this connection that only in this home among those visited do the guests have a share in preparing and serving meals. The cook comes only from ten a.m. until 2 p.m., to cook and serve the large noonday meal. The matron and a rotating committee of three women prepare breakfast, and also the evening meal, which is left partially ready by the cook, often consisting of casserole dishes. The table is covered with a white cloth, and little personal touches brighten each meal.

Another home which caters to men, however, does not appear to achieve this friendly atmosphere. The men eat in two shifts -- those who are neat, quick eaters first, those who are slow, messy eaters second. Too often, in more than one house, mealtimes seem to be occasions for airing complaints, and are hurried and unsatis-
factory, in spite of the fact that in all homes so far as the writer was able to ascertain, the food is well prepared and plentiful. Relations between the staff and inmates, and between the inmates themselves, would seem to be the most important factor in determining whether mealtimes are satisfactory or otherwise. As an illustration of this point, at the home in which the table appointments appear to be more attractive than in any other home visited, meals are nevertheless unpleasant times for all concerned. There are small tables in a large bright room, the tables set charmingly with good china and silver, and with individual serviettes; the meals are almost sumptuous. However, the matron states emphatically that she does not like old people and considers that they are worse than a group of naughty children. However congenial the old people might otherwise be, her attitude cannot fail to disturb them. Complaints in the home are incessant, and particularly so at meals. This matron is not entirely to blame for the situation, which will be more fully discussed in a later chapter.

Clearly, the physical setting of the meals and the excellence of the food are not enough in themselves to ensure enjoyable mealtimes for the old people. However, they are important enough to warrant more effort than some homes give to them. There is general agreement that tables seating too many give an institutional air to a home and if possible should be replaced by smaller tables seat-
ing four or six. Since this necessitates larger dining rooms than long tables do, it is obviously impossible for some homes to alter their arrangements. The matron at Soroptomist House felt that for the close congenial group living there the table large enough to seat all of them was appropriate, but for most groups it would seem to be true that smaller tables are more satisfactory.

Use of the new type of plastic table cloths or individual place mats should make it possible to set a table nicely without increasing the laundry problems. One matron was planning to purchase figured plastic cloths at the time her home was visited. She pointed out that while her dishes are a conglomeration of left-overs from many sets, they are not a heavy, ugly type of crockery, and with paper table serviettes and a small bowl of flowers or a plant in the centre, her aged guests can always sit down to a cheerful looking table.

Without exception, whether they served meals at a table or on trays, matrons favor serving the meal in the kitchen and bringing the plates to the old people. Everyone is served the same amount in this way, eliminating many occasions of ill feeling, and those who desire second helpings are able to ask for them. Mrs. Bailey said that while several men ask for second helpings after the first very substantial serving, she finds that this method, in addition to avoiding quarrels, also results in a saving of food, since a number of men used to heap their plates and
then leave a good part of the food. The last to be served
from the serving bowls on the table were in danger of going
hungry, too. It is the experience of many also, that the
whole table looks much neater when meals are served from
the kitchen.

Meals Served on Trays

Six homes serve all meals on trays. Where the
old people have comfortable pleasant rooms, however, tray
service seems to be appreciated. Mr. Cunningham said that
the men who formed friendships enjoy being able to share
their meals in one another's rooms and he feels the tray
service method gives the individual the best opportunity
to eat as he likes best to do. Mrs. Fowler especially
pointed out that those who have become uncertain and shaky
in their movements are sensitive and unhappy when forced
to eat at table with others, while with their own tray
they need not worry about the scrutiny of other persons.
One home in particular, however, has only small bedside
tables where the inmates set their trays, and they are un-
able to sit with their knees under the tables.

Miss Fortune, who also believes the old people
prefer trays to dining room service, keeps each woman's
tray and dishes separate at all times. A tray and its con-
tents are washed and the tray reset before the next tray is
washed, and each has its own napkin and napkin ring. The
ladies attach great importance to always having their own
dishes, and small touches to brighten up the tray now and
then increases their pleasure in their meals. Sometimes Mis Fortune adds one flower to each tray, now and then she serves a jelly that has been set in a mold, or perhaps folds the clean napkin in a novel way.

Several homes using tray service give all the guests breakfast in bed. In most cases some member of the staff goes around with extra tea and coffee, while one gives each person a two-cup pot of beverage. Mrs. Fowler lets the men return their own trays to the kitchen, and they enjoy the trip very much, especially as the cook frequently has cookies or other things as a treat for them.

Four homes combine tray and dining room service. At the King's Daughters' Restholme breakfast is served in bed, the other meals in the dining room. Mrs. Blaney serves breakfast in bed, and the guests have the option of coming to the dining room or having a tray for the other meals. Some always take trays, others always come to the dining room, while two or three do one or the other according to their desires at the moment. Mrs. Blaney felt that combining the two methods of serving does not materially increase the work of the staff, and each guest is given the opportunity to eat in the manner which she prefers. Mrs. Deal makes tray or dining room service optional at all meals, and finds that there is less pattern to the way her guests take their meals than in Mrs. Blaney's case, due probably to the fact that there are only six in Mrs. Deal's home. She also feels the work is not greatly increased by
following both methods, and she feels the men appreciate
the privilege of eating alone or in company depending on
their moods.

The general time schedule for meals is breakfast
at or near 8 a.m., dinner or lunch at noon, and dinner or
supper at 5.30 or 6 p.m. Two homes serve breakfast at a
later hour, but most homes follow this schedule.

General Observations

The writer was well impressed with the quality
and quantity of the meals served in all the homes. Most
serve substantial plain meals and avoid fried foods and
the rougher raw vegetables. More fruit and milk might be
added in some homes. One or two homes serve really quite
sumptuous meals. In all homes visited the staffs eat pre­
cisely the same meals as are served to the inmates.

The manner in which meals are served varies; but
a few general recommendations can be made on the basis of
the information collected and observations made in the
course of this study. Both tray and table service can be
pleasing to the old people if they are not rushed through
meals and if the table or tray and the surroundings are
cheerful. Where possible it would probably be best to have
small tables in a dining room rather than one large one -
although for close-knit groups the large table is desirable.
The most satisfactory system of serving meals, according to
both the old people and the matrons in the homes using it,
is that combining tray and dining room service, allowing
the old people to use either as they please. This means slightly more work for the staff, but both Mrs. Deal and Mrs. Blaney agreed that the results make the extra work very much worthwhile.

Expert advice on the nutritional needs of the old, and possibly sample menus, might be used profitably by the matrons of boarding homes. This would be especially valuable for new arrivals in boarding homes, in the light of information from one matron. She and her husband operate two homes quite close to one another, and she has found that the majority of old people on first entering their homes are run-down and seriously in need of special building-up through proper diet. In the main those who are run-down have been living alone and either through lack of money or through inability to prepare food, have been on very inadequate diets. In one instance seen by the writer, an extremely undernourished old lady was admitted to the home, who soon afterward had to be sent on to hospital because she did not respond to the care in the boarding home. The matron thought it would take several weeks of hospital care before the old lady would be well enough to accept ordinary food. This was an extreme case, but illustrative of the fact that matrons need to be well informed about nutrition.
Chapter VIII

USE OF LEISURE TIME IN
BOARDING HOMES

It could be called one of the tragedies of life that by the time people reach the point in life when they have an unlimited amount of leisure, their interests have usually narrowed until they include little more than the provisions for the individual's own comfort. Somewhere along the way society has failed the individual if he has never had the time or opportunity to develop interests and hobbies that can serve him later in life. The total impression one gains through visiting old people, whether in boarding homes or in their own or relatives' homes, is that most of them have never learned how to occupy leisure hours in satisfying ways. Too many, perhaps, have worked long hours all their lives, and never had the time, money or the opportunity needed to develop leisure time activities. Most have had too little opportunity for informed constructive direction in finding out their interests and building up skills which might serve them well in their later years, as well as giving them a fuller life in their earlier years. A great deal might be said about the part the schools could and should play in this area of children's lives, as well as about the very real need for government sponsored, professionally staffed recreation centres which are available to all. It is a serious commentary on the lack of oppor-
opportunities for individual growth and development in a society to find the majority of its aged persons with few or no resources with which to meet the days and years of full-time leisure which they face in their old age.

Common Rooms in the Boarding Homes

The first concern of the boarding home is to provide comfortable quarters, good food and a minimum of supervision to the aged immates. Provision for their leisure time is quite secondary and is even regarded by some matrons as being unimportant. So true has this been that only roughly one-third of the boarding homes visited provided common sitting rooms for the old people. This will not be so in the future as the licensing body is now requiring that one room be set aside in each newly-licensed home as a sitting room. Three operators said they felt a common room to be quite unnecessary if the old people are provided with comfortable chairs in their bedrooms, and if they also have radios and other means of amusing themselves in their rooms. Indeed, one operator said he felt a common room only helped to foster arguments and dissension, whereas if the bedrooms are comfortable enough the guests may visit as they please among themselves and achieve group activities in that way. This operator's home for aged men has single rooms comfortably and cheerfully furnished so that the men are perhaps better able to fill in their time agreeably in their own rooms than they might be in some other homes. Other operators felt the lack of a sitting room was unfortunate.
and one which should be remedied if at all possible. Some of the homes would need some alterations to provide such a room, although in one or two a partition or half-partition would be sufficient; however in each case it would mean giving up two or more boarders, and the income from them.

The main sitting room at Taylor Manor is a long room with a stage at one end, and it has a number of comfortable chairs and couches arranged informally. Floor lamps are plentiful enough so that sufficient light is available for everyone using the room. There is quite a large collection of books, some magazines, a piano, a record player and radio, all there for the use of the old people as they wish. Cards, cribbage boards and checker boards are also part of the equipment of the room, as well as a few small tables on which the games can be played. There are in addition several verandahs which, especially in the warmer months, are used as sitting rooms by the old people. The verandahs can be adapted for use by anyone with special interests. A year ago the writer watched an old man on his own long work table at one end of a second-story-verandah working on an elaborately carved box. This year at the time of her visit another smaller table on the same verandah held a row of flower pots which a guest is painting a bright color.

The Icelandic Old People's Home has a large living room, very well furnished, on the main floor, and the old people also use the couch and chairs in the large front
hall. There is reading material and a radio available in
the sitting room, as well as cards and some other games.
In the basement a second reading room is being equipped.

The Soroptomist House has a living room on the
main floor which is comfortably furnished, and here the
women sit to knit and talk and have tea, as well as to lis­
ten to the radio or to read. Another home has a very lux­
urious sitting room which is apparently used by the ladies
only on request, for entertaining visitors. One or two
other homes have sitting rooms which appear to be used some­
times by the old people although they are actually part of
the matron's living quarters. At one of these, for instance,
some of the old ladies come into the matron's living room
(also her bedroom) whenever her daughter is practising or
playing the piano.

The licensing board feels that it is essential
that any new home being licensed should be required to have
a common sitting room for its inmates. No matter how com­
fortable or cheerful a bedroom may be, or how convenient
for visiting, reading or playing cards, it remains a bedroom.
A person who must be either in his bedroom or out of the
house altogether would understandably become bored and dis­
contented. A common room offers more opportunity for per­
sone to meet and become friendly and participate in group
activities. The inmates of a home can share their enjoy­
ment in radio programs, in games, in "just talk", in a com­
mon room where they can meet comfortably.
The equipment in a common sitting room should be such as to allow for both comfort and a certain amount of mobility. A number of easy chairs would seem to be preferable to chesterfields, although one or two chesterfields could be useful and comfortable. Easy chairs allow for grouping around a table for cards, or around a fireplace for discussion, sewing or having tea and for pulling close under a lamp for reading. Easy chairs and chesterfields meant for the use of old people should not be too deep or soft, for the old people find them difficult to get into and out of, and not too restful or comfortable to sit in. Like a very soft bed, an over-stuffed, deep chair tends to make old bodies stiff and weary.

A common room should be provided with a radio, books, magazines, and a record-player and a piano if the latter are possible. The radio should be in one corner of the room rather than near the centre, one matron suggested, so that some might play at cards or read at one end of the room without being seriously disturbed by others listening to the radio. The lighting should be adequate enough so that all the chairs in the room could be used for reading at one time. Floor lamps are probably the most convenient means of lighting, since they can be adjusted to throw the light over the reader's shoulder and can be moved about for other reasons. Overhead lighting is most undesirable for a common room; wall brackets and table lamps are much more convenient and comfortable, if floor lamps cannot be used.
for any reason.

In addition to providing a place where the old people can meet and share activities, even if they are individual pursuits such as reading, a common room provides a place where visitors might be entertained, especially by persons who share a room with several others. The writer asked whether a separate room or two might not be furnished to be used for visits of friends or relatives. Most matrons agreed in principle but pointed out why such a room could not be made available in their own cases. Three answered, definitely not; they felt that each old person should have his own private room with adequate enough furnishings so that he could entertain his visitors in his own home. This of course is the most desirable situation, but a small room for holding visits in privacy might be appreciated by those not fortunate enough to be in a home where they can have their own private room.

Recreation Indoors: Reading

It must be remembered during the following discussion that the activities recorded here are those pursued by persons who have the entire day to do with as they see fit. With perhaps two exceptions they do not, even, in the boarding homes make their own beds or tidy their own rooms. The hours during which they are eating or sleeping are their own to do with entirely as they see fit - this cannot be emphasized too strongly.
The favorite indoor activity of a majority of the old people in the sixteen homes visited would appear to be reading, although it is difficult to generalize since whole groups of old people in some homes are reported to never read even a newspaper, while other groups read avidly and continuously. All homes have some kind of a book collection, but a number of these which were seen by the writer were made up of very old books, few of them good. For some reason most homes seem to have accumulated a supply of the peculiarly saccharine romances of the early years of this century. However some of the homes have had recent pocket size editions of more modern books - mainly western and murder stories - added to their collections.

The Vancouver Public Library visits the Mayfair Nursing Home once each month, bringing a new selection of books, and taking back the books left the month previous. The library staff endeavors to fill requests for particular books if the old people make any. Such an arrangement with the Library would bring newer books to the old people and do away with the complaint so often heard, that they have read all the books in the boarding home several times. The writer suggests that if the library is unable to give a similar service to other homes, that the matron could arrange to have two or more library cards, which allow ten books to be taken out at once for a period of twenty-eight days, and reading material for the home could be obtained through these cards. It would be particularly
desirable to interest the old people themselves in participating in such an arrangement, and doing the selecting of the books at the library themselves. This should not be done by direct urging if the old people are reluctant to take on such a task, but interest in trips to the library for books for the home could be roused, for example, by asking help in preparing a guide list from which to choose. The passive acceptance apparently shown by the old people in the homes where the books were decades old and there was no circulation of books seemed more unhealthy than the inertia shown by the operators, but it should be possible to overcome both with a little effort. Such effort should not be expected of the personnel of the licensing and inspection department, who already are faced with heavy work loads, but might be undertaken by interested lay persons or club or other groups. More variety in reading matter could be introduced also through collection of current magazines and pocket novels by such clubs and groups, but it is the opinion of this writer that the more positive course would be to interest the old people in selecting their own reading material through the library. This could then be supplemented by gifts of books and other reading material.

Several homes supply one or more daily newspapers to their inmates. Mrs. Bailey, for example, subscribes to all three local daily papers, and these are read thoroughly, and discussed at length, by a number of men in
the home. Neighbors contribute current copies of several magazines as well, so that there is always a good deal of new reading matter on hand. Mrs. Blaney also supplies a daily paper for her guests but finds that it is read very little. Several papers daily arrive at Taylor Manor - copies of all three local daily papers. On the whole men appear to spend a greater proportion of their time reading than do the women in boarding homes, and this is especially true of the newspapers. Those ladies who do read appear, from the few inquiries the writer made, to prefer love stories to all other kinds of reading. The men look for mysteries, westerns, adventure stories. A small minority read biographies, books on travel and on serious subjects. Only one man was mentioned as liking to read aloud, and he has formed a friendship with a formerly very lonely blind man who lives in the same home.

**Use of Radios in the Boarding Home**

Those homes which have common rooms have radios in these rooms and these radios are used a good part of the day. Men are particularly inclined to follow news broadcasts and news commentators. Some matrons said the guests listen in groups to certain comedians, to plays and to some musical programs, and on the whole prefer popular music when they are not listening to a definite program. Some of the men in two or three homes are particularly fond of western music. Mrs. Bailey has found that the men wish to keep the radio going steadily, and she has found
it necessary to prescribe the following limits to their listening; the radio is not turned on earlier than 7.30 a.m., and is turned off between 1 p.m. and 3.30 p.m., which is used as an afternoon rest period for most of her guests, and the radio is played steadily from 3.30 p.m. until about 8.30 p.m., when some of the men retire.

In some of the other homes there is at least one radio in each bedroom, these belonging to the old people themselves. Some matrons find it is necessary to insist on radios being turned off at a reasonable hour at night, while others are able to leave this to the discretion of the old people, most of whom are quite ready to respect the desires of the other persons sharing their rooms. Radios are wonderful company for many of the old people, although apparently few are particularly discriminating in their choice of program; they tend to turn the radio on and just leave it going at the one station. One or two homes could make good use of radios in rooms where several live, but the old people are unable to afford these themselves. Interested service clubs might be able to help obtain a few radios where they seem to be needed.

Other Amusements and Occupations Indoors

Cards afford a great deal of pleasure to many of the aged people in boarding homes. Women play bridge and double solitaire more than any other games, while men play rummy, cribbage and other games besides the two already named. In the homes where there are common rooms, card
games are in progress every night, and often there is a good deal of friendly rivalry and in some instances games go on on an almost tournament basis. In other homes, certain bedrooms have come to be used every night for card games. One matron observed that she has found she has to make the effort to get the old people to begin a game, but that it is invariably worthwhile. She has learned over her eleven years of experience that old people (like many others of us) have to be urged and even, she said "badgered a little", before they will engage in any group activities but that they enjoy it once they begin. Other games such as checkers, dominoes and draughts are also popular in a few of the homes.

Surprisingly few of the women living in the boarding homes knit or sew. A factor may be failing sight and stiff fingers, although most matrons were inclined to blame this condition on sheer laziness. It seems reasonable that a number of them may just have lost interest for lack of incentive. There must be some sort of purpose in an activity of this sort. For a few the achievement of a well-made or fine-looking article may be enough. Miss Fortune formed a knitting club among her ladies, which met for two hours every week during the recent war. The ladies enjoyed it very much, but interest lagged very quickly after the war ended, and at present none of her guests knit or sew. On the other hand, the women at Soroptomist House, who form almost a family group, do quite a bit of handwork, including tatting lace. One woman of seventy-four, who has always
led an active life, crochets and makes hats, and enjoyed doing so very much. Mrs. Deal said that two years ago she was able to interest the group of men living in her home at that time in learning to knit. They got a lot of enjoyment from their knitting, and concentrated mainly on socks. The same group learned to operate the sewing machine, and gained quite a lot of satisfaction from doing so. The men at present living in her home are apparently extremely apathetic and refuse to take an interest in anything, even in watching boats on the Fraser River, which the home overlooks.

**Further Activities within the Home!**

Talking with one another about the past, present interests, and so on and on, absorbs a lot of the time of some old people. In some homes evidently the discussions and friendly arguments are very lively and give a great deal of enjoyment to the inmates. In other homes it seemed apparent that most of the talking among the inmates consists of "griping" and quarreling, thus reflecting their general dissatisfaction with life and themselves. Homes which reported that the old people discuss many things on a friendly basis and with enjoyment, also reported the greatest number of other activities and interests pursued by the inmates, and discontent and quarreling increased as the interests decreased. Relationships within boarding homes are improved as the old people living in them broaden their interests and forget their own small grievances.

There are a few special hobbies of old people in
the homes that seem worth mentioning. One old woman cuts out and saves pretty pictures and pastes them into scrapbooks which she later gives away. Another old woman who has become too senile to carry on any kind of conversation, spends happy hours very efficiently ripping up woollen garments and piling up the pieces which are used by a church group for quilts. One man whom the writer met delights in setting up bridge hands and chess layouts, and working out how they could be played. One matron in a home which has a small workshop in the basement is constantly pestered for jobs to be done around the house by the two old men who enjoy using the workshop. They want the work they do to be useful to someone.

Almost all homes reported that the old people take a rest or a nap after the noon meal, which is a desirable thing. The men and women who do nothing but rest, however, are in need of some kind of help in expanding their interests and solving some of their greatest personal difficulties, and, as has been suggested above, this is a difficult and delicate task which may be taken on by someone in at least a limited way in the future.

Recreation Outdoors

Most of the homes visited are within easy reach of shopping districts and parks or beaches. Many, perhaps most, old people in the homes visited, go for daily walks. Some take active interest in window-shopping, in meeting and talking with others in the parks or on the beaches,
in watching children's games, and so on and on. Others merely engage in a form of mechanical exercise by walking so far every day, often the same route day after day for years, or go and sit on a park bench, where they actually do nothing but sit.

It is a fact that, as has been previously stated, old people prefer to be within easy reach of shopping and other facilities. In spite of the very gloomy picture painted above of the apathetic old age of so many people, a good proportion of the aged do not wish to be out of touch with the more active world around them. Indeed quite a number seem to particularly enjoy watching children at play and are even able to enter their games, although many other old people find children too noisy and irritating to be borne. The pity is that many of the excursions of the old people are purposeless and without much pleasure.

This is far from true for all. Many who have children or relatives in the city visit them regularly, as well as receiving visits from them. The more contented inmates are often those who are on good terms with their families and able to see quite a bit of them. Miss Fortune said that a number of her guests are particularly fond of street car and bus riding, and often go off in groups of two, three or four for whole afternoons, especially Sunday afternoons. They plan out routes beforehand and exchange experiences on their trips later. She also finds the old ladies enjoy the nearby beach, and often Miss
Fortune, on a nice summer day, will pack a lunch for the entire group and take them down to the beach for a picnic. Sometimes two or three will take lunch to a park or to the beach on their own.

All homes have either verandah or lawn, or both, on which the old people spend much of their time during the summer. Here they read, talk or sew, or play cards, just as they do indoors. Mrs. Beal fixes up the verandah with chairs each summer, as well as providing chairs, a card table, cushions, and pieces of carpet for the lawn, so that the men can lie down or sit on chairs while out of doors. Mrs. Bailey serves noon or evening meals on the lawn if the men request it and help with the necessary moving of furniture. They take advantage of this quite often and enjoy a semi-picnic meal very much indeed. A few old men enjoy gardening and do some in the grounds around the boarding home. Much of the care given the yard and garden at Mrs. Fowler's home is given by one active old man, and at the Icelandic Old People's Home, the gardening and janitor work is done by a man of about seventy. He has not accepted jobs offered him by neighbors because he likes to work at his own speed and plan the garden himself. Several men at Taylor Manor are interested in working in the yard and are encouraged to do so.

Activities brought into the Homes

On the whole relatively few of the old people attend Church regularly, but very many often listen to and
appreciate very much, the Church services broadcast over the radio every Sunday. More of them go to services during the summer than during the less pleasant winter weather. A few ministers make frequent visits to homes to spend a few minutes with an individual guest, and for a few men and women these visits mean a great deal. As far as the writer could ascertain, those old people who place a lot of value on religion and on keeping up contact with their Church, are all people who have always given religion a real place in their lives. In the Mayfair and one of two other homes, regular Church services are conducted by visiting clergymen, and these are well attended.

Other groups occasionally visit certain homes to entertain the old people. Taylor Manor has a stage at one end of the common room, and has concerts with some regularity. Mrs. Douglas, matron at Taylor Manor, said that she had observed that concerts should be fairly short for old people to be able to sit through them in comfort, and they appear to particularly enjoy children performing, and hearing familiar music. Sing-songs are always popular. At the Mayfair home, a group of Mennonite girls come every two weeks to sing for about forty-five minutes, and to lead in some group singing. This program is very enjoyable to the inmates. At Christmas, too, the Lytton Studios brought a concert to the home and the inmates had refreshments and a short party following it. The Icelandic Old People's Home has been used by the Lutheran Women's Auxi-
liary for holding a whist drive, and the old people had a lovely time. Some played whist, others watched the playing, and two helped prepare the lunch. Other organizations also use the home for similar purposes. The writer was unable to determine, however, whether the old people themselves are consulted about entertainments to be held there, or whether they are merely notified after plans are made.

Two matrons have apparently done some fine work in helping a few old people overcome disabilities. One, who is a hearty cheerful person, and who says she "kids and bullies" many men into taking up some kind of activity, says she has had one or two enter her home with their hands all knotted up, and that now they are able to work a little in the garden and to feed and clothe themselves with less trouble. "Patient, understanding nagging did the trick", she said. One man in another home, who is paralyzed on one side, has learned, with the matron's help, to thread needles using his teeth, and to do rough mending. A very special effort on the matron's part is needed to accomplish such things, and is really more than can be expected of matrons who are charged with all the many duties of running a boarding home.

The Problem of the Apathetic Old People

Most of the matrons spoke almost with despair of the inmates who sit by the hour doing nothing and to all appearances taking no interest in anyone or anything. They feel, particularly with reference to women, that it is ex-
tremely unfortunate that they should have given up all ac-
tive interests so completely that they no longer take any
pains with themselves or their rooms. Most women have at
one time or another kept house and might be expected to
have some lingering interest in the appearance of their
rooms. Most matrons gave the impression that they feel a
certain intolerance, and even disgust, towards other women
who have become so apathetic; and undoubtedly they convey
their attitudes to the old women, who might be expected to
resist efforts to engage them in activities such as making
their own beds or tidying their own rooms.

Men, too, give up all activities and interests
save perhaps a daily walk and a little desultory talk with
other men, but this does not seem to rouse quite the amount
of antagonism and concern to matrons. Traditionally men
are expected to rest at home. The operators of the homes
who were interviewed all expressed concern over the lack
of initiative and interest in so many old people, and two
were able to express the opinion that those who settled
into a near-vegetative state on entering a hoarding home
"grew old" much more rapidly than they might have done
in a setting that demanded more from them. The terrible
waste involved in so many persons almost literally sit-
ting down in a corner and waiting for death bothers some
of the matrons a good deal, and in all likelihood influ-
ences their attitude towards the old people. Several
voiced the need they felt for someone who could "stir them
up" and get them doing something - anything - just as long as they showed some enthusiasm for it.

The problem is one which might challenge the most skilled worker. Personal unhappiness due to neglect by their family and friends, personality difficulties which may have always existed and now are only pointed up by age and other troubling factors, and many other things, added to the rather destructive attitude of society to old age, probably all operate in some degree to cause the aged individual to give up everything but concern with his own comfort. It may be that group work techniques within a boarding home might help some at least to face life with a healthy curiosity and a desire to take their places to the best of their abilities. But for many, intensive case work might be needed to help the old people to face the realities of old age and the present situation, and resolve some of their fears. Perhaps with some, help in bringing about better relations with family or others in the community might make them able to move out into some kind of activity.

There would of course always be some who could only be helped, if at all, by a psychiatrist.

Since there is little possibility that such services will be available to old people in boarding homes for several years to come, it would seem advisable that some thinking be done as to what methods might be used to teach old people in the homes and to help them begin to make use of their time. Since this is a matter which would call for
skill and a great deal of time and patience, it might be something which could be closely supervised by the professional worker whom the Committee on the Care of the Aged hope to engage in the near future. As has been suggested so many times before in this study, a service club might attempt a program in one home but it would only be effective if done in a sound and skilled way, and therefore it would seem advisable to suggest that it needs to be at least supervised by a professional group leader.

Summary

Generally, old people spend a good deal of their time reading, listening to their radios, talking, playing cards, walking and sitting out of doors. The majority have no active hobbies such as gardening, sewing or knitting, although there are usually one or two in each home who do pursue some such activity. It would appear from a few examples cited, as for instance where a group of men were persuaded to take up knitting, that where someone is able to give leadership, the old people's interests can be aroused. It is possible that in future such leadership might come through the social worker who will be employed by the Committee on the Care of the Aged, who would probably lead and help a group of volunteers, who might be drawn from interested service clubs. What kinds of programs and activities might best be brought to old people in boarding homes, and what methods used in awakening their interest,
might well be matters for further study, probably by a
group worker. Certainly the apathy and indifference to
other persons and activities around them that is shown
by so many old people in boarding homes is to be deplored,
since it means unhappy boredom for the old, and a real
waste of energies and capacities that might be used to
make valuable contributions to the community.
Chapter IX

RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN BOARDING HOMES

A good deal of time and attention has been given to evaluating environmental factors in boarding homes for the aged in the preceding chapters; so much, indeed, that it might seem that the physical appointments are of primary importance in a boarding home. That this is not so is attested to by the fact that the licensing administrators will not approve a new home for license if it appears that the person applying for license does not have the type of personality that would make him or her suitable for work of this kind, however ideal the proposed premises may be. That a minimum standard for boarding home facilities is very necessary has been stated before, and the Welfare Institutions Licensing Act guarantees such a standard in this province. Physical comfort is a requisite for happiness and contentment, but it can only supply the background for such contentment. If an aged person feels he is an interloper or a barely tolerated guest in a luxurious and carefully planned home, the comforts he enjoys will mean little to him, or will come to mean too much. Or if he is treated like a precious but useless person who must be spared all responsibilities and efforts, he would be quite justified in feeling he has been shelved and no longer has any contribution to make to the world.
Every matron who was interviewed, however affectionate and accepting her attitude is towards old people, stated that in order to make a success of a boarding home for the aged, one must first of all "understand" old people. Even the two matrons who are probably close to seventy themselves seemed to regard the aged as being a race or kind apart from other humans, as though placing "old" and "people" together in a phrase changes the meaning of the two words as much as the meaning of "night" and "mare" change when they are used together. There seemed to be no recognition of the fact that the elderly man or woman is simply a man or woman who has lived quite a long time, and who can be expected to have the same kinds of personality structures and needs and desires and reactions as other people who have not lived quite so long.

It seems logical to say that probably many of the problems that arise with aged persons would never arise if the old were not made to feel by the rest of the world that they are no longer quite of the world. The working world has no job to offer to the less agile and quick person whose physical strength and stamina have decreased with the passing years. Children have moved out into homes of their own where there is no room for an older person, whose own home has perhaps been broken by death. New ideas and methods have come into use faster than he has been able to keep adjusting himself to them,
and he is regarded merely as an "old fogey" by the younger generations, who have no desire to hear his opinions, or respect them if he does speak up. Gradually it is borne in to him from all sides that he is superfluous—a irritating and disliked superfluity, or a treasured and beloved superfluity, or perhaps a rather "amusing" one.

The natural reactions to a feeling of no longer belonging to the world or having a real part to play in it are the ones which cause some of the difficulties that are met with by those working with the aged. They perhaps fight back by being irritable and over-critical, or seek a vicarious sharing of life by being curious, and prying into the affairs of others. They may retreat to a position of superiority from which they watch suspiciously, and deprecate everything that is new and different. Their retreat may be into a concentration on themselves and their own needs and desires. A few are able to meet the attempt of the world to shelve them by aggressively carving a place for themselves, learning new things, perhaps, or in some way demonstrating that they most emphatically are not "done". Whatever the reaction of an individual may be, it is largely determined by the degree of maturity he had reached during his adulthood, and the pattern of reactions he had established long years since.

The aged person meets the crises of life at this stage the way that he has always met them; he meets therefore the crisis of old age in the manner that is, and has
been, characteristic for him. Old age and retirement too often bring with them dull and useless days, for many and uprooting from all they have known previously. Since old age is "a phase of life with the fewest adaptation possibilities" when "the plasticity of the ego is gone, as well as the ability to modify the environment", the individual meets the difficulties that old age brings with it with an intensified version of his characteristic way of reacting to life. Old age carries in its wake frustrations and losses in most areas of living. Physical strength is decreased, and for many there is a failing of faculties such as sight and hearing, so that activities must be circumscribed. Advancing years bring both financial and physical dependence in some degree to a great many persons. Possibly most serious of all the calamities age can visit on the old is emotional starvation, which so often comes at a time when all the other disadvantages of old age are making themselves felt.

The old are people who have little time left on this earth, a fact which is faced with reluctance. They are made to feel useless and often unloved. "Old age is rarely attractive to others or pleasant to the old, even when it can pay its way and retain its wit

1. Powell, Amy S. and Fox, Flora, "Growth in Old Age", The Family, Vol. 20, P. 119
2. Loc. Cit.
and health. But the flavour of life lasts a long while". The aged do not want to be apart from the world around them, or to cease functioning as citizens and members of families, but the cumulative effect of the ills and disabilities, physically, of age, plus all the social and economic pressures which tend to increase with age, drives many aged persons into one kind of retreat or another. That this process has been under way for some time, often for years, before the old person finds his way into a boarding home, makes the task of achieving a healthy kind of adjustment a challenging and difficult one.

Attitudes of Operators to Old Age

The writer gathered from the content of conversations and the manners of the matrons while talking, that most of them see the old people as displaying, wilfully or otherwise, traits that are peculiar to the old, - or The Old - as distinguished from traits displayed by people. Since this seems to be the thinking of most people it is quite natural that it is shared by the matrons of old people's homes. Several matrons and operators said, categorically, that they like old people. Probably this means that they like people, therefore they also like people who are old.

There was general recognition amongst the operators of the hoarding homes visited; the physical needs of old people being the same as those of all people, with modifications due to declining strength and efficiency. The special needs of old people are needs for adjustments in the environment to gear it to their slower and less sure bodies: fundamentally the needs remain the same as for all of us. Therefore, theoretically at least, the problems of adjustment to be met with in a boarding home should be much the same as those which are met with in more normal circumstances. Because the matron or operator occupies such a responsible position in the boarding home his or her personality and attitudes have a very great deal to do in creating the atmosphere in the home.

As has been pointed out, the matrons on the whole expressed a liking for old people. One, however, said frankly that she disliked them. A second indicated almost as clearly by her expression when talking, and the subjects of her talk, that she is rather strongly repelled by aged people. The effects of these feelings on the part of the person in charge were discernible even to the relatively casual observer. The jolly, rather bluff matron who treated her "boys" with an affectionate condescension, achieved rather a jolly atmosphere in the whole boarding home. The old men do respond to her heartiness, and enjoy her motherly kindness. They keep themselves and
their rooms quite neat, they sit in little groups and talk, and look up gladly when their matron comes along. But they are dispirited and hopeless for all that. Their matron, who likes them and cares for them even tenderly, and who brings them a cheerful vitality, nevertheless feels they are inferior beings, and reflects it in her attitude towards them.

Almost every matron or operator of a boarding home who was interviewed during the course of this study, conveyed, more or less subtly, his or her sense of the inferiority of the aged. One matron spoke of them affectionately as being like children to handle, and said one became very much attached to them. Her voice held much the same note of tender amusement it might have held if she had been referring to pets. A second matron put this attitude into words when she said, "They are only grown-up children," and indicated that she uses cajolery and persuasion rather than a more mature approach whenever she has occasion to have direct contact with any of her old ladies.

A number of like examples could be quoted to give emphasis to the statement that operators do not see their boarding home inmates as being fully human. With the most excellent of intentions almost all speak to their aged residents with a slightly artificial heartiness, in a modified form of the manner so many otherwise
pleasant and intelligent people assume when they speak to children. The very way in which recognition and approval are given to the old underlines the feeling that these are a group of inferior beings. It is a matter of pleased surprise on the part of we, the superior breed, that this old lady continues to sew and crochet, that that old man does an excellent job of keeping equipment repaired, that a group of men keep up an intelligent interest in current events.

Operators of boarding homes for the aged are not alone guilty of this attitude, of course. Our whole culture conditions us to expect little from the aged but a desire for physical comforts. It would seem desirable - rather, necessary - that persons who are running or planning to run homes for the aged should be given some kind of orientation course. They might be helped to realize that, while there are obvious and inevitable losses of physical strength and coordination, mental powers are lost very slowly. Old people test equal with young on vocabulary and general information tests, and only slightly lower in such things as mathematics where speed and mental agility play a part. Moreover, such factors as the remoteness of the persons' school days, the lack of educational opportunities, and lack of incentive may play a large part in such differences in mental and intellectual powers as are shown between
the young and the old. If the operators knew the potenti-
alities of old people they might be able to meet the aged on
an equal footing and help the old people to a happier ad-
justment.

However kindly and considerate the staff of a
home may be, so long as they see their aged inmates as
slightly sub-human incompetents of whom little can be ex-
pected, they will reflect this in their treatment of them.
The aged cannot help reacting to this according to their
individual personalities, perhaps by resisting rather an-
grily, perhaps by being ingratiating and a little humble.
But their sense of inferiority is heightened by it. One
of the greatest steps toward providing a happier old age
for inmates of boarding homes, indeed, for all old people,
would be their recognition by all (including the aged) that
an old person is as truly a person as he was when young.
The old have much to contribute, in experience and steadi-
ness and skills, but they are blocked by the lack of re-
cognition of their assets by the general public, and by
their own feelings of insecurity and inferiority.

Attitudes of Operators to their Residents

As has been pointed out, most operators rather
"talk down to" the old people, even when they like them

---

1. Lorge, Irving "The Evaluation of Mental Status as a
Function of the Mental Test" Journal of Orthopsychi-
atry, George Banta Publishing Co., Menasha, Wisconsin,
Jan., 1940.
very much. This is a general observation and in this writer's opinion must bring a reaction from the old people themselves. However, the feeling that the old are both different from and inferior to other people appears to be so thoroughly basic in many minds that it may be impractical to suggest educating it out of those minds. On an individual basis, probably a case worker with the time to devote to working with each matron or operator separately could help him or her to recognize and acknowledge the fact that an unconscious conviction has led him (or her) to treat the old with condescension rather than as equals.

One or two matrons regard their residents as nothing more than children. They have affection for them and a degree of understanding, but they do appear to feel that they are no longer capable of making even minor decisions for themselves. They arrange things for the old people that they are perfectly able to take care of themselves, and which they would probably be pleased to do if they were given a little encouragement. They "manage" them by diverting their attention to something new when the old people are complaining, or doing anything which does not please the operators. This is done on the assumption - a true one for some, no doubt - that the elderly man or woman on whom such tactics are used does not recognize the maneuver when he or she sees it. An approach which implies that the operator or matron credits
the old person with ordinary native intelligence would be much healthier and should elicit an eager response. The old person who is forced to leave his own home and perhaps some of his own family to enter a boarding home where privacy is perhaps at a premium, and ordinary contacts are missing, needs to be accorded the dignity of being treated as a worthwhile and responsible adult by the staff of the home where he has come to live.

It has been pointed out earlier that the attitude that the old person is hardly a responsible adult is often unconscious. Where it is deliberate, it is often so with the best of motives. Again, a worker who was able to spend a lot of time with the matrons or operators of homes on other than the more straightforward issues, might be able to help them readjust their thinking a little. With the right kind of help they could recognize attitudes on their own part of which they are probably not aware. The old people who found the operators meeting them as equals and not as beloved but irresponsible children, or as irksome children, would logically respond by feeling happier and more at home and therefore more eager to adjust to everyone in the home.

A New Inmate:

The matter of adjustment to such a new and totally different environment would be difficult for the most pliable nature. Old people are notorious for being "set in their ways". It would be a wonderful thing if
placement of an aged person in a home could be carefully planned and considered. Ideally he would have time to consider the reasons for placement and be given support while he accepted them. He should be able to visit one or more homes more than once so that he could make a considered choice. It would be helpful also if a worker were available to get a social history so that real thought could be given to selection of a home, and the staff of the home given an understanding of the person. Naturally, where shortage of accommodation is so acute that placements are usually made on an emergency basis, such idealistic plans are ridiculous.

Nevertheless there are some things which can ease the new inmate into his new home. A friendly matron who treats him as an intelligent person whom she expects is going to make every effort to fit in, can do a lot in the initial meeting. The old person has the right to know just what the house rules are and why they exist. As with everyone else, with the old person the rules should be enumerated and explained in terms of the total benefit to all members of the household. This in itself does two things. It helps the person to accept regulations as necessary and reasonable instead of seeing them as measures deliberately aimed at curbing his liberty. It also invites his participation in the program of a household of which he, in that participation, becomes a member.

The actual practise at the entrance of a new
inmate may in some instances be something like the above outline. However, inquiry revealed that there is no real screening of applicants and study before placement, due, as has already been pointed out, to the fact that accommodation is so limited that no attempt is made even to keep waiting. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that the matrons take whoever comes at the time a vacancy occurs and takes a chance on their fitting into the home. Dissenters who are troublesome and simply won't adjust have to go. Usually this is not done without some effort being made to help the dissenters to find their places.

One operator discussed an elderly man who quarreled bitterly with every roommate he had. Nevertheless, he was moved several times in an effort to find someone congenial to him. Finally a small single room was available for him and it was found that his relations with everyone improved when he was able to be alone when he wished. Evidently this same technique of shifting people about until they appear to have found roommates with whom they can get along satisfactorily is used by more than one operator. It is a hit and miss method, of course, but the only one available to date and therefore a great deal better than no method at all. A worker who could devote herself to intake and personal relationships within the home should be able to effect a much more harmonious atmosphere. It may not be practical or possible for some time to come to actually suggest that a worker might be assigned to
working with the staff and inmates of boarding homes, quite apart from any workers going in already to do a specific job - the license inspection or the delivery of relief cheques for instance. There are a great variety of tasks such a worker might undertake in helping inmates to adjust to one another and the staff and their families, in helping staff to appreciate the special problems and the special assets of the aged, in helping old people use their time constructively, and in many other ways.

**Specific Problems in Adjustment**

Problems of personalities clashing and of unhappy people lashing out at authority or at other inmates naturally occur. Some old people complain about everything, are very demanding, or hostile to everyone. Arguments arise about almost every item or event of daily life. One matron said she never had real troubles because the old people have learned that if they come to her with tales of woe, they can get them off their chest. She offers sympathy and advice but she never interferes and never passes any complaint on to others. They bring their complaints and air them, and apparently leave with their anger or distress dissipated.

A second matron said bitterly that the old people were never satisfied with anything and she refuses to listen to their complaints as she did when she first went to the boarding home. The residents however were able -
and even encouraged - to go straight to the board running
the home to air grievances. Relations appeared to be
strained to the breaking point, and would appear to have
needed a very strong and wise person to take over and
clear up the relative positions and roles of staff, board
and residents. Probably the matron had real reason to
feel her job was an impossible one. Possibly her own
feelings about old people needed clarifying too, so
that she could understand her own rather violent reac­
tions to the situation. Obviously there is need here
for an objective, skilled person to help with readjust­
ments in relationships.

There were numerous small elements which ap­
peared to cause friction in the homes. In one home where
everything appeared to function fairly smoothly, the ma­
tron nevertheless remarked that the ladies irked her ter­
ribly because they so resented every request she made
that they do something for themselves or the home. They
even refuse to make their own beds, although the majori­
ty had been homemakers or had worked at other careers.
This seemed rather a serious indication of maladjustment
since a number of other homes reported the eagerness in­
mates showed to do some kinds of tasks. One home uses
its inmates for the major part of the light work, with
excellent results in what might be called the spirit of
the home. In the first instance it may be that the ma­
tron's own basic hostility to the aged arouses opposition
to a request that might be interpreted as a command. Probably no clear statement of what was expected of the women by the staff was made at the time of admission. Just possibly some at least felt that they had earned a period of full leisure after a lifetime of work. It should hardly have been the insuperable problem that it evidently was: it certainly appeared to be a chronic source of irritation for everyone in that particular home. At the risk of being repetitious, a worker going into that home might be able to resolve the matter of making or not making beds to someone's satisfaction.

**Rules, Regulations and Participation**

No home occupied by a number of persons can be operated efficiently unless there are some rules and regulations which are observed by everyone. It goes without saying that these regulations should be as few as is commensurate with smooth operation of the home. They should be observed, of course, but they should also be flexible enough to allow for special circumstances. Sample rules might be that anyone planning to be away for a meal should notify the staff of his intentions, and also of any plans to be out late of an evening, or that visitors should be gone by a certain hour at night. Some homes require the inmate to do certain tasks such as making his own bed and tidying and dusting his own room.

Such rules should be explained fully to everyone on entering the home, and the reason for their exis-
tence being given. A rule that has a real reason for being made is much easier to follow without friction or discontent resulting. Indeed, it is possible to invoke a feeling of participation in a program designed to give the maximum of comfort to all residents. On the other hand, regulations which are merely listed arbitrarily are apt to awaken a feeling of rebellion.

Certain rules which are enforced in some of the homes appear to be both arbitrary and unnecessary. One home insists that lights must be out at ten o'clock at night. Such a rule overlooks the individual likes and needs of different people. Possibly this is necessary in a room where the only lighting is overhead lighting. Inevitably all persons in the room submit to a common lights-out time, but it should be left to themselves to turn it out when they are ready. Of course, they should instead secure individual bed-lamps if it is at all possible to do so. However, even the two or three people in single rooms were apparently forced to observe this rule even though they disturbed no one by not doing so. It is difficult to justify such a rule being applied to responsible adult persons, especially as they were neither required nor expected to rise at an early hour.

A rule regarding bath times, based on water supply and bathroom schedules, is reasonable enough. Such a rule, limiting each person to one bath a week regardless of his personal inclinations, based as far as could be
discovered on the matron's feeling that bathing created extra work by upsetting bathrooms, is inexcusable. Ma­trons and operators should be encouraged to consider the regulations they are enforcing, examining them carefully to see how necessary they are, and how restrictive they are. It might be interesting and have rather amazing re­sults, if the residents of a home were to study such rules and comment on them and make suggestions for changes and omissions - and even additions.

Residents of old people's homes are too often kept in their role of paying guest with no responsibili­ties and certain set privileges. It would probably be considered a privilege by many to be allowed to take cer­tain responsibilities in the home. These should not be restricted to sharing in some of the routine tasks, but in planning and administration. They might examine the rules and regulations, as has been suggested. They might rotate some of the lighter household tasks. It might al­so be possible to make them responsible for some kind of organization of leisure time activities, probably on a very modest scale. The matron might even be able to take them into her confidence regarding the problems met in her administration and the measures taken to solve them.

Very few matrons would be able to institute even such a modified and modest program suggested above. It would call for an organizing ability coupled with a
sincere belief in the abilities of the old. Most difficult of all, she would have to surrender some of her authority, and meet the old people as equals. Here again in all likelihood the outside worker, this time one with some group work skills, would be needed to do the job. It would be aimed in part at restoring to the old people some of their feelings of independence and interest, and in fostering a group feeling among them. Ideally they would in time be able to carry on under their own initiative. The most difficult person in many homes with whom to work would in all probability be the operator.

The Problem of the Family

Where an old person living in a boarding home has a family new and diverse problems can arise. The home should of course encourage contact with the family, but in many cases the family is to the matron and staff a source of trouble and irritation. If the aged man or woman and his or her family are on affectionate and friendly terms, and the placement in the home has not meant rejection of the old person, the family would not be a problem to the home. Visits between family and inmate are a source of pleasure and satisfaction to both. However, where the family has pushed the old person out of their home they may feel guilty and relieve their feelings by demanding special considerations for their aged relative from the home.

One matron described in some detail such a
situation. A woman of about sixty-five had been placed with her by the family. All the sons and daughters had refused to keep her in their homes, giving in each case rational excuses which were doubtless largely true. However they evidently all felt some guilt and demanded several concessions for the mother on the part of the home. The mother realized she could gain attention and an expression of concern from her children by making complaints to them, and she did so freely. Every visit by her children - who were adults, it should be remembered - resulted in some degree of clash between staff and visitors. The old lady was pleasant and cooperative in the home and evidently enjoyed the association with her fellow-inmates, but naturally enough there was always some ill-feeling between she and the staff because of the attitudes of her family.

There are many variations of the above story. Some old people are irritable and unhappy following contacts with family, others depressed. Some boast incessantly of the love their children have for them, which is irksome to their associates even if they are able to see the attempt at reassurance that is being made. These are examples of poor family relations where some attempt at camouflage is being made. Other families frankly wish to shelve the old person and make no effort to conceal it.

The problems created by the family relationships of inmates are numerous and complicated. They might be
alleviated by some brief counselling of both the old person and his family, but actually resolving the conflicts would need a long-term skilled job and it is probably impractical to suggest it. The worker to whom frequent reference has been made might well find the area of relations between aged persons and their families in one where she is needed and useful.

General Observations

The whole problem of relationships in a boarding home could be dealt with adequately only in a very much longer and more comprehensive study. This seems to the writer to be an area deserving of an exhaustive survey and might be suggested as the subject of a subsequent thesis.

Briefly, the importance of the staff to the smooth operation of a home has been indicated and it was intimated that operators and staff could be helped to appreciate the individual qualities of aged persons. They often need to be assisted so that they can at least recognize their unconscious conviction of the inferiority of the aged. The old people themselves too often share this conviction and are therefore blocked from adjusting in a healthy fashion. They need to learn that they can participate in some kind of group effort.

Families have a decided impact on the boarding homes and of course on the happiness of the old people.
Both the families and the aged persons themselves need help often in resolving their conflicts about placement of the old person in the boarding home, as well as in deeper relationships between one another. Whereas it has been suggested in earlier chapters that a worker with the opportunity to spend time on boarding homes could help in bringing service groups into homes to effect certain practical, (i.e., material) changes, and to make, in the ideal situation at least, carefully considered placements, the area in which such a worker is needed most acutely is the area of personal relationships in the home.

A student who indicates interest in studying some aspects of the problems of the aged might, as an example, attempt an experimental job in one or two homes, and report on the results obtained. The present study has been conducted on a comparatively superficial level and therefore can only point to some of the areas of need and suggest possible plans for future study.
PART III

SOME IMPLICATIONS
Chapter X

ADVENTURES IN PLANNING

During the past two or three decades a number of interesting attempts have been made to provide suitable accommodation for aged persons, generally with the view of giving them both a slightly protected atmosphere and the companionship of others of their own age. Such schemes are rarely conducted on a scale which would make them available to all persons who would need or wish to make use of them. There is little in the present outlook, in Canada at least, to indicate that the near future will offer the aged suitable housing in anything approaching an adequate amount. However, it is instructive to consider some of the varieties of accommodation that have been tried in a number of different localities and to briefly consider the advantages or disadvantages they may offer.

Locally we have, of course, a number of boarding homes which offer good care on a physical level, and in some cases a real feeling of companionship and belonging is also achieved. There are at least two other types of accommodation of interest. A Church group operates a row of attached two room cabins. These are in a poor district, and have little to recommend them in beauty or completeness of appointments. However they are let at a very low rental, and the old people, mainly men, who live
there are able to achieve both a reasonably comfortable life and a feeling of independence on low incomes. Each man cleans his own cabin, finds his own fuel and prepares his own meals. They are within easy reach of the downtown area, and the residents have privacy plus the opportunity to enjoy companionship with other men. A resident supervisor is there when she is needed by the men, but they are not in any way regimented or restricted.

This type of accommodation has much to recommend it. It is possible for a pensioner to maintain himself comfortably in such a dwelling without surrendering his independence, but without exposing himself to the isolation and loneliness of a room or cabin where perhaps no one is interested in his welfare.

Recently the first work was begun on what will be a group of small cabins for aged people. These will have the advantages mentioned above with the added attraction of being newer and more modern, and having plots of ground for the use of the residents. Such developments do tend to isolate the old people from the rest of the community but will probably represent the healthiest and finest effort possible until such time as housing is planned for the population as a whole.

English housing schemes have featured several types of group accommodation for aged people. Some have been boarding homes, others blocks of small suites, still
others groups of individual cottages. The most recent development has been a recognition by the housing planners that the aged have a place in the community, with the result that housing units have been planned which include the young couples with their families, the aged, and other groups. This would seem to be the natural scheme of things and it is to be hoped that when Canada comes to plan the building of communities, the aged will be included with the rest of the population.

Denmark's municipal homes for the aged are worthy of comment here as they offer a degree of independence plus protection to the aged, although of course they do serve to set the aged apart from the community. For the able-bodied there are small apartments consisting of living room, bedroom and kitchen, "where they cook their own food from raw material supplied". The municipality pays all expenses for the home, and in turn collects the old peoples' pension cheques, leaving them a small amount for personal spending money. One of the finest of such municipal homes, located at Elsinore in Denmark, has one hundred and ninety four apartments in five three-story blocks set in a group.

Such homes for the aged offer a fuller and more secure life to old people than they are often able to find in many other countries. Here too couples are

able to remain together instead of having to separate when they give up the home they have made for themselves in their earlier years.

A plan that would appear to offer almost everything that old people might want was outlined by Kathryn Close in her article "Old Folks at Home". It was suggested that small villages might be built in the mild southern climates. They would be planned specifically to meet the social, physical and economic needs of the aged. They would have the opportunity to carry on active and interesting lives in single or multiple-dwelling units without the curse of loneliness or fear in their old age. The community ideally would offer full recreational resources, gardening and other hobby opportunities and health services. Probably a cooked-food service for delivery of meals to those homes where the wife also had chosen to retire, would be advisable. This would ensure proper meals for the aged without the disadvantage of common dining rooms.

Such villages were pictured as offering a great deal to the aged persons, especially if full medical, nutritional, group work and other services were supplied. They might also be wonderful centres for the study of geriatrics and the social implications of aging. Financing of course was seen as a formidable

1 In *Survey Midmonthly*, Survey Associates Inc., East Stroudsburg, Pa., Aug. 1941
obstacle, and also the selection of residents. It was recognized that here again there is segregation of the aged, excluding them from the community as a whole. A further difficulty might well lie in the older person's reluctance to tear up his roots and leave behind him all that is familiar and loved, even for the advantages such a settlement would have.

All such plans involve extensive planning and financing, but are interesting to consider at least. There is little to be gained by comparing local provisions for the aged with these few briefly described schemes. There are, however, other kinds of care for aged people that it should be possible to put into practise here, if only on an experimental basis for the present.

One of these is visiting housekeeper service for the aged. This service was experimented with by a New York Agency by assigning a certain proportion of their housekeepers' time to aged clients. The terms of eligibility were the same as for all other clients. Their policy was to give this service to "families and individuals who can, within a limited amount of time, make constructive use of (the visiting housekeeper), either to work out existing problems or to work out..."

---

other, more appropriate plan for future living". Such a service is for preventive work of course, and might in many instances, if supplied at the right time, enable aged couples or single old persons, to continue in their accustomed homes for much longer, instead of having to enter boarding or other homes at a times of crisis and perhaps never be able to reestablish themselves.

The agency using this service found three types of cases where it was particularly useful. Old couples or individuals who had been well able to care for themselves until they suffered accidents or acute illnesses, were tided over the bad time and were then able to carry on as before. Old people living with children or other relatives may become an insupportable burden to a wife and mother if they become ill. In a number of cases the housekeeper helped out over the crises, when otherwise it might have been necessary to move the old person out of the home. In a few cases the visiting housekeeper was used to assist the younger family, when an old person had become disturbed or senile, care for such a patient until a bed was available in an institution.

Many old people could be helped immeasurably by such a service on a part time basis. One or two hours of help a day with the heavier work and chores might enable many to carry on independently, who otherwise might have

1. Ibid., p. 23
had to enter homes of some kind, and to increase comfort and living conditions of many others who sacrifice health and comfort for the sake of remaining in their own homes. For many even a few hours a week to dispose of the heavier work such as floors and laundry might make a vast difference.

Housekeepers for aged people would of course have to be used with discrimination and the housekeepers themselves should be given some special training, and be supervised by a case worker. A service such as the one just outlined could conceivably be part of the "services" provided to those on Old Age Pensions in addition to being available to others not on pension through a private agency. Full time housekeeping service would of course be supplied for short-term cases of acute need, but the part-time type of care would be justified for long term cases. Dependency due to lack of strength to carry on all the tasks of a home alone, or to becoming ill because of lack of proper food or sufficient warmth because of persisting in living alone despite failing strength might be avoided or at least considerably delayed for many. What it might mean to many couples and individuals in terms of contentment and happiness to be able to remain in their own accustomed homes, cannot be measured.

Finally foster homes for the aged might be developed on a small scale to explore their advantages. Not
all old people can accept the impersonal atmosphere of
an institution or even of a smallish boarding home, but
might fit into a carefully selected foster home. Foster homes would have to be chosen after careful investigation, and would be designed to offer families, not parents, to old people. An agency in Ohio has done some work on this project with resulting comfort and happiness for the persons served. They have aimed at finding families who will accept the aged people as members of the family rather than as boarders.

The most successful foster homes, they found, have been those in which the families, particularly the mothers, have been easy-going, warm-hearted people, who are not too fastidious housekeepers. They must of course have respect for the aged, and need to have rather gay temperaments, and a good deal of patience. They have been encouraged to include the old people in the family group, to give them a share in light tasks in the home as well as in the family gatherings and celebrations. Even slightly senile old people have been successfully placed with the result that their decline has been retarded in the friendly home atmosphere.

Physical comforts are important too, and the old person should have his own comfortable room with

easy access to the bathroom. Good food is very important, homes where rather heavy "meat and potato" meals are served being the most satisfactory from this standpoint. The old person's clothing should be looked after in most instances.

Such homes were found by the old people themselves in some cases, or located and developed by the workers, but the best source of homes was found to be advertising, followed by careful investigation. The worker's role in placement is to give the family a sympathetic and interesting picture of the client, and to prepare the old person similarly for the family. Visits should be made before placement so that the persons involved can become acquainted/beginning to live together. The worker assumes responsibility for the financial arrangements which are clear and business like. Ideally, of course, the family should be paid promptly and adequately. The worker then should stand ready to interpret the family to the old person, and vice versa, where this is needed. While the worker should encourage the homemaker to use her, she remains primarily interested in her aged client.

For many old people the foster homes are the first real homes they have had. For others it means being able to go on living much as they have always done, without having to face both separation from their own people and learning to live in an entirely new kind of
setting at the same time. The feeling of belonging in
a close, warm group, of having security and comfort, is
very beneficial to them.

There should be a diversity of resources in
the community for the old people; institutions, board­ing homes, foster homes and apartments, to name a few.
It would be rather wonderful to be able to offer them
a choice of accommodation, and to be able to give them
time to explore and choose the kind which will be most
pleasing to them. There is little to be gained, of
course, by speculating on how fine it might be to offer
a choice of boarding home, or self-contained apartment
plus such things as cleaning services, or a foster home.
It is conceivable however that in a limited way foster
homes and visiting housekeepers could be provided for
a few, either through an established agency, or with
the help of some service group interested in the welfare
of the aged.
Chapter XI

CONCLUSIONS

It is only recently that the problems of the aged have been receiving careful study and attention. There are valid reasons for the neglect of this portion of the population in the past. Until medical science and improved living conditions increased the average life-expectancy so greatly, the aged did not make up so large or important a part of the population as they do now. The position of those who reached old age was not so precarious as it is in the modern age of small homes, mobile populations and industrialized civilization. A factor delaying awareness of the aged may also have been the pressing needs for services for children and families.

The first provisions made on a large scale were financial, but we are becoming aware that providing maintenance for old people does not solve all, or even most, of their problems. One of the greatest of these, as has been stressed throughout this study, is suitable housing. While many kinds of accommodation are needed in great quantity, there are numerous ways in which the existing facilities can be adjusted and improved so that they will better meet the physical and other needs of those using them. The present study has focussed on such adjustments within boarding homes for ambulatory or semi-active old people.
Some of these adjustments could be made relatively easily. For instance, service groups anxious to make some contribution toward the increased comfort of aged residents of boarding homes could provide bed lamps and perhaps extra electric wiring if necessary, to homes where these are lacking. Light movable screens might be supplied through the same medium. Such suggestions have been made throughout the body of this study. The Committee on the Care of the Aged would be the appropriate group through which such needs in boarding homes might be cleared and referred to interested service groups. The Committee, through a representative, or through a full-time worker, should seek to bring the persons who are to be the recipients of any such help into the planning for it, and to help the donors to appreciate the need for using a careful approach to the people they wish to help.

Much has been said in earlier pages about the prevailing attitudes to old people. They are too often regarded as a group apart from the rest of the human race, and even the matron who says she likes old people is by that very statement betraying her own feeling that they are inferior. If one honestly sees them as individuals rather than as an inferior group, one would like and appreciate them, or not like them, on the same basis as one likes, or does not like, the people who are seen as equals or contemporaries. The old need recognition as people. However it is expressed, whether by an overprotective
attitude, or a patronizing kindness or even by frank contempt, the aged sense this feeling that they are inferior, and react to it in some degree. Their uncertainties about their own value as persons are increased by the subtle expression of this feeling by the people with whom they have most frequent contacts.

The great importance of physical comforts is granted and should be given full consideration. Boarding home operators can be given help in recognizing what can be done to improve their institutions so that old people living in them have a greater measure of privacy and opportunity for recreation. The writer has tried to make practical suggestions which could be put into operation without incurring undue expense or causing extensive alterations in plant.

The most imperative need seems to the writer to be for development of a program aimed toward creating a healthier and more normal atmosphere in boarding homes. A case worker with enough time at her disposal could help the more receptive of the operators to see the old people as individuals rather than as a group. This is not meant to deprecate the very warm, friendly feeling most of the matrons have for their residents. The respect for them as persons, after the case work has been done, should show itself in small ways, probably, in an increased awareness of the individual’s right to privacy shown by, for instance, never entering his room until he has invited the knocker.
in; in abandonment of rules regarding times for lights to be out at night; in encouraging residents to bring personal belongings into the home.

It might appear more vividly in a willingness and even a desire to have the resident participate more actively in the actual business of operating the home. Sharing in some of the lighter tasks is only one form of participation but even this, if done in the right way, could give the residents a feeling of identity and importance. Bringing them in on planning of house regulations, meals, decorating and even financing would be more difficult to accomplish, or even to accept for any operator who needs to be in a position of importance and power. A worker going into a home with such ends in view would need group work skills as well as case work skills.

A great deal could be done also directly with many of the old people in helping them to accept the fact of old age and all that goes with it, and perhaps more vital for some, in helping them resolve their conflicts with their families. It has already been suggested that such tasks as outlined above might be attempted on an experimental basis and be reported on.

Little has been said regarding the work a group worker might be able to do in such a setting. The writer knows too little of this field to be able to do more than speculate, but it seems reasonable that a group worker could, in the course of introducing leisure-time activities
to old people in such a setting, accomplish a great deal in developing socialized attitudes. Certainly too many old people in boarding homes seem unable to find a satisfactory place for themselves in the group. Group relationships are important to everyone for the enjoyment of the group, and also for the development the individual personality gains from a group experience. Successful group experience is many times more significant for people who, like the aged in boarding homes, live in groups.

Whatever the future may hold in development of programs for the aged, it is to be hoped that the essential individuality of aged people will not be lost sight of. There is no single answer to their needs. There is no model boarding home which is the perfect boarding home for all persons requiring this kind of care. However, certain factors should be present in all homes. Single rooms, adequate bathroom facilities, modified to meet the frailties of old age, comfortable bedroom furniture, well planned common rooms, are some of the things which should be available in the ideal (or more nearly ideal than we now enjoy) boarding homes. The time may come when these things will be provided or licenses will not be granted for such homes. For the present such modifications as are practicable should be made in order to give the aged in boarding homes the maximum comfort possible under existing circumstances.
A major conclusion derived by the writer from all the impressions and factual material gathered in the course of this survey has not been mentioned in the discussion of boarding home care for the aged. There seemed little to be gained by outlining ambitious plans for altering present homes or for constructing new ones to meet all the needs of the aged. The measures suggested for improvements have been deliberately kept to a practical level. However, as the study proceeded and the assembled material was examined, the conviction grew that private endeavour cannot really adequately meet the problem of providing care for the aged. The kindest and best intentioned matron must charge her guests a high enough board rate to meet the full expense of their care and to leave a little over for her own use. If she charges a rate low enough to make it possible for assistance cases to use her home, she must keep costs down in order to meet operating expenses plus a reasonable reward for her own labour and investment. Extras such as the often-mentioned bed-lamps would literally have to be provided out of her own pocket.

Homes operated either by a service group or by the government are not expected to show a profit or even to operate without a "loss." Only a home subsidized either by a group or by the state can offer a really excellent standard of care and still be available to anyone needing it, whatever his resources may be. No criticism...
is being offered here of the really fine homes and the often selfless people who operate them. The fact remains, however the operators may wish to give the best possible service to their clients, they must make their living at it, and therefore there are realistic limits to how much they can offer the clients, and to how little they can charge them for care.

As the standards which homes must meet are raised bit by bit, a point may well be reached at which private persons will no longer be able to fulfill the licensing requirements and still make a living. Service clubs and national groups who subsidize boarding homes will be able to go on past this point of course, as will the state-maintained homes. In the meantime privately-run homes are doing a surprisingly good job, although they often leave something to be desired. Future plans for boarding homes for the aged can draw quite a bit that is useful from such homes.
APPENDICES
SPECIFIC REFERENCES

- outlines a plan for a village in Southern U.S.A.

- deals with the mushrooming of homes in the last few years, the fact that licensing has not kept pace in most places, deals with ideal legislation, suggestions for setting up inspection, etc. Very useful in trying to evaluate the local legislation and practice.

- Exhaustive outline of standards for old people's boarding homes, covering all aspects.

- outlines need for fitting the inmates to one another, for happier relations for all. Deals with signing over property versus paying by the month.

Manniche, Peter, Denmark, a social laboratory, Oxford University Press, New York, N.Y., 1939.
- outlines a community's blocks or apartments for old people.

Potter, Ellen C., and others, "Inspection and the Power of license as Tools in the Care of the Chronically Ill Aged", Public welfare, April, 1944, p.100.
- discussion of the way in which a sound worker can educate and raise standards without direct use of authority, and of some standards. Is directly applicable to licensing personnel dealing with ambulatory aged persons.

Old people need individualized care; some are not ready to use chronic care; we need more facilities, and need to coordinate those we have.

- Local statistics, some evaluation of homes.

- Excellent picture of the general situation of the aged in this city.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

GENERAL REFERENCES

Banning, Margaret Culkin, "Personal Inspection", Survey midmonthly, Sept., 1941, pp.252-4
-description of one old peoples' home, general needs of old people.

-fears of the old age group, what is needed in a caseworker for the aged, study of referrals to the bureau.

-social factors affecting old people, costs of lack of services for aged, old age pensions, causes of dependency. Good.

Farquhar, H. S., "Services for the Aged", Objectives and character of post war social work, Proceedings, the Canadian Conference on Social Work, Halifax, N. S., June, 1946.
-good general picture of needs and the present services to meet these.

-population trends, employment situation, economic burden of the aged, attitudes among the aged to age, aged as individuals, needs for research, for resources, for education for old age.

-what old people have to offer to the community, in politics, need for adequate pension, some Canadian programs.

-statement as to the position of the aged is difficult. No significant differences in the situation according to more recent writers.
-need for study of facilities, needs and attitudes. Should public supply facilities? Pension should include allowance for recreation.

-causes of economic insecurity, dependence on wages, methods of guarding economic security.

-every variety of figures on such homes, including cost of operation and methods of financing.

Powell, Amy S. and Fox, Flora, "Growth in Old Age", The family, Vol. XX, p. 119.
-role of a worker in aiding adjustment to retirement, age, development of interests, seeing the needs of the individual.

-part the pension plays, needs for kinds of housing for the aged, place of occupational therapy.

-particularly the section on recommended plans for housing the old.

-"The Social Front", Survey midmonthly, Sept., 1940.
-proportions of the population by ages, surveys of where the aged live and their ability to tend to their own physical needs.

Wagner, Margaret W., "Mental Hazards in Old Age", The family, Vol. XXV, p. 132.
-personality of the aged person shaped by his childhood; children encourage dependence in the old; use of homes to give independence as well as to shed responsibilities; the "curse of idleness".
Wagner, Margaret W., "Foster Home Care for the Aged", The family, Vol. XXVII, p.238.
-Community should supply diversity of resources for the aged, what is needed in a foster home, in the "mother", what it can give to the old person, the role of the social worker in the foster home program.