ALEXANDRA NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

A survey of the origins and development of a Vancouver institution in relation to its local environment.

by

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

Accepted as conforming to the standard required for the degree of
Master of Social Work

School of Social Work

1952

The University of British Columbia
ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the function of Alexandra House and the role it has played in the neighbourhood. Special attention has been devoted to the period from 1938, when the agency became a neighbourhood house, to April 1952. In the historical sketch emphasis is placed on programme, staff, and administration of the agency. The social and physical transitions within the neighbourhood are also considered, in relation to their influence on the role of Alexandra House.

The material for the study was gained from annual and monthly reports, minutes of staff and Board of Directors' meetings, interviews with agency personnel, surveys made of the area, and other material secured through the co-operation of the agency and the Community Chest. The function of the agency and its services was analyzed on the basis of a series of criteria of neighbourhood-house operation. Comparison of the early non-professional staff with the present professional staff was possible, by analyzing the programmes of the two different periods.

The thesis shows that social and economic changes within an area influence the attitudes and the needs of the people; an institution must change appropriately in order to meet the needs of the residents. The study also reveals the necessity of professional staff to perform a qualitative job. However, not only should a neighbourhood house programme evolve from the needs of the community, but the people within the community should assume more and more responsibility for their activities.

A quality programme has evolved slowly with the aid of professionally-trained workers. Good leadership emphasizes quality rather than quantity; but it also illustrates that co-operation between all personnel is required for maximum efficiency, and that volunteers and students are able to contribute to the programme more effectively with proper supervision from professional staff. Looking at the future, the study reveals the need for a re-statement of this function, as the changes within the neighbourhood bring changes in the neighbours, and some drastic redevelopment possibilities loom for the district.
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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND of NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES

The terms "settlement houses" and "neighbourhood houses" are often confusing to the reader when used interchangeably. Historically, the word "settlement" originated in England when Samuel A. Barnett used this word to describe a group of people who "settled" in a working-class neighbourhood, in order that they might better understand the prevailing conditions and help to improve them. The term "neighbourhood house" became popular in America as a term denoting an activity centre which did not emphasize the philosophy of the earlier settlements. Today many other terms are used, such as "community houses", "association", "commons", "halls", "inns", etc., but regardless of these variations, in all settlements today, the neighbourhood is accepted as the base of operations.¹

It is approximately seventy years since the Settlement Movement first began in England, yet many people still do not know the real place and purpose of a neighbourhood house. This is only natural, because the activities are so varied and often appear so unrelated that a person is often impressed by whatever he sees first or what is most popular among the members. Thus a neighbourhood house is often viewed as a club house, a school, a recreation centre, or as a charitable agency. The main fact to be remembered is that the neighbourhood house is not merely a

place for activity, but a place for neighbourly relations. Mary Simkhovitch explains in an illustrative manner that the settlement is a family living its life with its neighbours, and she refers to this artificial family as a "group" of people with similar ideas.

"The kernel of the settlement is the group itself. What the group does depends on the needs of the neighbourhood and whether they can best be met by this group or by other means". ¹

This quotation naturally leads to the statement that settlements are living social organisms. Human needs are always changing because of the continuous environmental changes. The needs of the people are becoming more apparent in the community and specialized agencies are being developed to meet these needs. Therefore the function of a settlement house should always be flexible. It is remarkable how settlements have been prominent examples of social institutions without a stereotyped method, philosophy or programme. One of the reasons for this flexibility is that settlements guide and motivate, rather than impose a ready-made programme of services on the neighbourhood.

Community life today is complex, and the purposes of social agencies need to be dovetailed with other institutions to form a community plan for all such services. This co-ordinated and collective action to serve the total community means that settlement houses as well as other agencies must shape their programmes to fit the needs of the whole. Thus, it is up to the

staff and board of each agency to realize what specific services they may best provide. This does not mean that the traditions and contributions made in the past must be severed, but it does mean that the services should be expanded. In order to understand these traditions, it is necessary to gain a total picture of the Settlement Movement from its embryonic stage to the present day.

British Beginnings

The Settlement Movement had its origin in the work of some of the foremost reformers in England during the nineteenth century. It was early in the last century that gifted men and women attempted to alleviate some of the miseries so predominant among the working class. The economic and social conditions following the Industrial Revolution were such that "the rich were growing richer and the poor were growing poorer", so that the gap between the groups was becoming wider and more distant.

During this period, Thomas Chambers, a minister in Scotland, attempted to organize a model mill town. Despite the fact that his views of industrial problems were limited, he realized the value of neighbourly relations. Thus it was becoming increasingly clear to the intelligent reformers that emphasis should be placed on the community background of the working classes. Martineau, Ruskin, Carlyle and Dickens were influential writers of this day who brought to the attention of the upper classes the seriousness of the hardship and suffering produced by the industrial expansion.
In the sphere of philosophy, Thomas H. Green stands foremost in the teachings of constructive citizenship. T. H. Green has been referred to as the spiritual forefather of Settlements because, through his teachings, he aroused the zeal of many young and ardent reformers of the day. One of his students, Arnold Toynbee, introduced a new movement in the universities; a penetration of the crowded centres of population, by the educated philanthropic people of the upper class, in order that they might better understand and teach the illiterate people of these crowded slum areas. Arnold Toynbee did not live to see the first Settlement, as he died at the early age of thirty-one. But the foundation of the first Settlement, Toynbee Hall, in 1884, was a fitting memorial to Arnold Toynbee and his work. John R. Green and Samuel A. Barnett were the men who finally conceived the idea of residence in the industrial section of East London in order to share at first hand, in the living conditions of the working classes. Canon Barnett, in answer to a request for advice from a group of Oxford students interested in helping the poor, advised that a house be obtained in a working-class neighbourhood. For this purpose, Toynbee Hall was founded by the University Settlement Association, which was a committee acting for Cambridge and Oxford Universities.

Canon Barnett became the first warden of Toynbee Hall, not only because it was his original suggestion, but also because of his humanitarian ideals and his knowledge of the needs of the working classes. Without such a faith in men, the grim surroundings and almost hopeless conditions would have appeared invulnerable. From this first Settlement, the principles laid down by Barnett and his associates have spread to distant communities and
have been applied in different fields.

"Neighbourliness and service" was the basic spirit of the movement. It was recognized at once by thoughtful men that, aside from meeting the direct needs of the working class, the Settlement Movement gave hope that friendly relations between separated classes might come about. This, plus the fact that it was a popular idea, led to the establishment and spread throughout the world of this movement. Even during this embryonic stage of the Settlement Movement there was nothing stereotyped about its function. Violet Carruthers aptly portrays the varying functions of settlements within different countries in the following words.

"These loosely constituted bodies, federated spiritually as they are by certain broad ideals, represent an infinite variety of social theory and practice. Some are based on religious principles, others are wholly undenominational. One Settlement concentrates on certain definite branches of work, another ranges over a wide field of general social activity. The organization of clubs plays a large part in the programme. Some deal principally with boys, others with girls, others again with adults. Some present the spectacle of a chain of clubs stretching from the cradle to the grave, with a baby clinic at one end and a club for patriarchal mothers at the other. Social research and training of students is a side to which the larger Settlements devote much time. Indeed, the limits set to the activities of any given Settlements are only those of its finances and the capacities of its residents. A Settlement worth its salt becomes the centre for enterprises of many kinds. The residents live in the district as friends and neighbours sharing a common life of work and effort with the inhabitants".1

1. Ibid., pp. 148 - 149.
Spread to North America

The social and industrial problems engendered by the industrial expansion in the United States were similar in many essential respects to the problems of industrial England. The impetus to the Settlement Movement in the United States, as in England, came partly out of the religious problem of applying the gospel of Christianity to the demands of this new life. The college curriculum also placed more emphasis on the factors surrounding the evolution of modern England. Still another influence was that the ideas of protection and laissez-faire were being replaced by a more modern approach to economic facts. There were also famous American writers such as Emerson, Whittier and Lowell who expounded the principles of human rights and the evils of slavery. All these forces helped to set the stage for the introduction of settlements in the United States.

In 1883-1884 some students at Smith College, stirred by the writings of Carlyle, Ruskin and Tolstoy, proposed "an international order of women" to dedicate their lives to work among the poor. Although this order never functioned, it is significant that the impulse, which led to the founding of the first settlement in America, found its original stirrings in the women's colleges.

Many university students went to Toynbee Hall to study that experiment, and in 1886 the first American university settlement was established by Stanton Coil in lower East Side of New York. During the summer and fall of 1886, Stanton Coil devoted his time to the cultivation of neighbourly acquaintances and before
the winter of 1887, five clubs were meeting regularly and a federation of the young people's club had been organized. Out of this experiment the "Neighbourhood Guild" was born. In 1891 the name was changed to the University Settlement and a report was issued which portrays some of its early problems and aims. The report stated that the society required men to reside in the Neighbourhood House, who could give a large part of their time and services to this cause. It also stated that donations would be appreciated from people who thought that this enterprise would bring the different classes of people into closer relation. Although the methods of Toynbee Hall were imitated, the University Settlement laid greater stress on entertainment for both children and adults.

Two years after the establishment of the Neighbourhood Guild, the College Settlement was established on Rivington Street, New York, with the original purpose of devoting their time to helping girls and women. Jane E. Robins and Jean Pine, the two women directors, saw the fallacy of meeting the needs of only a segment of the community, and consequently made it into a Neighbourhood House.

At about the same time, Jane Addams, unable to continue her studies in medicine because of failing health, began her search for a method and means of approach to the social inequalities prevalent at that time. This search led to the establishment of one of the most famous social settlements in American, Hull House, on Halsted Street. Close acquaintance with the poor led her to understand some of the hardships suffered by
destitute men, women and children. The numerous problems encountered and overcome by Jane Addams and her friend, Ellen Gates Starr, are found in her writings on the development and progress of Hull House.

Two years after Hull House was opened, a third settlement came into being in New York. Everett P. Wheeler took the initiative in the founding of East Side House, which was on the river front in a neighbourhood of Irish, German and Scandinavian people. It can be seen that in such a neighbourhood there would be many problems concerning racial customs and practices that were not encountered, to the same extent, in the British Settlements.

The next settlement, Northwestern University Settlement, was established by Charles Zueblin in the largest Polish community in America; because of this fact it served as an experimental station for social work among Slavic peoples.

By 1900 the Settlement Movement had become well established in the United States. During the first ten years of settlement history in America, it is interesting to note that the various projects were the result of the efforts of one or two individuals and there was no affiliation between agencies. These early founders had faith and courage in spreading goodwill and sharing the misery of the poor in order to bring about neighbourly relationships.

Thus it can be seen how the Settlement Movement began in a few American cities and has now spread into almost every State. West of Chicago there are fewer settlement houses and the majority of these have been founded by different religious groups,
which is not true of those in Eastern United States. There appears to be a general opinion that a settlement, founded by a religious group in a one-faith neighbourhood, may gain strength by identification with the culture and religion of the group it serves. On the other hand, in areas where races and religions are mixed, as is true in most areas, a settlement working with only a certain part of the community will act as a separating rather than a unifying influence. There are, of course, houses which have been founded by religious groups but are as completely non-sectarian in their work as are the secular houses.

According to Elizabeth Handasyde, the American Settlement is held in higher esteem, both by the general public and the social work profession, than is the average British House. She accredits this mainly to the fame of many of the large, well-equipped houses of the east, and to the general high quality of staff found in even the smaller houses. It is pointed out that it is also partly due to the high degree of co-ordination attained by the movement.

"The Settlement Movement in the United States consists of the combined activities of two hundred and five settlement and neighbourhood houses, ten city federations of these agencies, and the National Federation of Settlements. Sixty-one additional neighbourhood houses maintain affiliation with the National Federation through individual membership, and across the country are many other centres which have felt the impetus of the movement."

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Settlement Movement, which had spread to Canada, became firmly established

in Ontario and Quebec. The majority of the Settlement Houses established in Eastern Canada have religious origins while the two agencies in Western Canada, namely, Alexandra Neighbourhood House and Gordon Neighbourhood House are secular in origin. These two Houses, both in Vancouver, are the only two settlements in Canada west of Ontario. The distance separating the western agencies from the eastern agencies, plus their difference in origin, are two reasons for the lack of close ties and affiliation between the west and the east. Therefore, Alexandra and Gordon Neighbourhood Houses have looked southward for direction and stimulus. Both of these houses are affiliated with the National Federation of Settlements, which enables them to keep in contact with the latest advances made in the settlement houses throughout the United States.

**Basic Philosophy of Settlement Work**

The basic philosophy of settlement work is common to other social agencies and to the motivation of all workers in this field.

1. "A sincere belief in the sacredness and worth of the individual and dedication to the task of helping individuals to grow, to realize their highest potentialities, and to be happy in their relations to other individuals and to the community."

2. "A conviction that the family is the social unit which is most important in the growth and development of effective individuals, and that family life should be strong and wholesome."

3. "A belief that individuals have the right to determine their own destinies, but may need to be helped to exercise that right and to realize their potentialities. Such help must be given without violating the right of self-determination and the
self-respect of individuals, and by encouraging a
maximum degree of social responsibility on the
part of the individuals."

Although the basic philosophy of the settlement is
common to other groups and organizations, we must realize that
the purpose differs in that it develops in the people, within the
area it serves, a deep feeling of neighbourliness. This neigh-
bourhood spirit consists of pride and loyalty to the community,
a feeling of responsibility for conditions of the neighbourhood,
and an awareness that the neighbourhood is a part of the wider
community, which ideally is world-wide.

In the early history of the Settlement Movement, the
reformers felt that a House should be placed in the midst of the
most degraded and hopeless classes, but today, there is a realiza-
tion that all the problems of the poorer classes, such as delinqu-
ency and crime, the needs of the indigent and poor and the needs
of people who are regularly employed, should be faced. Grace
Coyle categorizes the function of neighbourhood houses into four
major areas.

Education-recreation activities probably occupy the
largest portion of agency funds and time of personnel. For this
reason, the community often views the neighbourhood house as a
place for clubs, athletics, dancing, camping and similar activi-
ties. This educational and recreational work is usually informal
and the groups are formed by voluntary attendance. Thus, it is
through these services that the settlement can create new city

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1. "The Cleveland Settlement Study", Cleveland, Welfare
   Federation of Cleveland, 1946, p. 8.
2. Coyle, Grace, Group Experience and Democratic Values,
neighbourhoods which is the main objective. Public support in this area is not strong enough, though it may appear to be a public responsibility. Where public facilities are available for education and recreation, the neighbourhood house can experiment and develop new programmes and methods which can be executed in the more flexible structure of a private agency.

The second sphere of service is to the neighbours on an individual basis. There are three main types of contacts with individuals, firstly, the casual, friendly acquaintance with people in the area and the agency; secondly, contacts through home visits; and thirdly, contacts arising out of a need or problem. Whatever the manner of contact, the individual must be helped to recognize his needs or problems and the House staff, facilities and programmes should be used to meet his needs in whole or part whenever possible. Cooperation with other agencies is necessary in the co-ordination of services to meet the needs of the members.

Another function of a neighbourhood house is to help a neighbourhood to develop constructive and effective organizations. This can be done by helping to organize programmes, by furnishing facilities, by training and providing leadership and by assisting local organizations to better meet the needs of the community. This encouragement and assistance in the growth of a neighbourhood is a service which the neighbourhood house is especially qualified to provide.

Through social education and social action, the private agency can function freely toward the betterment of community conditions. Even controversial national problems can be attacked
through collective action. Public agencies, because they are government bodies, cannot agitate for change or side with the people against legislation but neighbourhood houses have the unique advantage to do this in a democratic manner. The neighbourhood house may take the initiative in organizing social action or may work with groups already in existence for the same purpose. The neighbourhood house should provide education about social issues and how to take appropriate action to remedy these unhealthy conditions.

Through these four services, namely, education-recreation, neighbourhood organization, individual services and social action, the neighbourhood house can meet the needs of a community. The creation of friendly, participating neighbours is the underlying purpose which should permeate and guide every programme and activity within a neighbourhood house.

Grace Coyle's criteria are a good yardstick with which the function of a neighbourhood house might be measured. With an understanding of these functions, attention can be focused on a local institution, Alexandra Neighbourhood House. These criteria might be applied locally because a number of questions may well be asked about Alexandra House. Why was Alexandra Neighbourhood House formed? How was it formed? Is the neighbourhood changing? What is the function of the House? Why do they require trained professional staff? How does the student training programme contribute to the Agency? In what kind of a community should a neighbourhood house be built? Is Alexandra Neighbourhood House in such a community? What will the Granville Bridge project do
to Alexandra Neighbourhood House? Does the function of Alexandra Neighbourhood House have to change?

Because of some deficiencies in service and because of the Agency's changing constituency (to be clarified in Chapter two) the present study has been undertaken.
CHAPTER II

THE COMMUNITY SERVED

The area generally recognized as that served by Alexandra Neighbourhood House, is bounded by False Creek to the north, Sixteenth Avenue to the south, Oak Street to the east and Alma Road to the west. The more effective area, shown by Chart I, is bounded by False Creek to the north, Ninth Avenue to the south, Granville Street to the east and Arbutus Street to the west. Ninth Avenue, Granville and Arbutus Streets are main arterial roads cutting through the neighbourhood which tend to form natural boundaries. Within this area, sixty-two per cent of the present membership is found. Because of these natural boundaries and the high concentration of membership, this small area is considered the effective neighbourhood. Outside of this district but within the stated boundaries, less than one quarter of the membership is found. Only fifteen per cent of the membership reside outside of the extended boundaries. Because of this concentration of membership within these narrower limits, it is reasonable to focus on this area.

The aerial photograph of this neighbourhood shows the position of Alexandra House and the natural boundaries which are formed by the arterial roads. The position of the House is such that no fewer than four main arterial roads cut through the immediate area which it serves. Two blocks east of the House is Granville Street, one of the main streets of Vancouver, where the traffic is heavy all day. Two blocks south of the House is the
Chart 1 DISTRIBUTION of MEMBERSHIP - ALEXANDRA NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE (1951)
busy thoroughfare of Ninth Avenue, which is now becoming one of the better office areas of Vancouver. Three blocks to the south is the main thoroughfare of Fourth Avenue which is enclosed by commercial buildings. While on the west, not one block from the House, is the main arterial road, Burrard Street, where there is a continual flow of traffic going to and from the City Centre via Burrard Bridge. These arterial roads present a hazard for children to cross, and just over three per cent of the membership is found east of Granville Street. (See Chart I) There may be other reasons for the small percentage of membership from this area but Granville Street has definitely become a boundary to the east. Perhaps Fourth Avenue and Burrard Street are the two which show the least influence in becoming definite boundaries, although the area north of Fourth Avenue is not being served properly. Broadway is becoming a definite boundary which is probably accentuated by the modern commercial buildings which line the street and form a more natural separation from the southern area.

The newly-completed Kitsilano Community Centre on Tenth Avenue, with a large adjoining playground, is situated in a strategic location for serving this southern area. At present it is not serving the surrounding community as well as it might, but is concentrating on city-wide clubs and professional teams who can pay for their use of the building. For this reason, there is some dissatisfaction about the present operation of the Community Centre. Once Kitsilano Community Centre focuses its attention on the surrounding district, people from this area, who at present go to Alexandra House, will most likely attend the Community Centre.
There is only one school in the "effective" area, namely, the Henry Hudson School; the school is located in the northwest section of the neighbourhood. The Lord Tennyson School, at Tenth Avenue and Cypress Street, and the Saint Augustine School, a Roman Catholic school at Seventh Avenue and Arbutus Street, are situated on the border of this area. These schools provide the only playground space, although Kitsilano Beach is nearby, and is, of course, a valuable play area.

Within the Alexandra House "district" are found the following churches: Saint Augustine, Roman Catholic Church on Seventh Avenue; Russian Orthodox Church on Sixth Avenue; First Baptist Sunday School on Second Avenue; the Sikh Temple on Third Avenue; the First United Spiritualist Church on Pine Street; and the Jehovah's Witnesses Hall on Pine Street. The latter two churches can hardly be referred to as neighbourhood organizations because only a few of their members reside in the district.

Some of the people of the neighbourhood attend religious services which are held within the sphere of influence of Alexandra House. Holy Trinity Anglican at Tenth Avenue and Pine Street; Fairview Baptist at Sixteenth Avenue and Pine Street; Canadian Memorial at Sixteenth Avenue and Burrard Street; Crosby United at Second Avenue and Larch Street; Saint Stephen United at Third Avenue and Larch Street and Saint Mark Anglican at Third Avenue and Larch Street, are all located within the extended boundaries served by the House. It is significant to note that the leadership of these churches is not found within the neighbourhood but comes from areas farther south and west.
A description of the area served by the House was recorded in the 1940 Annual Report of Alexandra House.

"The neighbourhood in which our House is situated is the old part of Kitsilano, a heavily populated district composed chiefly of rather old and, in many cases, neglected wooden houses; a few factories; some small shopping areas and four main arteries passing through it -- Granville Street, Burrard Street, Fourth and Ninth Avenues. The area is populated chiefly by English, Canadian, Scotch and Irish families. There are a few Americans, Scandinavians, French, Jewish, Russian and Austrian families in the district, and one small area made up largely of East Indian and Japanese families.

Many of the houses in this district which were recently built for one-family use are now housing several families and are seriously overcrowded. In many instances, families are living in one or two rooms without adequate cooking and sanitary facilities. In the section between Fourth Avenue and Cornwall Street and from Vine to Granville and east of Granville Street and between Seventh Avenue and the waterfront, is one of the worst slum areas in the city. Many of these houses are inhabited by Japanese and poor whites. Here also is the Hindu area, but it seems that the Hindus are gradually vacating this district and moving to other parts of the city. This section represents a serious social problem. Although it has been a decided physical improvement to the district, the presence of the Armouries and barracks is creating new problems."#

The appearance of the neighbourhood today is very similar in many respects to the above description, except that the Japanese people were removed from this area two years later, the housing has deteriorated more or less continuously over the past twelve years, and industry and commercialization is gradually engulfing the residential area nearest to Granville Street.

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Transitions within the neighbourhood.

Between Burrard and Granville Streets, Ninth Avenue and False Creek, small commercial enterprises are rapidly filtering into the residential sections. This district is noted for its rapidly deteriorating housing and there appears to be little, if any, attempt at repair or upkeep. Walking through this area, one is immediately struck by the many houses which appear unfit for habitation. Buildings with sagging roofs and foundations, wherein numerous people live, are not a rarity.

One sight, which perhaps typifies this area all too clearly, is an old church on the corner of Pine Street and Third Avenue. If one went past this church on a Sunday, he would not see children and adults passing through its doors; on the contrary, a strange silence would greet him. Yet, if he passed by this building on a week-day, he would be surprised by the strange sounds coming from within. He would be surprised - and perhaps smile sadly - when he realized that it had now become a furniture factory. This is only one example of what is taking place. This is the heart of the transition area, yet within the above district, according to a survey made in 1951, still reside thirty-seven per cent of the membership of Alexandra House.

The bulk of this area, from Granville Street to Burrard Street, from Sixth Avenue north to False Creek, has been zoned for industry. No building can be erected unless built of masonry material, which means that there will probably not be any new homes erected at all. The residual homes within this area have practically no value, but the sites have value - at least
potentially, for industries. Therefore, no money is spent on the buildings by the owners or landlords, because any improvement or repair does not increase the value of the property. The owners of these houses "hang on" hoping for a high price and, as the building deteriorates, the rent which can be obtained for living quarters decreases per unit. The amount "sweated" out of a converted building may be considerable. Naturally, this area, which is characterized by declining housing, industry, and cheap rents attracts people who are in low-income groups and cannot afford better housing accommodation.

West of Burrard Street is also a transitional area. This area was, at one time, one of the better residential districts of Vancouver. Over the years, there has been a gradual change and those homes with a view of Kitsilano Beach have been replaced by apartment buildings. South of the apartments, homes are being converted to multiple family dwellings.

The population structure of this area has changed over the years; one way of illustrating this is by examining the institutions found here. There are no political or social clubs and the membership of the churches has changed. For instance, at one time the Saint Mark Anglican Church was an outstanding institution with hundreds of parishioners; at present, one-half of the building is a Workman's Compensation Office. The Saint Stephen's United Church, forty years ago, had an active membership of at

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Mr. Charles Bailey, one of the teachers in Kitsilano High School, who has done considerable sociological research, made a study of this area, and much of this material was obtained from him. Acknowledgment is hereby tendered to him for permission to use his data.
least five hundred, with seven hundred and fifty children attending Sunday School. This year, the two United churches of Saint Stephen and Crosby have combined to form one parish.

These changes are significant because they show that not only are the number of parishioners decreasing, but the people remaining are in a lower income group and cannot support these churches. This western part of the neighbourhood appears to be following a pattern similar to the area immediately surrounding the House, where a church on Second Avenue has become the Hollywood Furniture Factory, a church on First Avenue was replaced by the Boultbee Maintenance Shop, and the Methodist Church on Sixth Avenue has become a printing shop.

The new Granville Bridge project, which is already under construction, will have a great deal of influence on the future of Alexandra House. The plans laid for the new bridge indicate that it will extend over much of the area now serviced by the institution. (See Map 2) The clover-leaf roads cover approximately one block on each side of the bridge and one "run-off" from the bridge starts at Eighth Avenue and Fir Street which is one block from the House. Another "run-off" will start at Fourth Avenue and Pine Street and will be built between Third and Fourth Avenues, which will cut up this block. Pine Street will most likely become a main thoroughfare for trucks and other vehicles. This will mean that the House, which is on the corner of Pine Street, will be located in a poor position, as it will be dangerous for children who stray from the playground area. The Granville Bridge project will have a definite influence on this
area, as it will "seal off" housing and cut up the district so that community feeling and dependence is discouraged. Approximately eighteen city blocks will be directly affected by the southern extremity of the bridge and it is only natural that numerous other blocks will be indirectly affected. The resultant deterioration will produce a multitude of social problems.

The membership of Alexandra House had been quite stable during the early period of the development of the House, but during the last two years the turnover in membership has been quite high. The neighbourhood is becoming more and more a transitional area where people live for a short period of time and then move to another part of the city. Since just before Christmas of 1951 to the spring of 1952, thirty-one children have left the playschool in Alexandra House through moving to other parts of the City. With a total enrolment of forty-five playschool children, this means a changeover of approximately sixty-nine percent due to moving. Of the five hundred and eighteen families registered at the House, three hundred and four are new registrations and only two hundred and fourteen are renewals. Even though there are no statistics available telling why the renewals form such a small percentage of the total membership, it does indicate the transient nature of the community.

A door-to-door survey was made in the fall of 1951, by five students taking one of the courses in community organization at the School of Social Work. This survey was an attempt to determine the attitudes of the neighbourhood people toward the House. Three hundred and eighty-seven homes were
visited in the area from Fir Street to Arbutus Street and from Eighth Avenue to Fifth Avenue. It was found that, of the people canvassed, only twelve per cent were active members of Alexandra House, seven per cent attended occasionally, and nine per cent did not even know about the House. Only two per cent expressed hostility toward the Agency and practically all of these lived in the immediate vicinity of the House. Approximately twenty-five per cent displayed no interest in the programme and many others displayed only a slight interest in the House.

The observations of four of these students who had made the survey are interesting. One student stated that the most surprising impression she received was the number of people who did not know the function of the House. One person thought it was a school, another thought it was an orphanage, while many others thought it was only for young people. The people canvassed showed a general lack of interest in the Agency. Another student was impressed by the number of "foreign-speaking" people, who had a difficult time understanding what she was talking about. She found some interested in the general idea of the function of the House, but they, themselves, did not appear too interested in belonging to the Agency. The third student's outstanding impression was the general lack of interest and apathy shown by the people. In all the visits, no one was interested enough to ask him inside. The fourth student who participated in the survey found that many people thought the House was a place for children. He discovered that most of the younger girls were encouraged to go to the House, but that the older ones were discouraged
because the parents thought it was "too rough".

Although this survey was made on a rough sampling basis, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions, the high percentage of lack of interest displayed is noteworthy, and the large number not knowing about the House is also significant. This general disinterest and apathy of the people may be quite characteristic of such areas. It has been shown by sociologists that in a deteriorating or declining community, there is a tendency for the people of the community to lose interest in neighbourhood functions. This trend may be well exemplified by this district.

Two examples may be cited to illustrate this indifferent attitude of the neighbourhood. One is that the erection of the new Granville Bridge has not caused any apparent anxiety within the immediate district, although people living even farther west in the Kitsilano district are becoming concerned. Similarly there were no protests against a suggestion that a new police station be built at Sixth Avenue and Hemlock Street; although when two other sites in different sections of the City were suggested for this building it immediately aroused the people in those areas. It was noted in the first chapter that one of the major functions of a neighbourhood house is social education and social action. The question now arises whether the House can assume such a role in this neighbourhood where inertia and apathy are so predominant.

It was noted earlier that although the basic philosophy of a neighbourhood house is common to several other organizations, the purpose differs in that it develops, in the people
of the district it serves, a deep feeling of neighbourliness. This neighbourhood spirit should consist of pride in and loyalty to the community and a feeling of responsibility for the conditions existing there. Since a neighbourhood house is vitally influenced by the district in which it is situated, a good understanding of the surrounding area is required before the services can be analysed. It is clear that Alexandra House is situated in an area where many changes have occurred in the past and are still going on. Against this background, both the embryonic stages of the Neighbourhood House and the more recent ones should be analyzed.
CHAPTER III

DEPRESSION and WAR YEARS

A "Children's Home", for children without parents or whose parents were poverty-stricken, was established on the corner of Homer and Dunsmuir Streets in 1892, by a small interested group of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. A provisional board was appointed, consisting of two representatives of the churches, along with one representative from the City, and one from the Ministerial Association. The number of children increased, which necessitated a move to a larger home on Hornby Street. This home was occupied until December, 1894. At this time, the Directors of the Alexandra Hospital for Women and Children donated their building and equipment, at 1726 West Seventh Avenue, to the cause, on the sole condition that the institution assume its present name. Between 1894 and 1930, the number of children in care of the Alexandra Children's Home would average around seventy. By 1933, the number of children in care decreased to only thirty-seven.

The changing concepts of child care and the emphasis on family welfare services in the thirties had a direct bearing on the institutional care throughout Canada and the United States. By this time the public relief authorities also realized that it was not only more economical but socially more desirable to maintain the family unit. Consequently, a more adequate basis for relief grants assured the preservation of the natural home. Another factor which was important was the beginning of the swing
away from orphanages to foster home care. In 1933, Miss Charlotte Whitton's advice was sought and she reported that the position of Alexandra Children's Home was common to many agencies and communities in Eastern Canada and the United States.

In the meantime, the Children's Aid Society asked if Alexandra House could be used as a receiving home for their children, until they had the opportunity to develop their programme of subsidized boarding homes. Therefore, from 1933 until 1938, the Home received boys and girls from the Children's Aid Society, mostly as short-time placements. The average number of Children's Aid Society children being cared for was fifteen, while their own institutional population was rapidly decreasing.

In 1937, the Directors of Alexandra Children's Home wrote to the Children's Committee of the Council of Social Agencies of Vancouver for advice. They thought that the children might be transferred from Alexandra House to a cottage home under the care of a matron; if this plan was carried out, the Directors thought the building might be converted into a community centre. The Committee approved the proposals, but recommended that support from all community groups should be obtained. The churches, schools, the Kitsilano Chamber of Commerce, as well as representatives from among the residents themselves were to be consulted before making any public announcement.

It was apparent that the Foster Home Movement forced the Directors to abandon the orphanage, and the dilemma now became - what to do with the building? The serious unemployment

Much of the early history of the House has been obtained from the 1940 Annual Report of Alexandra Neighbourhood House.
situation existing at that time led the directors to focus their attention on the development of a programme of relief. This was one of the reasons why it became a neighbourhood house. The amount of research that was carried out in the community to determine the need for a neighbourhood house was extremely limited. A person was hired to do this preliminary research but due to the lack of time, attention was focused on the social agencies interested in the Neighbourhood House, and any thought of contact with the people, or publicity in the community was abandoned. The Neighbourhood House did not evolve through a community movement, but it became a reality because the Directors had a building, which they desired to devote to some useful purpose.

On September 1st, 1938, Mr. W. A. Morrison, who had considerable experience in community agencies, such as Flat Bush Boy's Club and the New York Community Centre, was engaged as Superintendent of Alexandra Neighbourhood House. The House officially opened its doors to the community on October 1st, 1938.

**Development of Programme**

Alexandra House opened its doors to the community with the idea that services would be rendered in three major areas. The categories of service were "community service", "family service", and "group work activity". Community service was to include and emphasize social action towards the improvement of the neighbourhood by attempting to gain more play space, better housing and better traffic regulations. Family service was to

There is a lack of material as to the community and family services performed during the first decade.
include home visits; to assist people to obtain employment, to help them gain assistance if required and to refer them to specialized agencies who could help with their problems. These categories would also include the development of neighbourliness and community spirit. The third category, which was referred to as group work activity, was considered the most important and included club groups, play school, educational, cultural, social and physical activities, mass activities, and special events.

In the first year, 2,354 were registered members, of which 1,342 were registered with the Social Service Exchange. Such a high percentage of membership, being known to different agencies, indicates that the majority of membership had financial or family problems. One of the main reasons why so many people were registered with the Social Service Exchange was that the House opened its doors a year previous to the declaration of World War II, at which time unemployment was a serious problem. During the war years, the number of home visits increased because of the prevalence of child problems. Home visits were made each year with a view to secure the cooperation of the parents of children who attended the Agency. Close cooperation appears to have been maintained with other agencies and the families. Referrals were made to those agencies which could provide more specialized services, such as case work and financial assistance. During this early period, day work and permanent employment was obtained for different members of the family. Thus, it can be seen that some preventive social work was performed in their attempts to attain a neighbourly spirit.
The group work activities occupied the largest portion of agency funds and time of personnel. The Director, because of his previous experience, had a good understanding of the fundamentals of group work and he attempted to build a programme around the expressed interests of the members and not superimpose a programme upon them. New members were placed in clubs most suitable as to age, interests and needs. The Director attempted to build a flexible programme in order that it might be readily adjusted to meet changing interests and needs.

The programme activities were soon developed under six main categories, namely, group clubs, education activities, social activities, physical activities, miscellaneous activities and outside groups. Group clubs were formed according to age groupings and sex. For example, in 1939, there were five clubs of junior boys (six to eleven years of age), four clubs of junior girls, nine clubs of intermediate boys (twelve to sixteen years of age), and in the adult department, there were two women's clubs and one men's club. The educational or vocational activities included kindergarten, weaving, quilting, rugmaking, sewing, painting, drawing, leather work, woodwork, and cooking. Miscellaneous activities included such services as games room, library, archery and house councils. Outside groups were either groups associated with the House or were independent groups, who merely had the use of the facilities. For example in 1939, there were the Self-Help Groups (ten craft groups, one drama group), Pro Rec Groups (seven groups), Lions Club, Lady Lions Club, Sea Rangers, Kitsilano Red Cross and seven independent club groups.
Alexandra Neighbourhood House consisted of two buildings. The main building was a large rambling place, which contained fifteen rooms of varying sizes. On the main floor there was the entrance hall, a large social room, a room used for a gymnasium, boy's club room, check room, office, reception room, Kindergarten and a kitchen. On the second floor there was the auditorium with stage, girl's club room, dressing rooms, wash rooms, Superintendent's apartment, women's club room, men's club room, Superintendent's office, library and three craft rooms, one of which was quite large and occasionally used for meetings. The other building was formerly a small schoolhouse. It was turned into a woodworking shop and became a special project of the Kitsilano Lions Club.

Staff and Membership

The Superintendent had a good understanding of the function of a neighbourhood house, but he lacked professional staff, which meant that he could not give the leadership to groups that developed in the Agency. In 1939, the permanent staff consisted of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, caretaker and a non-paid kindergarten teacher. During this year, four social work students were assigned to the Agency for their field work. There were also over one hundred volunteers contributing their services to the various groups. With such a small staff, it was impossible to give the proper supervision and co-ordinate the numerous programmes that were developing. The lack of leadership was portrayed in the fluctuating membership.
A men's club formed during this year and consisted mainly of unemployed persons. The membership reached thirty and a committee from this group met periodically with a committee of the Kitsilano Chamber of Commerce. A Women's group, called "The Self-Help Group", were having difficulty in adjusting to the Agency, as they felt it was a place for children rather than for adults. From the beginning, the younger people were given the greater share of facilities, space and time, which made the adult groups feel neglected.

The assistant-superintendent was not appointed until April, 1939, at which time, with the assistance of volunteers, he took on the responsibilities of four groups, in order to help set a standard and to demonstrate proper group methods. This person, a non-professional with limited experience, did not appear to set a very good standard, but he was not replaced until two years later.

The young adult group (sixteen to twenty-three years) had a poor quality of leadership amongst themselves, and they did not want adult supervision. This portrays the need for qualified leadership which was not available at that time.

The distribution of membership was in the following proportion; fifty per cent boys and girls under sixteen years, twenty-five per cent young people and twenty-five per cent adults. Two house councils were formed; a senior house council, consisting of adults and young people, and a junior house council for the younger groups. This, in itself, was a desirable step which enabled the groups, through representation to the councils, to suggest better ways and methods of improving and co-ordinating
In 1940, the average daily attendance was approximately three hundred. Active monthly membership ranged between fifteen hundred and eighteen hundred. There were one hundred and twelve different groups or activities meeting weekly or daily. Despite the impressive figure of one hundred and twelve different groups or activities, many groups were at loose ends because of the lack of leadership. Most of these groups were led by volunteers, many of whom did not attend regularly. There was a lack of consistency due to a continuous change of leadership, which usually results in disintegration of groups.

The Junior League and Normal School provided the Agency with most of the volunteers, without which it would have been impossible to carry on programme. The Junior League also provided money for a girls worker, who was sorely needed to provide a more adequate girl's programme, as the attendance of the girls had fallen off because of the deficiencies in programme. Some of the volunteer leadership appeared to come from the community and a week's training programme during the Easter Holidays was provided for the older boys. This experiment, which was supervised by the Superintendent, apparently was successful. It was recommended that a similar training programme be organized the following year, but for some reason it was discontinued. Such a training programme is a good method of encouraging and developing leadership from the community. It enables the neighbours to assume more and more responsibility for their own activities.

The following year was quite similar in most respects except that there was a change in staff. The Junior League pro-
vided the salary for a social worker for a year and also provided the salary for a playschool supervisor for the summer months. The boys' worker was dismissed because he was incapable of doing satisfactory work. A new boys' worker was appointed in September and a girls' supervisor was attained at the same time.

Leadership Problems

The year 1942 marked the opening of Gordon Neighbourhood House, at the corner of Nelson and Jervis Streets. It also marked the closing of Alexandra Children's Home, which was also administered under Alexandra Community Activities. Mr. Morrison, the Superintendent of Alexandra Neighbourhood House, assumed the role of executive-director of both Alexandra and Gordon Houses. The appointment of one executive-director to be in charge of both neighbourhood houses reveals the lack of autonomy or home rule of the individual houses. This meant that the Executive Committee maintained control over the operation and management of Alexandra House, but the House Committee should have had the power over these

1. Alexandra Neighbourhood House is one of three agencies which make up the Alexandra Community Activities. The others are Gordon Neighbourhood House and Alexandra Fresh Air Camp. The Executive Council (Alexandra Community Activities) makes all necessary capital expenditures and owns all physical assets. The major portion of the budget is obtained from the Community Chest and Council.

The Executive Council consists of not less than thirty-six members and not more than sixty. Alexandra House Committee is one of the standing committees and is virtually a Board of Directors for the House. This Committee has control over the affairs, operations and management of Alexandra House. Any matter affecting policy or capital funds and expenditures must be referred to the Executive Council.
areas in order that the people of the community might have the opportunity to assume responsibility for their own activities. To ensure this responsibility, the House Committee should consist mainly of people who reside in the neighbourhood.

Alexandra House by this time had a membership of one hundred and twenty-nine kindergarten children, eight hundred and fifty-three juniors, six hundred and twenty-two intermediates, four hundred and seventy-two seniors and nine hundred and forty-five adults. There were six clubs for boys, nine clubs for girls and seven clubs for adults. The boys' work was curtailed because of the lack of leadership. The shortage of men, caused by enlistment in the services, was one of the main reasons for the lack of leadership.

This was the first year that members were required to produce their membership cards before they could enter the House. The members had no feeling of responsibility toward the House and they resisted this new policy. If a sense of belonging had been developed by the leaders, there would not have been the same degree of resistance to paying token membership fees. Not enough attention was devoted to programme development in the clubs and there was a lack of co-ordination of over-all agency programme. At this time the staff began to realize that quality of work was more important than the number participating. The girls' worker, especially, realized that numbers had been stressed rather than quality, but she did not have the time nor the support of permanent professional staff to institute any change.
Alexandra Community Activities
(Executive Council)

Property

Alexandra Fresh Air Camp
Alexandra Neighbourhood House
Gordon Neighbourhood House

Finance

Standing Committees

Programme Property Finance Personnel

Temporary Committee

Second Avenue Transient

Community Groups
Junior Boys
Junior Girls
Teen-agers
Adults
Playschool

HOUSE COUNCIL
which includes
Two Board Members
Two Staff Members

Chart 2
STRUCTURE OF ALEXANDRA COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES
In 1942, a senior boys club, which had been organized three years previously, withdrew from the House. It was stated that the volunteer worker, who was leading the club, resented direction from the staff and had resigned. The boys had a close tie with this worker and when he resigned the boys left the House. It was stated that there was some doubt about the wisdom of the leader's ideas as to boys' club work. The volunteer leader apparently wanted more to say on the administration of the House. He thought his club should have been consulted on such administrative problems as to the use of the side entrance for boys, hours for leaving the house and the use of rooms.

This example illustrates two major points worthy of mention. First it portrays the dangers involved in having volunteer leaders in charge of friendship groups without adequate supervision. If the leader had been supervised, it would have been noticed that he might become emotionally involved with the group and would not be able to do an effective job. This volunteer should have received help to serve the group more effectively; or been placed in another area where he may have been more capable. Thus, not only was the volunteer harmed, but the members were deprived of a meeting place and the opportunity to develop through a good group experience.

The second point, which this example illustrates, is the lack of good administration. If there was a House Council where this group could send representatives with their ideas and suggestions, the situation would most likely never have arisen. The representatives would have been given an opportunity
to request the use of the side door and to discuss the reasons why the House closed at a certain hour. It may have also meant that they could have received the space which they required. The representatives could have at least reported back to the group the results of their queries. With such a situation arising, it also shows a lack of co-ordination between groups. It might also reveal the lack of formulated policy on the part of the Board because of their concern over small details.

Up to this time the Board of Directors had not been able to visualize its role as one concerned with the broader aspects of policy, budget and over-all agency programme. The "Board" carried over the same focus on minute details of operation as when it was directing an orphanage. For instance, in 1939 the director submitted a request to the board for numerous small articles, such as boxing gloves, kindergarten tables, two blackboards, two quarts of enamel paint and one stapling machine. A similar example, taken from the board minutes of the following year, was a request from the director for the Board's permission to purchase supplies amounting to eighteen dollars for the camera club. On another occasion the roller of the typewriter used in the office had to be replaced, an item which costs approximately five dollars. A report on this was presented to the Board in great detail, explaining that the roller had deteriorated owing to the acid on the stencils. The Board's approval was obtained. Numerous examples, similar to those described, appear throughout these early years and it was not until 1945 that the Board began to focus on policy, insurance, budget and salaries.
By 1943 there were only twenty club groups in the House. It is not only interesting, but also significant, to note that in 1939 there were thirty-one club groups and each successive year there was a decrease in number of groups. These club groups correspond to friendship groups, which are composed of members with a number of common factors such as age, interest and other characteristics which bring people together. These groups require leadership from trained personnel who are capable of assisting individuals to adjust to the group, and who have a broad knowledge of programme media through which the group can express themselves and have their needs met. With the lack of good leadership, it is only natural that there was a decrease in the number of these groups. During this same period of time, there was an increase in the number of interest groups. Interest groups are formed around one specific interest, such as sewing, basketball, etc., and this interest is usually the only bond which holds the group together. It is easier to obtain leadership for this type of group because the leader needs skill only in one area of programme. This could account for the increase in number of interest groups over this four-year period.

During this year there was a general decline in attendance and one senior girls' club and one women's club disbanded. The girls' club which disbanded ranged from sixteen to nineteen years of age and had acquired a close attachment to the leader. The leader was unable to continue the following year and the girls felt that no one could take her place, so they were left on their own. The club finally disintegrated because of the
lack of leadership. This example once again illustrates the fact that without good leadership a great deal of harm can result. It reveals the need for supervision of leadership to safeguard the members. With adequate supervision, there would have been a "tapering-off" process, in which the leader would have made a gradual withdrawal from the group, and ideally a new leader should have been introduced a few weeks previous to her complete break from the group.

At this time, it was noted that there were usually not enough persons in the men's club to make a foursome in cards. The rapid decrease in number of men was mainly due to the change in the economic conditions. The House opened its doors during the end of the depression years, when many men were unemployed and had a great deal of time to spare. The conditions of war rapidly changed this situation to one of economic prosperity. The armed services took the majority of the physically fit men which meant there were numerous jobs available, even for older men and women.

It was during this year that both Alexandra and Gordon Neighbourhood Houses separated under two different directors. The new executive-director summed-up the situation at Alexandra House quite adequately. She stated that the staff had done a good job, although without professional training and without knowledge of the underlying principles, they had been attempting to remedy situations that were beyond their capacities. The children and young people had been allowed to come and go as they pleased, and to do what they wished, with no respect to anyone. The director did not expand on the results of this lack of direction and limitations on the boys and girls, but it is another reason for
the decrease in number of adult members.

One significant force was the lack of loyalty of members toward the House. Each group was working toward the achievement of its own ends and did not worry about the over-all programme. They took the House for granted and felt no responsibility toward it. This was portrayed in their resistance to payment of token membership fees. It is evident that quantity rather than quality had been stressed. Recording the number of membership and attendance had been emphasized, rather than doing a good solid job, even if it meant a sacrifice in numbers.

The staff, during this period, had no contact with outside organizations and did not even know the community resources. Home visits had not been considered part of their work, which meant that they did not know the home conditions of the members. Without an understanding of the parents and home conditions, which have a direct bearing upon the behaviour of the children, it is impossible to do a good groupwork job. This also portrays a lack of interest in the family unit. Maintaining the family unit is one of the fundamentals in the practice of social work; service to the family unit is also one of the major functions of a neighbourhood house.

When Alexandra Neighbourhood House opened its doors to the public in 1938, there was not enough money available to make any structural changes in the building. It was not until 1944 that a complete renovation and re-decoration of the building was attempted. The building had retained some of the atmosphere of the orphanage days, even though its function had changed. This renovation helped to inculcate new attitudes in members and staff because of the brighter and more pleasant atmosphere. There was
an increased feeling of pride, respect and responsibility among members.

The shortage of labour and building materials meant that the renovation period lasted from March until November. This delay plus the fact that the caretaker became ill, and the loss of a staff member on April first resulted in a definite slump in programme activity and a drop in attendance.

Lack of integration of club activities plus leadership difficulties were prevalent throughout this year. For example, in February, one leader did not attend at least three consecutive meetings and failed to notify anyone of her absence. Few clubs can hold together under such circumstances. A number of clubs were discontinued due to the deficiencies in leadership. The fact that some of the volunteers were not carrying the responsibility of their particular clubs and, because there was not enough cooperation between groups and their leaders the Director had to call a meeting to discuss the problems.

The Fairview Baptist Church allowed the use of their gymnasium for basketball practice. The lack of a gymnasium is still one of the major problems in the House and permission to use a gymnasium was a great asset. This meant that a better teen-age programme could be developed and it enabled the membership to develop basketball teams to play outside groups. Another development in the teen-age department was the Teen Canteen, which was attached to the House but had its own separate entrance. The Teen Canteen membership was divided according to the following age levels; thirteen to sixteen years, sixteen to nineteen years, nineteen years and up. Each of these groups had the house to
themselves one night a week and both teen-age groups had dances at the canteen twice per week. This programme was perhaps the most popular in the House.

While the teen-age programme appeared quite satisfactory, the adult department had gradually decreased in membership since the peak reached in 1941 and 1942, until there were only three small groups by the end of 1944.

This chapter has described the numerous services rendered by the House during its embryonic stage. There were certain deficiencies in programme linked with a shortage of staff and a poorly focused Board. This is not an unusual occurrence in a new institution, and especially since Alexandra House was the only neighbourhood house in Western Canada. The following chapters will reveal how many of these problems were overcome through good management and professional staff. Some of the problems found in the early years are still apparent today. One of the major problems in these early years has revolved around leadership which is the key to the development of quality programmes. These problems have been overcome—but other problems emanating from the community itself are now of prime importance.
CHAPTER IV

POST WAR YEARS

The year 1945 is important to Alexandra House because it marks the origin of group work training in the Department, now School, of Social Work at the University of British Columbia. The Junior League made a grant to the University to permit group work training, and this became the first full fledged course in Canada. This was an important event for Alexandra House not only because it has trained capable leadership for the House, but has also enabled students to take their field work placements at the House. This has reciprocal advantages for the School of Social Work and the Agency.

This year also marked the end of World War II which meant that the Neighbourhood House was entering a new era. The House had originated in the last years of depression, had operated during five years of war, and was now facing a period of peace and prosperity. In the same year a survey was made by the Community Chest and Council, of group work and recreation in Greater Vancouver.¹ This report gives an objective view of Alexandra House at this particular state of development. The report explained that the house programme consisted of a kindergarten in the morning, health and cultural arts in the afternoons and early evenings, and one boy's club, led by a staff member, was organized and met weekly. The Teen Canteen programme was considered one of the

strongest in the House, although there was also an excellent programme in the cultural arts. The cultural activities were supervised by part-time staff and received a great deal of support from the Junior League.

The House at this time was supervised by a director, a staff of one group worker for teen-agers, a part-time person for kindergarten, a part-time person for cultural arts and a librarian. A small budget was provided for a boy's group worker, but the salary was not too enticing and the position was vacant. Three of the above positions called for college graduates, but only one group worker had a graduate degree in social work. This was considered one of the major reasons for certain deficiencies in the services provided by the House.

A number of recommendations were made by the Community Chest and Council of which the following have been selected in order of importance. The first recommendation was that the board of management should become more neighbourhood conscious in order to give the membership a greater degree of responsibility and interest in the activities. There was no house council or teen council to allow the members to express their ideas about changes and developments in programme. Without this means of representation by member clubs there was the possibility that the board of management was superimposing its ideas upon the members. At this time there were few, if any, community representatives on the house committees which meant that the neighbourhood people had little to say about the operation of the Agency. Another recommendation was made that the nearby Kitsilano area was not served
adequately and that another staff person would be required to do community group work. This would mean that facilities would have to be obtained in the area before a programme could be organized. It was not only the distance but also the arterial roads which cut through the neighbourhood that prevented this area from being properly served from the House. Third in importance was a suggestion that the number of friendship groups should be increased. As has been stated earlier, such groups require strong, stable leadership and good supervision which was not then available in the House.

The last recommendation stated a need for more committees on finance, operation and programme, because at that time all the committees of the House, except one, dealt with property management. The fact that the Board members were concerned with minor details of property management was exemplified in the previous chapter, and it was not until this time that the Board became concerned with the broader issues of leadership, programme and operation.

It was noted that after the survey by the Community Chest and Council a committee was set up for the improvement of the playground, and the Board members stated a willingness to allow non-board members on the committee. Committee members selected from the community were Mr. Pound (real-estate business in area), Mr. Hersog (House member), and Reverend McLaughlan (Fairview Baptist Church in area). Due to the pressure of business, Mr. Hersog resigned in 1946 and Reverend McLaughlan left Vancouver the following year. Thus, there was still a lack of members from the district on this committee.
The year 1947 is important to Alexandra House because this was the year in which there was a revision of the constitution of the Board. This marked a movement toward the attainment of autonomy or home rule of Alexandra House. A committee composed of representatives of staff, board and membership was appointed to set up the House constitution which was to be approved by the Board. The Executive Council arranged for an increase in salaries of the staff of Alexandra House which was approved by the Budget Committee of the Community Chest and Council. The Committee members of the House saw this as a threat to the autonomy of the Agency. The constitution outlined in the Powers, Duties and Regulations of the Standing Committee of Alexandra Community Activities states:

"The House Committee shall have control over the affairs, operations and management of Alexandra Neighbourhood House and shall have power to engage, suspend or discharge all members required or employed in the operation thereof, and shall regulate, decide and fix their salaries; provided all expenditures are contained and approved in the budget of the year. Any matter affecting policies shall be referred to the Executive Council." 

Four women members of the Henry Hudson Parent Teachers' Association criticized Alexandra House and a committee was formed to meet with them. This group thought that Alexandra House should be giving more service to the area north of Fourth Avenue. They also suggested that the playschool be operated in the afternoon as well as the morning. The Committee recommended that the Social Planning Committee of the Community Chest and Council be asked to set up a committee to make a survey of the area which

1. Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting, 1947.
Alexandra House was serving, or should serve, and to consider to what extent the services of Alexandra House could meet the needs of this area.

This year marked the formation of a new house council, which helped to co-ordinate programme of groups whose members were over sixteen years of age. The club for overseas war brides, which was organized in 1945, extended its membership to include other young married women of the community. More emphasis was placed on the women's groups, and as they became more interested in the neighbourhood they attempted to obtain space for a playground below Fourth Avenue. Despite the fact that they were not successful, such interest in the neighbourhood should have been encouraged by the staff. Three group work students from the Department of Social Work took their field training at Alexandra House, which helped to give some stable leadership to the groups.

In 1948, the kindergarten supervisor was dismissed because she could not accept the structure and function of the Agency. The Mothers' Study Group thought an injustice had been done and they presented a number of criticisms to the Board of Directors. On the eighteen complaints submitted to the Board, the following have been selected by the writer as the most important.

1. Lack of cooperation with community groups.
2. Continual change of staff, with discontinued services.
3. Poor publicity for agency and community.
4. Lack of effort to recruit volunteers.
5. No attempt to discover and meet community needs.
6. No representation of the community or membership on the Board.
7. There are many age groups whom no attempt is made to serve (young adults, business girls, married couples, older citizens.)
8. The schedule is such that outside groups have more use of the building than membership from the community.

The Board of Directors of the Community Chest and Council appointed an Interim Survey Committee to report on the facilities, programme and staff of the House. The composition of the Committee was representative, including the Executive Secretary of the Welfare Section, Community Chest and Council; a member of the Mothers' Study Group; a member of Alexandra Neighbourhood House Committee; the Chairman of Alexandra Neighbourhood House Council; and the Secretary, Group Work Division, Community Chest and Council.

Facilities

It was pointed out that the facilities were adequate and in good repair, and generally speaking, the space was adequate for a neighbourhood house programme. There was need indicated for another office with telephone for programme staff. Mention was made of the inadequacy of the gymnasium for ball games, badminton, etc., and the need for a larger gymnasium was to depend upon the facilities of this nature in the community. There are no such facilities in the neighbourhood and this is still one of the major lacks in the House. The analysis showed that it would be possible to carry out a more extensive programme than the present one, if such were needed.

Programme

In view of the need for an immediate analysis, figures were confined by the Committee to the month of March, 1948. The
committee realized that a true evaluation of programme lies within the experience of individual members and that it is unlikely that a committee, concerned with facts, could achieve an evaluation of such intangibles as discontent and happiness. The committee based their analysis on the following six criteria for neighbourhood houses set out by Clyde Murray for the National Federation of Settlements.

The first criterion states that a neighbourhood house is responsible for a given district and that the major portion of its membership should come from this neighbourhood. There were eight hundred and forty on the membership list of Alexandra Neighbourhood House which was more than adequate for a programme staff of three persons, two of whom had little or no professional preparation. Of these eight hundred and forty members, five hundred and forty-six were actually participating in the programme in March, which represents a thirty-eight per cent drop in attendance. This is a significant drop in membership, but it appears more reasonable when we see that two hundred and forty-four, or approximately thirty per cent live outside of the large area bounded by False Creek and Sixteenth Avenue, Alma Road and Oak Street.

Thus, it was suggested that the Board of Directors establish residence boundaries, for full membership, within walking distance of the House. It was explained that it could not become a "law", without exception, but that the boundary should be a guide if the House was to become primarily concerned with its neighbourhood.

The second criterion stresses that all ages and both sexes should be served in a neighbourhood house. Numerous lacks
in the total sex and age-groups of the membership are portrayed.

Table 1  Membership of Alexandra Neighbourhood House

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Participants in March</th>
<th>Number of Groups Available</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen-age</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Male - 336 in eighteen groups
Female - 504 in twenty-three groups


Although there was a high percentage of teen-agers, there were only a small number of friendship groups. This was perhaps partly due to the shortage of male leaders. Another major gap is found in the adult membership, where there were only six men in contrast to two hundred and twenty-seven women. It was also revealed that only four of these men lived in the neighbourhood. Outside of one women's group, there were few young adults served and no recreational group was offered to single men and women in the young adult age-group.

One of Murray's criteria states that a neighbourhood house should be "multifunctional". There was no doubt that Alexandra House served numerous functions, although there was a need for the House Committee to review their services and to rate them as to their degree of importance. It was suggested that emphasis
should be placed on the needs of the membership, that Health and Welfare Agencies and functions within the neighbourhood should get second choice and other organizations of city wide or purely social nature be catered to as remaining space and staff time permitted.

The fourth criterion maintains that a neighbourhood house is interested in the family unit. The eight hundred and forty members of the House represent seven hundred and three families which meant that each family was represented by only 1.19 persons. Only one hundred and eleven families had more than one active member in the House. In the older teen-age groups, five hundred and four children and teen-agers were represented by only twenty-seven mothers. Thus, the Agency could not be termed a family recreation centre.

The fifth criterion emphasizes the importance of qualitative work even if it means a sacrifice of larger numbers. It was realized that through statistics it is impossible to judge whether the job is, or is not, qualitative. In the younger age-range, the number and size of groups indicated a quality programme. It was suggested that through a wider use of volunteers it would be possible to serve more people in small groups without sacrificing quality programme.

The last criterion states that the neighbours should be encouraged to assume more and more responsibility for the activities. The survey explained that this is one of the more important roles that a neighbourhood house should fulfil. This was one of the major lacks in the House, as there was an absence
of neighbourhood people on the Board of Directors and a house
council was not functioning at this time.

It was quite clear that generally speaking, the staff
had been inadequate in respect to both numbers and qualifications.

The analysis of the programme duties of the boys' wor-
der, girls' worker and playschool director showed that none of
these staff members had adequate time for home visiting, recruit-
ing and training volunteers, or maintaining community contacts
in addition to their major responsibility of conducting and super-
vising programme. The staff were commended on the excellent con-
dition in which the building and physical facilities were kept,
and also on the excellent financial and statistical records.

There was an absence of policy in regard to what types
of programme should be emphasized by the staff, or which reflected
the needs of the neighbourhood. More emphasis was required in
establishing and maintaining relations with community groups. A
partnership of staff and volunteers was emphasized. There were
apparently lacks in the recruiting and training of volunteers.

The Interim Committee made a number of recommendations,
of which the following have been selected for further development.
The first advice was to establish geographical boundaries, and that
the needs and interests of the people from within this area should
determine the programme development. The geographical boundaries
had been stated when the House was in its embryonic stage of
development, but they had not been strictly adhered to. The
result was that nearly thirty per cent of the membership had come
from outside of this large area. As has been explained earlier,
there was a need for a house council in order that the membership might assume more responsibility for their own activities. Similarly there was little, if any, representation of membership or neighbourhood people on the Board. It was also noted that there were numerous outside groups using space and facilities of the House, which might have been devoted to the development of programme for the members.

The inadequacies of the staff were revealed in the survey and it was suggested that adequately trained professional staff be employed as soon as possible. Qualified staff could then cooperate and assist volunteer leaders to give quality services to the membership, under the direction and assistance of the Director. There appears to have been a poor working relationship between staff and volunteers, and without cooperation between all personnel, the programme could not be co-ordinated. The staff had not maintained contacts in the neighbourhood and, as was portrayed in the first chapter, this is one of the major responsibilities of neighbourhood house workers. Without a good understanding of the trends and developments within the neighbourhood it was impossible to assist the community people with their problems.

Another recommendation advised that written job descriptions should be available. This was an important item to which the House Council had not given any attention. With staff duties defined in writing, the staff themselves would know their areas of responsibility and it would also be of benefit to the director in regard to appointments, dismissals and retainments.
Certain recommendations were made regarding programme. It was suggested that there was a need for more interest and friendship groups for the teen-agers. Without adequately trained staff and without cooperation between students, staff and volunteers, it was only natural that there were only a small number of such teen-age groups. It was also revealed that there was no men's club in the Senior Citizens programme and that such a group, or a mixed group, should be established. Another major lack in programme was the absence of young adult groups. The survey advised that emphasis be placed on these weaker areas.

The majority of the defects and lacks in programme, staff and functions of the House, which have been explicitly portrayed in this survey, have been carried over from previous years. The weaknesses have been revealed in the preceding pages of this thesis. Many of the weak areas of programme cannot be attributed to the fault of personnel but can be linked to the physical factors of the neighbourhood. The next and final chapter discusses improvements that have been made in these areas.
CHAPTER V

LOOKING to the FUTURE

From 1948 to the present time there has been a concentrated attempt to restrict membership of Alexandra House to a reasonable area. Boundary limits were established in 1948, which meant that any new registrations would have to be within the area bounded by Sixteenth Avenue and the waterfront, Oak Street and Macdonald Street. It is significant to note that a study made in 1951, by a social work student, reveals that only fifteen per cent of the membership came from outside of this area; while in 1948 approximately thirty per cent of the membership came from outside. This is a great improvement when one considers the difficulties attached to limiting membership. There will always be a small percentage of people who will retain membership outside of this area, because the neighbourhood is becoming more and more a transitional zone, and if people form attachments to an Agency, these attachments cannot be suddenly severed.

In the last few years a greater effort has been made to serve the area north of Fourth Avenue. Playschool children were met by a staff person and brought in a group to the Agency. As heavy traffic is a serious problem for this age group, this service enabled the children to get to and from the Agency without danger of an accident. There has also been repeated attempts to gain the use of facilities north of Fourth Avenue, in order that this area might be more adequately served. For example, from 1948 up to the present time, attempts have been made to obtain the
use of the Baptist Church Hall on Second Avenue, in order that a programme might be set up in this needy area. The requests have been unsuccessful, but attempts are still being made to gain the use of some facilities in this area.

An extension programme was organized at the Henry Hudson School in 1950. The Henry Hudson Extension Programme, at present, consists of two girls' groups, six to nine years and nine to twelve years. A professional staff person makes bi-weekly trips to the school. The small building available for this programme is inadequate but it is a step in the right direction.

The need of extension programmes to serve a certain area does bring up the question, as to whether or not this area can be considered a neighbourhood, and whether or not Alexandra House is a true neighbourhood house. This point will be discussed towards the end of the chapter.

Membership

From the beginnings of Alexandra Neighbourhood House, programme emphasis has been placed on the boys and girls, and as a result the adult members have felt neglected. Perhaps one of the reasons for this programme emphasis for the younger people was due to the background work of the first director. His earlier positions were confined to work mainly with children, and it is only natural that he understood children and preferred to work with them. This meant that the majority of space and time of personnel was devoted to the programme of the younger people.

With such a background, it is reasonable that adults do not feel as welcome as the children. The survey of the neigh-
bourhood, which was mentioned in the second chapter, disclosed that a large number of people in the neighbourhood thought the House served only children. The situation today is such that the programme is still stronger and the membership is still larger in the younger age ranges.

Table 2  
Membership of Alexandra Neighbourhood House 1948 - 1952

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 18 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>607</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The membership of those under eighteen years of age is still larger than the adult membership. There was an increase in adult membership during 1950 to 1951 to approximately fifty per cent of the total membership. In 1951 to 1952 there was a decrease in adult membership to nearly thirty per cent of the total membership. This decrease in membership was partly due to the disintegration of a large choir group and also to the fact that the square dance group lost its natural leader. The large number of new members in comparison to the number of renewals makes it difficult for the staff to build a strong, sustaining membership.

In 1949 a great deal of effort was devoted to an attempt to develop a programme for the senior citizens of the
neighbourhood. Circulars were distributed to the City Social Service Department (West Unit), Family Welfare Bureau and to the Catholic Family and Child Welfare Division. Visits were made to Old People's Homes in the Kitsilano district. Four new adult groups were attempted with varying degrees of success. A Men's Club was started at this time and despite the fact that a good deal of time and effort was spent on this group, it came to an end in March 1952 and developed into a mixed group. In 1951 and 1952 different recruiting techniques were used such as contacts with other agencies and home visits in attempts to interest different men, but only a small number turned out. Thus despite a concentrated recruiting attempt and a good programme which included movies, cards, checkers, dominoes, afternoon tea, and a banquet at Christmas, the Club still did not develop sufficiently to warrant the time and effort expended.

Another weakness in programme, which was stated in the survey of 1948, was the lack of friendship groups for teen-agers. In the fall of the same year a number of new teen-age groups were formed which helped to develop a better "house spirit". In evaluating the programme in 1949, it was found that there was practically no thirteen and fourteen-year old members. The teen-agers were presented with a plan, which they rejected, but they suggested that Monday be club night for all teen-agers, on Wednesday there should be a mass activity programme for fifteen to eighteen year olds, and on Friday there should be a mass activity programme for thirteen to fifteen year olds. This suggestion of the teen-agers was followed through with great success.
In September 1950, the Red Feather Sports Council was organized and this enabled the House members to play sports against teams of the same "calibre" as themselves, which helped to develop a greater feeling of responsibility toward the House as well as an "esprit de corps" within the groups.

A good Junior Programme has evolved over the past four years. The number of groups and the enrolment increased to such an extent that the nine to twelve year old members and the six to nine year old members had to be restricted to alternate days, rather than having the old system of a six-day week for both age groups. The personnel were then able to devote more time to the individual members. This reveals an emphasis on quality rather than quantity.

The Young Adult Programme is one of the "missing links" in the age range served by the Agency. During the last two years some attempts were made to find young people who might be interested in activities but there has been no success. The number of young people is limited in this neighbourhood due to poor housing conditions. The young people who do live in the area go downtown for their entertainment. Throughout the community there is a lack of interest in neighbourhood functions and there appears to be no pride attached to living in the neighbourhood. These factors, plus the fact that in times of prosperity fewer young people attend social functions put on by the churches and other neighbourhood institutions, are some of the reasons for this gap in the age range served by the House.

There is no significant difference between the proportion of boys to girls in the junior groups. However, in the
older groups there are fewer teen-age girls than boys. The student survey brought out one possible reason for this condition; the House is considered too "rough" for older girls. Some attempt was made to encourage older girls to participate but there appeared to be a number of boys who were emotionally retarded and who did not like social activities. This attempt to increase the number of girls participating in the programme was not successful.

Multifunctional Role

The programme of Alexandra House, as has been portrayed in the preceding pages, consists of a diversity of functions. In the survey made in 1948 it was stated that there was a need for the House Committee to review these services and to rate them according to their degree of importance. The survey apparently drew the attention of the House Committee to this problem. Periodic surveys of different programmes were made and with the cooperation of the professional staff many changes were brought about. Group work leadership from the University recommended that a committee be set up to study the use of the building by membership and affiliated groups and that certain standards be set up for admission of new groups. The membership was given first priority as to time and space available, while welfare and health organizations and groups within the neighbourhood gained second priority. Other organizations of city-wide or social nature had been occupying much of the space and time which was needed for the other priority groups, therefore, these were reduced in number over the four-year period until there are only three such outside
groups remaining.

In 1948 each family was represented by only 1.19 per cent in the House. By the end of April, 1952, there were five hundred and eighteen registered families in comparison to six hundred and fifteen members, which means that each family is represented by only 1.18 persons in the Agency. Therefore, Alexandra House still cannot be termed a family recreation centre. The lack of interest of parents in the neighbourhood is a problem that home visiting and special family events has not overcome.

Emphasis on Quality

During 1948 there was a changeover in staff and by the latter part of the year the staff was adequate in numbers and qualifications to do a qualitative job. A professional staff member analyzed the membership-behaviour and member-staff relations which existed previous to his employment in 1948. He stated that a "repressive or controlled type of society" in the younger age groups had existed for some time. For example, participants in the teen-age dances were almost totally ignorant of who their elected committee members were, and in some cases they did not know that a committee existed. The committee itself felt no real responsibility for the success or failure of the dances.

A more permissive, self-reliant, democratic atmosphere in the junior division became the goal, which has helped the members to develop. After a discussion of their problems, the juniors voluntarily decided that they would play outside Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, in order that they might have the exclusive use of the Boys' section on Monday and Thursday afternoons. The senior boys
agreed conversely, and this plan worked quite effectively. The Junior Canteen was approached in the same manner and the responsibility for planning and carrying it out was assumed by the Canteen Committee.

Table 3  Specific Groups of Alexandra Neighbourhood House 1948 - 1952

<table>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendship groups</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest groups</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-club councils, committees, etc.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


By dividing the membership into numerous groups, the needs of individual members and those of the group-as-a-whole can be more easily met. The anonymity prevalent in mass activities is absent in friendship groups where recognition and personal contact enables members to assume responsibilities and to develop their skill and ability in many areas.

By 1949, it was noted that the attitudes of the teenagers were changing from a negative to a more positive feeling. This is exemplified by a "Gay Nineties Project" put on by the teenagers for the adult membership. It was the first major attempt to do something positive for the House. The attitudes and feelings of members portrays the quality of programme which was beginning to be emphasized.
In the fall of 1951 a Teen Council was established. Numerous questions were raised and problems solved by this representative body. The question of smoking was one of the issues which the teen-age representatives took to the Board of Directors. Despite the fact that they could not convince the Directors that smoking privileges should be given to fourteen and fifteen year olds, the representatives felt that they had gone to the "top" and that the staff were helping them to express their ideas. Another example, which has already been mentioned, is the Teen Carnival which was planned by the Teen Council. The members of the Teen Council supported by the groups which they represented, planned and operated the Carnival with remarkable results.

Table 4 Individual Services to Members of Alexandra Neighbourhood House - 1948 - 1952

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With individuals</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On behalf of</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individuals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Services to individuals have increased sixty per cent from 1948 to 1952. This indicates that more attention has been devoted to individuals and also reveals that the House is serving a large number of disturbed children. Such children require the profession-
ally trained leadership and quality programme which has developed over these years.

Democratic Procedures

The establishment of a Teen Council in 1951 under the direction of a staff member has enabled the teen-agers to assume responsibility for their own activities. This Council is composed of representatives of teen-age groups in the House, and any problems arising in the club, which may influence other groups, or which is of such a nature that the leader cannot give an answer, is taken to the Council by the representatives. This device enables the members to assume more responsibility for their own activities.

There are also many deficiencies in this area. For instance at present there is no House Council to suggest new areas of development or to co-ordinate the over-all Agency programme. Without such a Council, the membership are not given the opportunity of deciding in a democratic manner what programme they wish to develop or to expand. The professional staff and the Programme Committee often use the suggestions of individual members in developing programme, but it is not so good as having all groups represented in a Council which decides major issues of programme development and co-ordination. In order to have a House Council, it is necessary to have groups who have developed an "esprit de corps" and who have a feeling of responsibility toward the Agency. The absence of a feeling of belonging and group identification has been quite apparent in the adult groups. Therefore emphasis has been placed on the development of the
groups themselves, and at present there are two adult groups who are at the stage of development where they would be interested in a House Council. Until there is an expressed need for a Council, it is worthless to attempt to superimpose one upon the membership.

The fact that there is no person living in the effective neighbourhood on the Board of Directors is a significant factor. One of the Board members has a business in the area and a few others work in the district which means that there is some contact with the community people. This is in direct contrast to Marpole Community Centre where all the members of the Board live in the neighbourhood, except one who owns a business in the area. This is an ideal situation where the community people assume the responsibility for the operation and management of the Agency.

Mr. H. Morrow, the Executive-Director of the Agency, has attempted to obtain new board members from the churches and schools within the area and has had some degree of success in getting board members from the schools. Most of the leadership of the churches comes from outside of the neighbourhood, which indicates that there is a lack of people in the neighbourhood with leadership qualities. Representation from the area is important, but it is more important to get people who are willing to devote time and effort to the cause.

In 1948 a committee with a board member as chairman was appointed to make a study of further changes to establish the autonomy of the House. Revisions of the Constitution of the Board has resulted over the last few years in almost complete
autonomy, or home rule, for Alexandra House. This is a major step, as a neighbourhood house should have home rule, in order that the people of the community, who should be on the board, can determine the programme and function of the Agency.

Another important factor is that, except for the volunteer leadership of the soccer teams, all the volunteers live outside of the neighbourhood. The three soccer coaches who are from the neighbourhood comprise only six per cent of the total number of forty-six volunteers. The House has been very fortunate in having such a large number of volunteers from the Junior League but the possibility of obtaining leadership from the neighbourhood should not be overlooked. The teen-agers might well provide good solid leadership from the community, if a training programme was organized. In the early years of the House, a leadership training period was arranged for the senior boys and it appears to have been successful, but for some reason, it was abandoned. Such a training programme should be organized, and it might even be possible to build a young adult programme from this nucleus of volunteers. One of the staff has approached the teen-agers to coach softball teams this year and the response has been quite positive. This is a beginning, but a training programme of a week at camp would be an added incentive to attract suitable leadership. There is, of course, the problem of a high percentage of transiency in the area plus the fact that young adults tend to move more frequently. These obstacles may disrupt such an attempt.

Generally speaking, the membership has not assumed the responsibility for its own activities. Some effort has been made
to obtain community people for membership on the Board and to interest them in the Agency but these attempts have not been too successful.

**Personnel**

The survey of 1948 recommended that every effort should be made to obtain and employ adequately trained professional staff. Since that time, the Personnel Committee has displayed increased efficiency in hiring fully trained and qualified staff. By the latter part of the year, there was a trained professional staff.

By 1950 there were the Director and four other professionally trained group workers engaged in serving members from six years of age to those adults who receive old-age pensions. In addition to these, an experienced kindergarten teacher had joined the staff in 1948. The attendance of these children, who are in the age range of three to six years, increased steadily from that time until membership had to be restricted because of lack of facilities. Recently more interest has been displayed by the mothers of these children and they have cooperated quite effectively in order that the fees could remain at a minimum. The spirit of cooperation of all working personnel is remarkable and well worthy of commendation.

The year 1951 - 1952 marked a change in the method of recruiting and placing of Junior League Volunteers. Previously, a placement representative from the League endeavoured to locate volunteers for specific jobs, which caused some anxiety. The new system is such that the representative from the League is the recruiting person who finds volunteers to work at the House. One
staff member was given the responsibility of interviewing each prospective League volunteer and outlining to them the various volunteer jobs which were open. They are then in a position to decide whether or not they wish to work at the House. The results of this experiment have been good, as the professional worker is much more capable of deciding whether a volunteer should be given the responsibility of direct leadership of a group. Close supervision enables the volunteers to present their problems to a professional worker and there is less danger of the volunteer or the group suffering from a bad experience.

The table below illustrates the number of volunteers and the amount of time spent for the months of November and March from 1948 to 1952. In the last two years the average number of hours spent by each volunteer for a month has been approximately seven.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5</th>
<th>Students and Volunteers at Alexandra Neighbourhood House, 1948 - 1952</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of service</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of work</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
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Over the past seven years many group work students have taken their field work at Alexandra House. The House has been able to maintain such a large number of students each year only because the staff are qualified professional leaders, who are capable of giving the required support and assistance through supervision. The students, in return, have devoted a great deal of time and effort to programme development. In the last two-year period, each student has spent an average of sixty-five hours per month. This is quite a contrast to the average of seven hours spent by volunteers. Naturally, some of this time has been spent in supervision and recording but this has enabled the students to perform at higher levels of efficiency. Through this direct contact with the School of Social Work, the personnel of the House have also been helped to maintain a high standard of performance.

Through the cooperation of professional staff, students and volunteers, a strong programme has been developed in most areas. New programme developments have been instituted, with good results, because of the cooperative spirit of members and personnel.

Recommendations for the Future

It has been revealed that a neighbourhood house should serve a neighbourhood. The one question which may come to mind concerning Alexandra House is; What are the boundaries of this neighbourhood? If the recognized boundaries designate the neighbourhood, then it should not be necessary to have an extension programme in an attempt to serve the area north of Fourth Avenue.
The section between Granville Street and Oak Street is another needy but neglected area in which only three per cent of the Agency's membership resides. This suggests that the main arterial roads cutting through this area divide it into sections, which are separate from each other. Another factor which has already been mentioned is that the Agency is becoming surrounded by business and industry and because of the lack of adequate zoning laws in the past, business and residential buildings are found side by side. These factors, plus the fact that the new Granville Bridge Project will have a direct influence on the location of the Agency, suggest that it will have to change its function or move to a new location, as there will not be a neighbourhood to serve.

Another function of a neighbourhood house is to serve all ages and both sexes. This, as has been shown, is not true of Alexandra House, as there are certain age and sex groupings which do not use the facilities. This is not through lack of attempts to extend programme to these groups. It appears that the problem stems from the community itself, as the continual shifting and moving of families tends to break down the feeling of the neighbourhood unity. There is no pride attached to living in a rapidly deteriorating area and there is a lack of participation in local institutions. This has even been evidenced in the local churches where there has been a decrease in the number of parishioners.

Another factor, which is closely linked to the above, is that a neighbourhood house is interested in the family unit. The figures previously stated show that Alexandra House is not a family agency although it attempts to serve this purpose. The
lack of parents' participation in programme has been shown by their conspicuous absence at special events. For instance, in 1952, the teen-agers put on a Carnival to raise funds for a worth-while cause, and only two parents put in an appearance. This example indicates the inertia and apathy which is prevalent among the adults.

The last, but one of the most important functions of a neighbourhood house, is to endeavour to get the neighbours to assume more and more responsibility for their own activities. Many attempts have been made to encourage members to assume responsibility but, except for the teen-agers, there has been little success. The transient population, linked with the apparent absence of interested people with leadership qualities, seem to be the major difficulties.

From this brief review, it might be questioned as to whether Alexandra House is able to assume the role of a "true" neighbourhood house. Whether or not Alexandra House can function as a "true" neighbourhood house, its role in the neighbourhood should be reviewed. It must be realized that with the numerous changes taking place in this area, the Agency will also have to change.

There are a number of roles which Alexandra House might assume in the future. In particular, there are three possibilities which could be investigated.

(1) Alexandra House could be used as a "base unit" from which community group work could be administered. In this way, needy "pocket areas", such as north of Fourth Avenue and east of Granville Street, could be served. The area east of Granville
Street and below Ninth Avenue is characterized by low income, crowded households, low rent and high delinquency which is indicative of the need for social services. Such a venture would require facilities within these pocket areas, to provide the needed services. With a good administration, an adequate budget and professional staff, this project could be extended to other needy areas which have been studied by the Community Chest and Council.

(2) The building and property on which Alexandra House is located could be sold and a neighbourhood house could be established in another area. The Survey Report of Group Work and Recreation of Greater Vancouver, which was published by the Community Chest and Council in 1945, stated a number of areas which should be given priority for such new developments. Setting up a neighbourhood house in one of these areas would mean time and effort devoted to a worthy cause. The fact that the life of the present building is limited is a practical reason for moving. The staff is at present a good working unit which could be maintained for such a worthy venture.

(3) With such a long history as Alexandra House boasts, there is bound to be a certain amount of sentiment attached to it. If it is more desirable to maintain this building, it would be feasible to devote it entirely to a kindergarten program. At present, the kindergarten membership in the House has to be limited because of the lack of space. There are a large number of children, within the extended boundaries of the district, who
could be met at certain points and brought safely to the Agency. This would make it more convenient for the mothers and would mean that this service could extend over a larger area.

Alexandra Neighbourhood House, through the cooperation of all personnel, the Board of Management, the membership and all other groups and individuals who have shown an interest in the House, has performed a service to the community which all may well be proud. Despite the problems encountered over the years, there has been a steady development and extension of services. In this study, attention has been directed towards the deficiencies in the services rendered and data has been gathered so that some remedies may be suggested. It is evident that some of the deficiencies of programme are closely tied to the physical aspects of the neighbourhood. One of the major deficiencies is the lack of participation by local residents in the operation and management of the House. It appears that part of this problem is due to the lack of pride and interest of the people in neighbourhood functions, which is characteristic of such transitional areas of high transiency. Generally speaking, there is little interest displayed in the House. In spite of the difficulties, professionally trained leaders in the last five years have developed a flexible programme with an emphasis on quality rather than quantity, and which is based on the interests and needs of members. This is not a startling revelation, as it is only natural that workers with an understanding of individual behaviour and interpersonal relations are more qualified to serve the community.
A. BACKGROUND REFERENCES


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B. SOURCES FOR THIS STUDY

I Minutes of Meetings

(a) Minutes of Alexandra Neighbourhood House, Board of Directors Meetings.
(b) Minutes of Staff Meetings.
(c) Minutes of Alexandra Children's Home, Board of Directors Meetings.

II Reports and Surveys

(b) Annual Reports of Alexandra Neighbourhood House.
(c) Monthly Reports of Alexandra Neighbourhood House.
(d) Staff Reports of Alexandra Neighbourhood House.

III Other Documentary Material

(a) Correspondence concerning Alexandra Neighbourhood House.
(b) Programme Statistics.
(c) Friendship group records.
(d) Material from City Hall on Granville Bridge Project and the surrounding area.

IV Interviews

(a) Mr. H. Morrow, Director of Alexandra Neighbourhood House.
(b) Programme Staff of Alexandra Neighbourhood House.
(c) Mr. Charles Bailey, a teacher at Kitsilano High School.
(d) Mr. F. Neumann, Engineer, The Vancouver City Hall.