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VICTORIAN COUNCIL ON THE AGEING
THE OLD PEOPLE'S WELFARE
COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

ANNUAL
REPORT

1955

THE OLD PEOPLE'S WELFARE COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

Postal Address:
Box No. 5342 BB

Telephone Number:
MB 1355

OFFICE-BEARERS

Patrons:

His Excellency SIR DALLAS BROOKS, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.
LADY BROOKS

Chairman:

Sir JOHN NEWMAN MORRIS, Kt., C.M.G.

Vice-Chairmen:

Mrs. J. G. NORRIS, M.A.
The Hon. Sir HERBERT OLNEY, Kt.

Hon. Treasurer:

Sir LESLIE McCONNAN, Kt.

Joint Hon. Secretaries:

Mrs. F. G. TUDDENHAM, M.A.
Mrs. W. H. DOBSON

Hon. Minute Secretary:

Mrs. A. MARCHANT PENFOLD, J.P.

Executive Committee:

Mr. M. E. ATKINSON, F.C.I.S.
Mr. D. R. DOSSETOR
Mrs. G. F. DYSON
Mrs. M. EBELING
Miss M. FITZPATRICK

Col. ROBERT ELLIOTT
Mr. KEITH MACKAY, J.P., F.H.A.
Mrs. M. G. PARDY
Mrs. J. N. SPITTLE
Mrs. D. C. URQUHART

THE OLD PEOPLE'S WELFARE COUNCIL OF VICTORIA

The Council affirms its allegiance to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, on the occasion of her Crowning, and will endeavour, in all humility, to emulate her wonderful example of service to the Community.

We have pleasure in presenting the second Annual Report of the Old People's Welfare Council of Victoria, which records a successful year's work. Results of foundation work laid down since the inception of the Council are being felt. Much research done by members of the Executive who have been overseas has given a fresh impetus to the work, and a full-scale drive on the newer approach to the problem of age has had excellent results.

ANNUAL MEETING

The first Annual Meeting of the Council was held on 29th July, 1952, under the chairmanship of Sir John Newman Morris. The guest-speaker on this occasion, was Mrs. L. Gillam Hunt, who had recently returned from overseas. Mrs. Hunt gave members an interesting account of her observations on welfare work for the aged, especially in Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries.

MEETINGS

There have been six meetings of the office-bearers which have been well attended, and one meeting of the full Council at which Mrs. Dobson was guest-speaker. Mrs. Dobson gave a most interesting survey of her research into welfare work abroad. This talk has since been duplicated through the kind services of Miss Pitt and her group of workers and circulated. Since the beginning of the year, the members of the Executive have greatly missed the kindly counsel of our Chairman, Sir John Newman Morris, who has been prevented by illness from attending meetings. All mem-

bers are looking forward to his early return to his place at the head of the Council. In the interim, Mrs. J. G. Norris has proved a very capable deputy and her leadership has been greatly appreciated.

HON. MINUTE SECRETARY

Special thanks are accorded to our Minute Secretary, Mrs. A. Marchant Penfold, who, besides actually keeping the minutes of the meetings, relieves the secretaries of countless odd jobs such as sending out all notices, invitations, etc., and carrying out many behind-the-scenes jobs which all too often escape notice. We are keenly appreciative of her unstinting service to the Welfare Council.

DONATIONS

Donations of £10/10/- each were received from the Society to Assist Persons of Education and the R.A.A.F. Charities Appeal Fund. £5 each from Mrs. A. Marchant Penfold and Mr. D. R. Dossetor for the purchase of a typewriter.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

Through the generosity of Mr. K. C. Collins, accountant, of 47 Queen St., we now have the use of an office at this address with the convenience also of the telephone and the box address. Telephone: MB 1355; Box No. 5342 BB, G.P.O., Melbourne. Will those interested please note. Special thanks have been conveyed to Mr. Collins, and also to Miss Tynan who has expressed her willingness to take telephone messages.

RESIGNATION OF TREASURER

During the year the resignation of Sir Leslie McConnan from the treasurership, was received with regret; Mr. D. R. Dossetor was elected by the Executive to fill the vacancy.

AFFILIATIONS

The following additional applications for affiliation have been received and accepted from—

- The Business and Professional Women's Club
- The League of Women Voters
- The St. Kilda Welfare Organisation
- The Women's Services Club.

In August it was decided to seek affiliation with the National Council of Women of Victoria which was responsible for the inauguration of our Council. This was granted and Mrs. Dobson and Mrs. Marchant Penfold were chosen as delegates.

AIMS OF COUNCIL

The aims of the Council at this stage of the scheme are:—

The establishment of Recreational Club Rooms in each municipality with, if possible, a Canteen attached where one hot meal per day could be obtained. From here arrangements could be made for the delivery of meals to sick and frail folk when unable to get to the Canteen.

More comprehensive cover for the aged in the Home Help Scheme.

Chiropody services at reasonable rates within the reach of pensioners.

Provision of amenities in the homes of the aged to enable them to remain in their own homes as long as possible.

A scheme of S.O.S. cards for elderly folk living alone or in rooms.

A long range plan is in preparation and, when the aims of the present section are in successful operation throughout the State, the Council will bring forward its further ideas for the development of the scheme.

APPROACH TO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

The method adopted by the Welfare Council in stimulating the development of club work has been first to contact the Municipal Councils by letter, then to make a personal approach asking the Council to call a public meeting of representatives of appropriate organisations within the municipality, together with interested citizens. At this meeting a committee is elected to form a club. Clubs for elderly citizens have been so established in a number of suburbs (e.g., Kew, Caulfield, Chelsea and Oakleigh), and others are in process of being established (e.g., Sunshine, Fairfield, Footscray). There is also a club functioning successfully in Northcote. In Richmond a three-course meal is also provided every day for elderly citizens. Some clubs were, of course, in existence before this Council started its campaign (e.g., South Melbourne and Carlton).

The value of these clubs in combating the loneliness of old age needs no elaboration. They are also a means of discovering the individual needs of aged persons and of meeting those needs.

When addressing Municipal Councils and other interested bodies, members have found it difficult to bring them to the realisation of the fact that our women—whether rich or poor—feel the loneliness of age and need the comfort of associates as well as our men. The Council has been gratified to learn of the establishment of several Club Rooms, but it would be happy to see more mixed clubs

on the lines of the South Melbourne Elderly Citizens' Club or of the Darby & Joan Clubs and others of the kind which are functioning so well in England.

COUNTRY CENTRES

The response in the metropolitan area has been so encouraging that it is hoped to take the plan to country centres in the near future. Already keen interest has been shown in two centres—Bendigo and Ballarat. Mrs. Dobson visited Bendigo and gave an interesting talk on her overseas research to a representative audience convened by the National Council of Women in that city, under the presidency of Mrs. L. W. Galvin.

Early in the year, Mrs. Dobson, with Miss M. Kelley, of the Victorian Council of Social Services, and Miss M. Todd, Social Worker from South Melbourne, visited Ballarat to make a preliminary survey of possibilities in that area. Arising out of this visit came a request that Mrs. Dobson should address a meeting convened by the Ballarat National Council of Women, under the presidency of Mrs. Kierath. Mrs. Dobson and Mrs. Tuddenham made the trip and found a very keen and responsive audience which included the Mayor and Mayoress of the City, Cr. and Mrs. Nicholson. The direct result of this meeting has been the formation of a club which is to be inaugurated, under the auspices of the National Council, in the Manchester Unity Hall on Thursday, 17th September. The good wishes of this Council go out to Ballarat in its venture, and we shall look forward to hearing of its growing success as it meets each week.

INTEREST IN OTHER STATES

From Canberra comes a report of the success of the Thursday Afternoon Club which is now well into its second year of successful and useful existence.

A request came from Queensland for information as to the plan on which the Welfare Council was running in Victoria. The work for the Aged in that State is already of a very high order, and we feel that the establishment of a Council in Queensland would do much to further that work.

South Australia also has this work well to the forefront of its social welfare work, as have also New South Wales, Tasmania, and Western Australia.

If a means can be found of co-ordinating this branch of welfare work in the different States, we should shortly see the fulfilment of one of the plans originally outlined at the Inaugural Meeting of the Old People's Welfare Council in Victoria, namely the formation of a National Old People's Welfare Council of Australia, through

which we should have direct access to the Commonwealth Government, and should be able to make widespread plans for this work throughout the Commonwealth.

DEPUTATION TO MINISTER OF HEALTH

At a recent deputation from the Executive to the Hon. W. P. Barry, M.L.A., Minister of Health, the following proposals were submitted:—

1. That the present Emergency Housekeeper Scheme be extended to include provision for certain home help for aged persons. Such a service for aged people would not necessarily be of an emergency nature, but would generally consist of the provision of assistance in the home for short regular periods. Many aged people who would otherwise require institutional care would be able to continue to live in their own homes if such assistance could be made available.

2. That some governmental financial assistance be provided for the establishment of recreational clubs for old people, such financial help to be made available through Municipal Councils. Where an elderly citizens' club is formed under the sponsorship of a Municipal Council and is approved by the Hospitals and Charities Commission, we would ask that the Government make available a grant of money towards the erection and equipment of a suitable building. In some suburbs a canteen, where a hot meal can be obtained at a small cost, is a necessary adjunct to the social club. It appears that the local people would be able to accept responsibility for the maintenance costs of such a club.

It is difficult to estimate the total amount of money that would be required, but we would ask that each application for financial assistance towards building and equipment for a recreational club be considered separately and, if it be approved, that the Government would grant financial assistance equal to the amount raised by voluntary subscription—on a pound for pound basis.

In summarising the case placed before the Minister, Mrs. Norris said that the Council felt assured that the implementation of these two proposals would not only promote the welfare of many aged persons in this State, but would help to diminish the financial burden on the Government of providing benevolent institutions for their accommodation.

The Minister accorded a very sympathetic hearing and assured the members of the deputation that the Government would consider in detail the proposals laid before him.

FUNERAL BENEFITS BILL

Members of the Council watched this measure with interest and congratulates the Government on its action to protect the interests of the aged in this matter.

THANKS

The thanks of the Council are due to the following groups or individuals: To the Society to Assist Persons of Education, to the R.A.A.F. Charities Appeal Fund, to Mrs. Marchant Penfold and Mr. Dossetor for their donations, to the Town Hall Authorities for their hospitality for Council Meetings, to the National Council of Women for the use of their rooms for Executive Meetings, and to all the many individuals who have contributed so largely to the success of the year's work of the Old People's Welfare Council of Victoria.

C. L. G. TUDDENHAM,

A. T. DOBSON,

Joint Honorary Secretaries.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1st July, 1952 to 20th June, 1953.

C. L. G. TUDDENHAM, Acting Treasurer.



