

THE RELATION OF A SOCIAL WORKER TO HIS ORGANIZATION.

By BORIS D. BOGEN,
Superintendent United Hebrew Charities,
CINCINNATI, OHIO.

Wise physicians prohibit their patients from constantly speaking of their ailments. The social worker should realize his weaknesses and try to overcome the unfortunate habit of grumbling and complaining of the unsatisfactory and often unjust treatment he thinks he is receiving from those "higher up."

As a public servant, the social worker must have respect for his own community, must be loyal to it, must make himself a part of it and take upon himself the representation of the communal interests in all possible directions. The grumbling, dissatisfied social worker, constantly complaining of the community that employs him, is a poor excuse of a leader, and deserves pity rather than encouragement. Still there may be some satisfaction in opening one's heart and stating his grievances to the public, analyzing his true position, expressing a protest and demanding sympathy and just consideration. These probably are the reasons that prompted the committee on program to include the subject of the relationship of the social worker to his organization in the discussions of this Conference. The speaker, however, wishes to emphasize that it was not his choice to present the topic, and that, in fact, he requested to be released from the unpleasant duty of tackling such a delicate proposition. Through moral suasion, however, he was induced to accept the task, for he realized that if the subject is to be presented he probably would be the person who could afford to do it without serious consequences. His position in respect to his community is fortunately such as to make it impossible to regard his remarks personal, and whatever he has to say is more a matter of observation than a result of his own experiences. He need not fear that his appearance may be taken as an expression of his own grievances toward his organization, for he has none, nor must he be careful that his statements may reflect upon the community which he represents. The office of a paid social worker is rather of a recent origin. At the beginning

the employment of a social worker is a matter of compromise; it is only through necessity that an organization becomes willing to spend money for management, and even then there are always some persons who consider the expenses for management not a legitimate item in connection with philanthropic activity. In many instances the introduction of a paid worker is gradual; often a person, after giving his services for a considerable time gratis, is given a small compensation, seldom sufficient to justify the employment of his entire time. Again in other communities the new field opens an opportunity to help a poor and unfortunate man or woman, who is thereby placed in a position where he can presumably earn a livelihood. To engage a social worker in this case means a double charity. While this is true historically, it is also applicable to the present conditions, and almost every community, if not as a whole, yet in part, retains the old views and considers a social worker as a charitable adjunct rather than a real necessity. Anyone who has had the experience of advertising for a social worker knows from the character of the persons aspiring to fill the vacancy how little uniformity there is in the supposed qualifications. Men of high social standing in the community will recommend their friends, sometimes even their relatives, whose only qualifications are the close relationship with the sponsor. Again there is usually pressure brought to get in some deserving member of the community, who cannot do anything else, and probably for this very reason will be able to do social work. You get applications from people without any experience, bold enough to say that they believe they can learn the tricks of the profession very rapidly; again from others without any education, claiming that they think that education, after all, is not altogether necessary. Again you may get candidates somewhat qualified, but all of them take it for granted that if they do not get the appointment it is not because they come short of the requirements, but because they did not carry sufficient pull or were prevented from getting the position by somebody in the field interested in behalf of some third person.

The development of social activities and the specialization according to the character of the work makes the term "social worker" too general. The qualifications of a superintendent of an institution, those of a relief agent or head worker of a settlement are and should be of a different character. Still there is one underlying

principle, and this is the general adaptation for social service. The management of our institutions, especially the orphan asylums and hospitals, has been considerably improved lately. The responsibilities connected with these offices became apparent, and the necessity of qualified persons in charge became imperative. Our homes for the aged are still following the old régime. The conditions of our relief agencies are especially instructive. In the olden times the distribution of charity was considered in itself an act of benevolence. Even children were given an opportunity to give alms to the poor directly. Conditions have changed, the scope of philanthropy has been greatly extended and has become more complicated. The problem of helping the poor is at present a sociological question. We are beginning to look for results, we are beginning to realize the necessity of a system, we are endeavoring to introduce economy and to avoid unnecessary waste.

Individual charity has been transferred into a co-operative enterprise, and it is only a question of time when it will become a municipal function entirely. The management and the distribution of charity funds has become a serious matter. It is not always pleasant; it calls forth stringent measures with a number of undeserving applicants; it requires close attention; it involves considerable work preparatory to the distribution; it implies investigation, organization and careful handling of each and every case. Naturally a work of this character cannot be left entirely in the hands of volunteers. Hence the necessity of a paid worker, the superintendent. The office of the superintendent, however, carries a different meaning in different communities. In some places the superintendent is nothing but a clerk, again, in others, he is the executive officer, with little power and no authority, and only in a few instances is the superintendent considered a leader of the community, directing the work and supplying plans and policies as to the different philanthropic activities. On the other hand, unfortunately, professional efficiency is not a general rule among the superintendents of relief agencies. The requirements for the office are still indefinite, and, while communities are beginning to recognize the importance of a qualified superintendent, they are, as a matter of fact, compelled to make their selections from among people without any special training. Under these circumstances, the superintendent enters the community not as a leader, but, at

least at the start, as an agent, ready to execute orders and follow directions. Who can blame a community that is unwilling to thrust in the hands of an inexperienced and untrained worker the care of dependents?

On the other hand, in the selection of a superintendent, the different communities are guided by different standards. Lately, the requirements became more positive. The appearance, the general bearing, the moral tone and disposition, eloquence and refinement are taken into consideration. It is only in exceptional cases where professional efficiency is sought for. How many communities care whether their superintendent possesses the knowledge of modern sociology, political economy, psychology, etc.? How many of the Jewish communities dealing with immigrants mostly demand that their superintendent know the language of the immigrants, their past, their peculiarities, their tendencies, their merits and their shortcomings? And these theoretical preparations are only a part of the qualifications of a superintendent, who is destined to become a leader in modern philanthropy.

In our settlement work the conditions are still less satisfactory. The requirements of a settlement worker are unreasonable, the work in its character is indefinite, the accomplishments of an efficient settlement worker are too manifold to be found in one person. Besides, the bulk of the work is done by volunteers, whose selection is a difficult matter, and, as a rule, the head worker has little choice in the matter. As a result of all this, the qualifications of a settlement worker are measured in a degree by the demands of the volunteers. The charming personality, the smooth talker, has better chances than an efficient communal worker, a man or woman of ideas, sincere and well meaning.

A social worker assuming a new position finds that one of his first, if not the most difficult, tasks is to get the confidence of the board of managers and to gain a hold upon the community that will establish proper relationship between him and his organization. If the record of his previous achievements is of some value, it will help him to start with a made reputation. He will be accordingly introduced, and will have to live up to the expectations. But even then his manners, voice, conversation, tendencies, views that he confesses, sociability, etc., will be critically scrutinized, and will mean a great deal in securing him a strong foothold in his new

position. Should he, however, be a person who has already been known to the community, and has been chosen for some other reason, than his experience as a social worker, his road toward success, is still more difficult, and the entire attitude will depend upon how successful he may be at the very beginning. In this case he meets a critical attitude, a lack of confidence.

As a rule, however, a social worker, when engaged for a new position, finds that he is met with open arms, and is shown a great deal of consideration in the beginning. But often his first experiences are not lasting. The trouble begins frequently from an insignificant episode. A mistake, an unnecessary friction that could be easily avoided and overlooked, causes anxiety, and is sufficient to overthrow the entire equilibrium, producing a storm in what promised to be an ideal atmosphere of relations. Under these circumstances it is quite natural that a social worker has to be careful from the very start, and this leads us to the consideration of a peculiar psychological feature, namely, the social worker's fear of his organization. Notwithstanding the growing demand for social workers, each and every one of them is in constant fear of losing his position, for he knows, and his friends do not fail to tell him, that to lose a position is, after all, a great deal easier than to get another one. This fear on the part of the social worker makes him very sensitive to the opinions of his superiors—he cannot stand any criticism coming from them, exaggerating its importance, taking too seriously every word uttered by any of his directors, a condition which is responsible for a peculiar ambition, characteristic of almost of everyone connected with social service. Realizing this ambition, the organizations are very generous in giving praise to their paid workers, making public acknowledgments of the wonderful achievements, though a little careful in advancing their salaries.

In preparing this paper it seemed advisable to interview a few leading professional workers and inquire confidentially what are the relations existing between the given individuals and their respective organization. We shall quote the answers promiscuously:

"My organization does not understand the problem. I cannot explain to them my attitude. They do not appreciate the difficulties and hardships and think that this is a store. It is impossible to please them."

"My board are just darlings, there is nothing they would not do for me; honest, their relations are just ideal."

"My board think they know all. They are not open to conviction and are not accustomed to have a paid worker differ from their views. The only thing to do is to humor them."

"They certainly treat me right and think highly of me. One must know how to show up; they are taken by the few things that I do."

"Why I have given my life to please them, have become a nervous wreck. I suppose they would be only too glad if I resigned."

"My board is certainly fine to me, I appreciate their kindness. I cannot expect them to treat me as their equal after all. I hope they are satisfied with me."

"The trouble is in Mr. or Miss So and So, they have full confidence in her or him, and whatever he or she says is law. It is no use to fight the impossible."

"I am getting tired of the explicit confidence the board shows to me. I begin to feel that they ought to share the responsibility and not leave everything to me."

"The organization, as a whole, needs an education as regard to recognition of the standing of a social worker. I do not want to become too familiar with my board. Careful, tactful and conservative action keeps my board in satisfactory condition."

"Mr. So and So is afraid that somebody else will get the credit. He takes it upon himself to deprive a fellow of a chance."

"My board realized the changes I have introduced; they see the difference between my predecessor and me; they certainly have respect for my education. They like to see me putting a scientific coloring to our work."

"Since I am working for them, they never greeted me with a handshake."

"My board loves to hear others praise me."

"They certainly make me work like a slave, and it is impossible to please them."

"My board is satisfied with me. Our relations are fine, I am entirely independent."

We could continue quoting different opinions, but all of them would represent a slight variation of the same theme. Evidently

not in all cases do the opinions expressed represent the true situation. They show, however, how sensitive the social worker is and how much he takes to heart the attitude of the board toward him and the work he does.

The most frequent cause of friction between the social worker and his organization is the difference of opinions as to the method and tendency of the work itself.

In the relief agency the worker may be accused of being too lenient or too severe, as the case may be; in the institution the question of discipline may cause considerable trouble; in settlement work the lack of restraint and the character of activities may not meet with the approval of the board. This is a legitimate and natural controversy, and it is the duty of the worker, if he is given a chance, to bring about a uniformity of ideas. Unfortunately, often the worker sacrifices his own personality in attempting to compromise difficulties, he becomes a champion of a cause in which he himself does not believe. He changes methods not because he is convinced of the wrong of it, but because the board will be better pleased with it, and by doing so does not emphasize the fact that he is not responsible for the new way; just on the contrary, he praises the things that he hates and downs those that he internally believes to be good.

The tendency on the part of the members of the board to apply a business criterion to philanthropic activities is often the cause of considerable friction between the organization and the social worker. The social worker is often kept responsible for raising of funds, and is kept busy inventing schemes or executing the schemes of his board for the purpose of obtaining money for the different activities. In some organizations an unreasonable economy is enforced, and the recent fad to get returns from the constituency itself leads to a most unsatisfactory role that the social worker is made to assume. Relief societies are attempting to base their adequacy upon the amount of money repaid by the applicants, an arrangement that defeats the very purpose of a relief agency. The work of the latter should not be confused with that of a free loan society. A free loan society advances money under a certain guaranty, either in the form of a pledge or the assurance

of a third person, who is in position to assume the responsibility in case the payment is not forthcoming. A failure to repay a loan in a free loan society would bar a person from further transactions. The relief agency cannot afford to put this ultimatum. The truth is, that if a person is not in position to pay his debt he would probably need more assistance, and if his need is substantiated by investigation he ought to get it. The return of a loan to a charity agency should not entitle the person to continue to remain on the charity list for a longer time than is absolutely necessary.

In institutions, hospitals, asylums, schools, etc., the importance attached to the sometimes very insignificant income is usually exaggerated. Meanwhile the social worker is compelled to show results in dollars and cents, and if he fails in this particular respect he loses his standing. He appreciates the falsity of his position, and naturally protests against this unfair measure of his achievement, causing a feeling of discontent on the part of the organization.

In settlement work the lack of appreciation of special paid assistants, and the idea of getting along with volunteer service exclusively, is responsible for the physical breakdown of a social worker, and for the unavoidable failure producing friction and unpleasantness in the relations of the social worker and his board. The social worker who fails to recognize, however, the rights of the members of the board, who fails to appreciate the importance of the views of the large number of contributors to his cause and who ignores public opinion, is partly responsible himself if he does not find satisfactory relations between himself and his organization.

A social worker must never forget that the board of managers are the choice of the public; they are the trustees of public funds; they are instrumental in making ample provisions for the material support of the different activities, and are responsible for the entire workings of the organization; they are the controlling medium, and it is their duty and privilege to examine, approve or disapprove his actions; they are entitled to know all the details of the different transactions, and must be put in position to watch results. The social worker who succeeds in being left alone, be it because the

members of the board are indifferent to their duties and are too busy with their own affairs, or because they have full confidence in him and do not want to interfere with his prerogative, may find himself in a predicament when he awakens to the fact that his board did not keep pace with the progress made and is unable to give him the co-operation which he may want. The same is true of the worker who is attempting to keep his board in ignorance of the true status of the situation, who misrepresents reality and substitutes for it results pleasing to the board. While the different boards are partly responsible for this situation by encouraging the social workers to report nothing but what they want reported, still the social workers are to blame considerably for this deceitful tendency toward their organizations. This tendency is especially evident in the official statements and even statistical data given by the different organizations. Everything is calculated to produce the impression of a perfect situation, and no allowance is made for weak and negative features that we meet in almost every department of social service. In fact it is hard to say what would happen to a social worker if he should dare to bring before the public his doubts as to the real merit of the work in which he is engaged.

The board is responsible for the social worker, and consequently has the right to employ or discharge him. It is a misfortune to have a social worker who is a fixture, who keeps his office on the strength of his past achievements, or through some outside influence, or as a matter of charity. On the other hand, the social worker not merely by virtue of his office, but through efficiency, should assert himself as a leader. The efficient social worker is not the one who does just exactly what the board of managers wants him to do, but the one who is instrumental in making the board demand what he himself thinks ought to be done. All this is true, however, in a general way; in individual cases, the social worker in his relations to the board of managers encounters innumerable difficulties. The board of managers, as a rule, is not a homogenous body, human beings differ, especially when they are members of a philanthropic organization. The position of a social worker is exceedingly difficult when his organization is divided into factions; these differences are hard to reconcile. Both

parties, if there are only two, may be at fault, the entire animosity may be of a personal origin or based upon petty ambition and rivalry. The social worker is placed in the position of a politician, he watches the market and observes each movement of the pendulum of social achievements of one party or the fall of the other. Woe to the social worker who is obliged to flatter, gossip, to lead intrigues and to take advantage of the weaknesses of the individual members of the board. The zeal with which the social worker cultivates his board makes him sometimes forget that the board is, after all, only a small part of the public and that the contributors are also deserving of serious consideration. The favorite of the board is not always the favorite with the public, and, while his position may be quite certain at some time, he is likely to get into some difficulty, and with no co-operation on the part of the community at large will have to stand on his own merit, independently of what the board thinks of him. In settlement work especially, the opinion of the large corps of volunteer workers and so-called sympathizers requires careful handling. Here, as anywhere else, tact and patience are necessary, and a little politeness is always in place. A certain duty devolves upon the social worker in regard to the supporters and contributors. His work depends upon their interests and, therefore, it is very important that he should do all he possibly can to acquaint the public with the manifold activities; their workings should present facts that promote sympathy, enthusiasm and belief not only in the methods, but in the people, for whose benefit the institutions exist.

The tendency on the part of the charity worker to emphasize the faults of the poor, speak of their deceiving natures and of their depravity and of the dire ingratitude, is a wrong means to get the proper co-operation from the organization. An organization based upon hatred and distrust of the people, who are its beneficiaries, even if thoroughly organized, does not deserve the name of charity. The charity worker who sentences every applicant as a thief and liar is unable to do justice even to the deserving individual. The charity worker who thinks that his sole duty is to protect the community from impostors is laboring under a false conception of true charity. With him the problem seems to be

"how to refuse," not "how to help." The board of managers may be curious to know the peculiar and, at times, very morbid experiences with the undeserving poor. This is a weakness similar to the love for detective stories, but this will never serve the cause of charity. The social worker should use all possible opportunities to present the true conditions under which "the other half lives," explain the causes of poverty that are beyond the control of the individual, and he should endeavor to get the sympathy for the suffering and excite the desire to be helpful to the unfortunate. He should cite examples of definite results achieved through adequate relief, and, in general, act as an enthusiastic advocate in behalf of the poor. In doing so he may encounter a good deal of opposition and criticism, but as long as there is no question as to sincerity he is bound to achieve his purpose.

This brings us to the final and the most important consideration, and that is, the relation between the social worker and the beneficiaries, the applicants for charity, the inmates of the institution and the constituency of the settlements. The idea that a social worker is always misjudged by the people among whom he is working is the most dangerous point of view. Many a board doubts the efficiency of its workers, because the latter are on too intimate terms with their charges. Often the hatred shown to the social worker is taken as an indication of his wonderful achievements. No matter how important it is to get friendly relations from the board of managers and the large list of contributors, the social worker must never forget that his mission is among the poor and the needy, the ignorant and the lowly, those that need his assistance, his just and kind attitude.

In relief work the social worker must never forget that he is a paid agent, that he is placed for the purpose of ameliorating the conditions of the needy, that he is called upon primarily to serve the poor, and should never permit himself to play the role of a benefactor. He must give a chance to every applicant to explain to him fully his needs and desires; he must never shirk his responsibility and avoid meeting an applicant whom he cannot or does not want to help. In granting assistance or refusing to do anything for an applicant, he acts in a business capacity; his per-

sonal likes and dislikes should find no place in the matter of distributing relief. All applicants should be treated courteously, friendly and with doubtless sincerity. Kind and forgiving, the social worker should, however, be definite in his actions, decisive and straightforward. Nothing annoys the poor more than the double-faced policy; the social worker need not rehearse in a mirror a smiling countenance, the poor will not believe him. Nor will it be of any purpose to put on a mask of dignity, unnecessary sagacity or stern character, the poor are not easily deceived. The social worker who is really interested in the welfare of the beneficiaries, the social worker who gives thought to each and every case with the view of doing the very best, the social worker who knows what is needed for the community and is frank and fearless in putting his ideas into practice, the social worker who sympathizes with the suffering and never goes back on his promises, will have no trouble to adjust his relations with the people for whom he works.

DISCUSSION.

MISS WIENER: The formal discussion of this paper will be opened by Mr. Montefiore Bienenstock, of St. Louis.

By MONTEFIORE BIENENSTOCK,
ST. LOUIS, MO.

My appearance before you this afternoon reminds me of the story of the negro who, when asked to change a ten-dollar bill, said: "Ah haven't got the change, boss, but Ah thanks you for the compliment." I also thank you for the compliment of offering me the privilege of presenting my humble views; and while I haven't the full change in return for your expectations I'll give you the best I can by way of discussing Dr. Bogen's splendid paper.

Once upon a time a lady gave her son Willie a chameleon. The next day she called the boy and asked: "How's the chameleon, Willie?" To which Willie answered: "The chameleon is all broke up." "Broke up! Why, Willie, how is that?" "Oh!" he said, "this morning I put it on my brown coat and it turned brown; in the afternoon I put it on my blue trousers and it turned blue, and this evening I put it on my Dolly Varden sash and it broke up."

The social worker is a great deal like this chameleon in reference to trying to please all the members of his board. It is his business to have a color of his own on all the important questions, and not merely to try to reflect the opinions of each member of the board. The chameleon policy is the beginning of a "break up" for him in his work. Of course, he must get the general opinion and desire of those for whom he works, but he must carry out their ideas in his own way, and must also give opinions and thoughts of his own on the facts of his work for the board to carry out. He is, therefore, at once a leader and a follower—a reality and a reflection. But he cannot be a chameleon, and change with every viewpoint to the color of the cloth worn by individual members of his board. He must become recognized as a social leader, as well as a follower, and the right arm of men and women with ideas in which he concurs for social benefit. Just how to do this is the question each social worker must solve for himself. A few remarks along the lines of this question are highly apropos.

Miss Kate Barnard, Charity Commissioner of Oklahoma, a young woman of rare enthusiasm and ideals, came into my office about five years ago, and remarked, among other things: "Mr. Bienenstock, it is a great pleasure to meet you, because you are doing so much for 'civilization' and 'humanity.'" I answered: "Miss Barnard, I do not know 'civilization' or 'humanity,' at least in the aggregate. I know these terms in general, but my knowledge is of individuals and not abstractions."

The charity worker must realize this at the outset. He must know men, women and children personally, and not in the mass, though such knowledge comes later, and for purposes of statistics is not to be ignored. The social worker must also know his community, the rich members of it as well as the poor. For him this community—and this includes the idea of it as a municipality—must indeed be a profound study. A social worker who never looks beyond his office walls in the alleviation or amelioration to which he is pledged and privileged is no social worker in the sense I mean at all. He becomes a dead issue, and drops into decay and oblivion that usually follows. In fact, he even clogs the energies of the community which depends on him for outlook and viewpoint on many topics that come within his scope. Such a charity

worker has missed his place, and deserves to be looked upon in the manner so ably set forth by Dr. Bogen.

But the social worker of today means so much more than the mere man who dispenses alms or deals out dollars or doughnuts. In a convention of this kind, or in life in general, there is a curious tendency to think charity a thing apart. It is not. It is not the segregation of ideas or people, but rather the promotion of all things that will disseminate each. Charity means much more than that which is locked in the social worker's brain and bosom. It is general and universal. There is one point in Dr. Bogen's paper, and only one, that touched the point I have in mind. I don't know that I can quote the exact words, but here is the substance: "That it is only a question of time when charity, which is now taken out of the hands of the individual and put in the control of the organization, will become entirely a municipal function." This rings true, and is in line with progressive thought. Wherever a charity office works hand in hand with the Police Department—not merely to arrest people, though to help justice must always be a large part of charity, but to work with the municipal authorities for the relief of distress in its various forms—there will the social worker attain his highest success. In fact, the true social worker should study the statutes of his city, and ought to have a general knowledge of law as well. He should also know various legislators, and have a current knowledge of general legislation, especially on subjects that interest him. In this way the social worker can come into the fullest realization of his powers for benefit.

This is the first time I know of that the social worker has been brought into limelight, individually, at a public conference. It is meet and proper that social work should be ranked among the professions, though the word vocation, as applied in this connection, seems a better term; as containing less lip and more heart expression, and real activity. Profession implies something by which we earn a living; vocation implies choice and life work. But a quibble on words is not in order.

The mistake made by so many social workers is the idea that their work removes them in anywise from the ordinary scheme of

things, or people who are engaged in other pursuits. The social worker must not differentiate himself. Nor must he deem his work of such vital consequence that it must obsess every moment of his waking and sleeping hours. Social work is a tremendous strain, and the nerve-racking tension of the day must be mitigated by pleasures, such as all men enjoy, when the worker has time for leisure. No work that I know is so apt to prey on the mind as well as the other faculties, to the extent of rendering the worker entirely unfit for the zeal, earnestness and enthusiasm which must always be his for the best accomplishment. However, this does not mean that the social worker must keep his work always at the office. Some people think social workers bores if they discuss their work too frequently—in fact, that is just what they are. But there is a wise rule in all things, and the social worker must discuss his work after hours; must discuss it persistently with those whom he wants to help in the causes in which lies his heart.

As I said before, the social worker must be much more than a mere alms doer. The details and multiplicity of ideas that flow into him are necessarily to be utilized in every possible way. And they must be studied and digested very carefully, and discussed dispassionately for the acquisition of the best results. This requires the reading of the current literature and books devoted to social uplift. Every newspaper item connected with or about charity work is of interest for knowledge and study. Financial questions and problems are of especial interest for him, and economic conditions must be food for serious reflection.

Members of charity boards ought also to educate themselves just as must the paid social worker. No good work can be done by anyone, even if he attends meetings regularly, if he does not make some attempt to master the questions up for solution. There are some cases where vanity and mere desire for public notoriety make men serve on charity boards. This should be discouraged and frowned upon. The worker must become the thinker. Nor must the board member merely ride hobbies at the expense of general work done. A harmonious fulfillment of ideals and ideas, or an approximation thereof, is the desideratum. In fact, sacrifice of personal wishes is often necessary to the better solution of gen-

eral problems. The most important, and the thing within practical scope, is the duty of the board as a whole.

Now to return to the paid worker. He must not think he knows it all, any more than any individual board member should have a similar thought. In many cases it is better for him to be merely like the little boy who said he was a director in the bank because he directed the mail. When good ideas are presented to him it is not only his duty, but to his decided interest to carry them out willingly, and even when necessary do the very drudgery of it all. If people who serve on boards, and social workers who carry out the work, either initiated by board members or themselves, know their business, the greatest benefits will accrue. But here is the point: the question of prevention is the main problem of charity. The remedial end of it is much easier, though in itself presents overwhelming difficulties. Prevention and remedy take brains and practical sense. These come through observation, study and serious thought, if they come at all. And this leads to the idea of charity in general.

I stated before, that it is not a thing apart. It belongs to everyday life. You cannot write merely with words, nor build a house merely of brick and stone. You build four walls and call it a home, or a club, or a charity building, a depot, or whatever name its purpose has. It is your thought of it that consecrates it. It is your idea of charity, too, that makes it. And charity is of the home, the parlor, the kitchen, and the rest of the house. It is not merely an office term, a fad, a folly, and an excuse for the expression of hypocritical, or even genuine impulses. It must be common to the social worker, and all the members of his board, toward each other, and the entire community. It has a higher meaning than the mere dispensing of funds. It means kindness, courtesy, consideration and good-will. It also means common sense, and its application to the little problems, as well as the greater ones, of life. If members of boards will realize this in their relation with the paid social workers: that charity is sympathy and good-will; that each one, whether he be a business-man, a lawyer, doctor, architect or mechanic, is in himself a social worker, and necessarily must be; much will be accomplished. The social

worker must also fully realize this in all his attitudes, not by practice and forethought, but, as with all the others, because of life training in gentility and refinement of feeling to all around him. Charity in this sense must be promulgated or inculcated among the rich as well as the poor. If this spirit prevails there can be no friction, nor can the question of the relationship of the social worker to his organization be one entitled to more than mere passing comment.

MR. CHESTER J. TELLER, New Orleans: I can understand how this subject, the relations of social workers to their boards, might be a very interesting and entertaining subject for the Section of Social Workers had they had a little private meeting of their own. It surely is a subject of great importance. It is one which both the successful and the unsuccessful social worker might find very interesting, and one, too, which might bring out some very interesting reminiscences. But, Miss Chairman, and ladies and gentlemen, I really can't see why, in a gathering of this sort, where there is some real work to be done, where we meet only once in two years, for earnest, active, serious work, we should give ourselves over to such an unprofessional subject as the relation of the social worker to his organization. I am under the impression this subject was brought into the program this afternoon for the express purpose of elevating the tone of our profession, and I don't know of anything more lacking in dignity, more unprofessional than the open and official statements that have been made here on this platform in regard to the social worker and his organization.

I consider this subject purely a matter of interest and importance between the social worker in each case and his organization in each case. If we are to take up the time of our society we ought to do it in the proper way. We have to ascertain first how many of our social workers have given their time and gone into their work and made special studies by which they have equipped themselves for their profession. We have, secondly, to persuade persons of high intelligence to go into the profession and to study as the rabbis do, as the lawyers or medical men do.

It doesn't elevate the tone of our profession in the slightest degree to come here and speak of the boards with which we have

been in relation, or the boards with which some of our colleagues have been connected.

I believe that this subject ought to take a more serious tone, if we are to get any good out of it. I feel that whether we have been successful or not that depends largely upon ourselves; that our relations are purely one of individual capacity; that they are relations for which we are altogether responsible.

After all, there isn't a field worth while in the world, where earnest minds don't have to come in conflict with other minds, where they don't have to meet emergencies in administration, solve knotty difficulties with other people. That man who attributes his failure to the ingratitude of his constituents, or the trouble he has had with a board, or to the fact that others misunderstand him, why that man is simply a failure. In every case where we are dealing with large problems and where we have real work to do, it's a part of our work to make other people understand us. It is part of our work to succeed in spite of difficulties, and to be indeed even grateful for the difficulties we encounter in the administration of our duties.

REV. RUDOLPH I. COFFEE, Pittsburg: If I may quote a well-known phrase of Jacob A. Riis, I should say that these discussions prove how little one-half knows about how the other half acts and lives. Our discussions lack point for this reason, and we would accomplish more were we better acquainted with the facts on both sides. On Tuesday afternoon, some person at the Conference on Dependent Children wanted to know why the Jewish people do not take up farming. I explained to the audience, mostly Christians, that the speaker was quite mistaken, for the Jews, increasingly in number, are becoming farmers. The various agencies were outlined, and I told of the good work that is being accomplished in several of our States. I was greatly surprised that so few members of this Conference were acquainted with these details. One of our leading workers doubted my word, yet this very morning a committee came here, representing, out of the Jewish people of St. Louis, twenty-seven prospective farmers, who are eager to purchase a splendid plot of ground in Eastern Illinois. In every large city you will find a strong desire, among our Jewish people,

to get out of the crowded centers and move to the farm. Yet I am surprised, beyond measure, at the lack of knowledge shown by our Jewish people, and even social workers, about this movement.

Another example may be observed in the discussion held this morning. We observe that Jewish workers are defending the system of placing dependent children in large buildings or institutions, while our Christian workers have given up this method because they have found better ways to provide for children. Massachusetts, for a quarter of a century, has boarded out children in private homes. At least eight States are successfully doing this work, yet this morning we heard the remark made that the system of boarding out children is yet in the experimental stage. Two years ago, eleven societies caring for dependent children in Southern California gave up the institution plan and formed an agency for placing children in board. What has been discarded by the Christians as out of date, was accepted as good enough by our Jewish people, who started soon after in Los Angeles an Orphan Asylum for Jewish Children.

And, finally, another example of this unwillingness to understand the other side is observed in this present discussion. You have just heard it stated that is is unworthy of this Conference to discuss the relation between the social worker and the board, but I say no subject is more vital. It would be instructive, though not pleasant reading, to know just how many social workers are unable to put their whole souls into their work, because of friction with the board. There are three resident workers in Pittsburg leaving their positions this month, because of this inability to work in harmony with their boards. Boards of institutions have been called "planks of ignorance," and the trained worker should be aided to work with these directors in harmony. Would it not be a splendid contribution if something could be done to bring a better spirit of relationship between the worker and his board? Our discussion should aim to bring about a closer feeling of friendship, more harmony and less strife. Accomplishing so much, this year, our discussion will not be in vain.

MR. CYRUS L. SULZBERGER: May I say just a word on behalf of the kid-glove class of ignoramus?

I think Mr. Teller spoke more wisdom in two minutes than we have heard here in the entire discussion. As in all other walks of life, all the dissatisfaction throughout creation depends upon yourself, not upon any outside influences. That social worker, or that broker, or that scrub-woman, that rabbi or that blacksmith, who is trying to hold his place by pull deserves to lose it, and probably will. That employe in any walk in life who is looking first to cut a figure with his employer instead of performing his labor never will succeed. There is no profound philosophy in this. Your duty you must do, and as one of the kid-glove philanthropists I tell you the board will appreciate it. Cut the figure, and the board will recognize. That is a very simple proposition.

The relationship between the social worker and the boards of directors of all the organizations I have been connected with have always been fortunate. We have had no time to appreciate that they were our inferiors, as were here offered today. I am glad to have learned. That is one idea at least, one item of information that I can carry home to my associates and tell them that it is the judgment of the Jewish charity workers of the United States that they do not regard themselves as the partners of the boards of directors.

DR. BOGEN: As a matter of personal privilege, I take the liberty of speaking again. I do not intend to take up the subject anew.

I can readily appreciate the sentiment of one of the speakers, that success or failure depends upon the qualifications of the person in question. I thought so myself when I was young. But eventually, when you come in contact with the different boards, you begin to appreciate that there are other factors of success outside of personal merit. Every social worker knows that many a sleepless night is spent in thinking over the difficulties with the directors. It is a blessing when a person happens to work with a good board. Mr. Sulzberger is, however, not a representative of the average board member. There are only a few that are of his caliber. I could get along with Mr. Sulzberger without any difficulty.

As a rule, however, a social worker cannot depend upon fair treatment. A superintendent of an orphan asylum, for instance,

being young and enthusiastic, may express opinions that are too radical. He is liable to lose his position, he may be discharged by a committee, and not because he is not qualified, but because the board did not appreciate his endeavors. The directors, on the other hand, are not supposed to be passive. Proper criticism and expression of different views should be appreciated, but let the professional worker have his chance. I believe it does good for the social workers to be frank—let the employer know our own opinion of our own inefficiency, but let him know also that we have the right to judge our work. There is no reason why the social worker should not discuss his work as any other professional worker.

There was a time when the rabbis took possession of the platform of the Conference, and we never had a chance to say a word; now we have gained some ground, let us keep it and let us not be afraid that it will hurt our "dignity."

CHAIRMAN WIENER: A paper has been interpolated on the program, and we will now listen to Mr. Folk Younker.

Mr. Folk Younker, Secretary of the New York Young Men's Hebrew Association, thereupon read the following paper:

WORK OF THE Y. M. H. A. OF NEW YORK.

By FALK YOUNKER,
NEW YORK, N. Y.

The activities of the Y. M. H. A. of New York are to a large extent modeled after that splendid institution, the Y. M. C. A. About sixty years ago this latter association was organized for the purpose of keeping young men within the church, and away from the lowering tendencies of city life. Built upon a religious foundation, this institution has maintained its standard and increased its prestige so that today it is a world-wide association, which receives liberal support and conducts a multitude of man-building activities.

Thirty-six years ago the Y. M. H. A. of New York was founded. The need was already felt in those days for an organization around which young men could rally for mental, moral, social and physical development. In its early days it had as its foremost workers

such men as Oscar S. Straus, Judge Greenbaum, Judge Platzek, David Leventritt, Henry M. Leipziger, Daniel P. Hayes and many others of equal prominence. These men to this day recall with pride and gratitude the training they received as active members of the Association in the formative period of their careers.

The value of an institution like the Y. M. H. A., besides teaching loyalty to faith, lies in its possibility of developing social workers, who, by their training, their ability and their Jewish fervor, are fitted to take up the many problems which confront the community and help in their solution. In a city the need of such a character-building association is strongly felt. The degrading influences of the saloon, the street-corner, the low-grade dance hall and theater must be overcome. But even in the smaller towns, where twenty or more Jewish young men associate, such societies should be established, in order that our youth may be led to take a live and intelligent interest in Jewish as well as civic affairs, and actively participate in all matters which concern the well-being of their city.

A Y. M. H. A. must be so conducted as to gain for it the respect and support of all good citizens. It must be looked upon as a force for good in the community. Its aim should be higher than that of a mere social club, though its work must necessarily be, to a large extent, of a social nature. The mission of the organization must, however, be kept steadfast in mind. No community should permit the name of the Y. M. H. A. to be used unless the leaders devote their time and energy to building up an association that will stand for Judaism, for patriotism and for brotherhood. The great success of the Y. M. H. A. may be summed up in a few words: Earnestness, enthusiasm and devotion to high ideals.

On the 30th of this month it will be exactly ten years since the present fully equipped home of the New York Association was dedicated. This building is situated at the corner of 92d Street and Lexington Avenue, and is the generous gift of Mr. Jacob H. Schiff. Since its opening the membership has increased from 800 to over 3,500; the annual attendance from 60,000 to over 200,000; annual receipts and expenditures from \$12,000 to nearly \$40,000. One of the main activities is an employment department, which is