

BURNABY FAMILY COURT COMMITTEE,
JANUARY 25, 1966.

The Reeve and Council of
The Corporation of the District of Burnaby,
4545 East Grandview-Douglas Highway,
Burnaby 2, B. C.

Gentlemen:

The 1967 Family Court Committee, composed of Mrs. C. Wells, Dr. L. Beamish, and Messrs. D. A. Copan, J. E. B. Holden, and G. A. Whiten, along with Councilor D. M. Herd (the Council's Justice Liaison), wish to report to the Municipal Council upon the completion of its appointed term as per the Council meeting of January 3, 1967.

The Family Court Committee was saddened by the sudden death of Magistrate Johnston in July of last year, and this community has lost the services of a dedicated worker. We wish to express our endorsement of the appointment of Mr. L. S. Goulet to the position of magistrate, and welcome him to the difficult tasks that lie ahead, and assure him of the willingness of the Committee to help and assist in whatever way they can, either as a Committee or as individual citizens within this Municipality.

The Family Court Committee has again this year been most vitally concerned with the availability of services for those juveniles who come before the Juvenile Court, as well as services for those individuals who with some preventive measures will never be in the position of having to appear the court.

The Committee was most pleased that the 1967 Municipal Council endorsed the four recommendations which last year's Committee presented in its report of the activities of the Committee during 1966. These were approved by Council on January 9th last, and it was assured that these recommendations would become standing policy.

It is regrettable that of the four recommendations endorsed only two have been acted upon to the expectation of the Committee which envisaged the original recommendations. The Committee was pleased to have a token amount established as a budget item in the fiscal policies of the Municipality, and although the amount was not totally used, we would ask that a similar amount be included for the 1968 Committee.

Although an initial request was made to the Attorney-General in January 1967, nothing further has been done by Municipal Officers to encourage the Corrections Branch of the Attorney-General's Department to improve the case loads of the Probation Officers who are still working under difficult conditions. Three Officers and two trainees have a case load of over 180 probationers as well as the preparation of pre-sentence reports for the Courts. The Committee is pleased to report that as a result of our continuing efforts in discussions with the Corrections Branch that we have been assured that in the near future the staff of the Burnaby Probation Office will be increased to four qualified personnel so that a proper service may be rendered by this office to those persons requiring the service.

An "In Camera" meeting of the Council on January 9th last asked the Burnaby Committee to consider the possibility of convening a meeting of all the Family Court Committees of the Lower Mainland for the purpose of discussing regional needs and to determine the methods by which these matters could best be resolved.

Each chairman of Family Court Committees of the Lower Mainland area was contacted as well as numerous municipal officers of neighbouring municipalities and cities with a view to holding such a meeting, but most were of the opinion that inasmuch as provincial legislation is such that the

responsibility of providing facilities and services rests with the individual municipalities, and until such time as there is a change in the legislation, there is little hope of co-ordinating our activities because each Council views these areas of activities as being relatively unimportant when compared to the needs and pressures of local improvements, etc.

Some headway was made, however, in this regard when the Lower Mainland Family Court Committee and the Provincial Department of Social Welfare co-sponsored a Conference to Investigate the Feasibility of Establishing a Diagnostic-Remand Centre to Serve the Juvenile Courts of the Lower Mainland, at the Villa Motor Inn in May. The Honourable Dan Campbell did indicate that if any two or more municipalities wish to co-operate in the establishment of a facility or a service, that the legislation which established the Regional Hospital District could be invoked to do the same for any other service deemed necessary, and that a similar method of financing could be arranged amongst the municipalities wishing to participate.

In our concern for the handling of juveniles in the new Justice Building, the Committee had a meeting with Inspector Gibbon, the Commanding Officer of the Burnaby Detachment of the R.C.M.P., and Mr. Balfour, during which time our views and opinions about this subject were presented to Inspector Gibbon and Mr. Balfour. The Committee is further of the opinion that this is a procedure which will have to be closely and carefully watched once the new building is operative.

In March, the Family Court Committee was instrumental in bringing together representatives of the police, the judiciary, the social service department, the school board, the probation office, and the mental health centre to discuss the structure, function, and services of the Forensic Clinic which had been established at the Provincial Mental Health Centre in Burnaby. The representatives

of the various agencies present welcomed the opportunity to meet with other departments and groups who have a similar mutual concern for service to the citizens of this community.

The members of the Committee have worked both collectively and individually to create a public awareness of the nature of the Juvenile and Family Courts as well as advise individual citizens and groups of citizens about some of the problems encountered by the different agencies offering services to some of the youth and families with problems. As everyone is aware, there is only a small percentage of juveniles who become court statistics or delinquents; but as long as there is any one person who exhibits a type of antisocial behaviour, then we, as members of the Family Court Committee, as members of this Municipal Council, as members of a department or agency offering service to the citizens of this community, cannot turn our backs, and say that no problems exist.

Of continuing concern to the Committee has been the establishment of a "Schools Pilot Project" in which an attempt would be made to co-ordinate community services in a particular school catchment area in order to improve the delivery of services to the area, and hopefully to reduce the incidence of known delinquencies, thus creating a more socially acceptable neighbourhood for the citizens living in the area. We are pleased to report that some progress is being made in this direction, and that a Pilot Project has been established on a voluntary basis in a school, and that the results, so far, are most encouraging.

The Municipal Social Service Administrator has attempted to obtain clarification from the Department of Social Welfare in Victoria of the criteria by which Group Living Homes could be provided in this Municipality. It is unfortunate that as both the Department of Social Welfare and the Attorney-General's

Department are involved in the provision of this service they cannot agree between themselves as to which department should assume the initiative in providing the facilities so urgently needed. The Burnaby administrator is to be commended for his persistence in attempting to resolve these difficulties; but to date the Family Court Committee is unaware of the establishment of definite guidelines, and would ask that this Council reaffirm its decision of last year that, "an attempt be made through the appropriate municipal department in conjunction with the Provincial Government to establish Group Living Homes so that there is available within the community a minimum of thirty placements."

During the year, a member of the Family Court Committee acted as a voluntary Probation Officer (section 8 of the B. C. Family and Children's Court Act, 1963) which proved to be a worthwhile undertaking inasmuch as the youth was not confined during the time it takes for a complete assessment of the situation to be made. Magistrate Goulet has recently expressed his concern about the lack of a facility in Burnaby for those youths who do not require incarceration; but who cannot be left on their own, and who require more individualized attention than our Probation staff is able to provide under existing circumstances. He has suggested, and in co-operation with the Committee, is considering the possibility of establishing a system of Voluntary Probation Officers who would be available to assist in a limited way, and thus remove some of the pressures from the Probation staff.

The Committee, and particularly the Chairman, wish to express its appreciation to everyone with whom we have had contact during the past year. The co-operative manner in which information has been made available and suggestions given has made our task more easily accomplished, although not always a pleasant one. We are particularly appreciative of the relationships we have had with the

Municipal Manager, the Police Department, the Judges, the Probation Staff, the Municipal Clerk, and the Social Service Administrator and their respective staffs.

- RECOMMENDATION # 1 - The Municipal Council is requested to have the Treasurer establish a three hundred dollar (\$300.00) budget for the Burnaby Family Court Committee.
- RECOMMENDATION # 2 - The Municipality in co-operation with appropriate departments of the Provincial Government should attempt to establish several more "Group Living Homes" so that there is a minimum of thirty (30) placements available within the Municipality.
- RECOMMENDATION # 3 - Departments of the Municipal government corresponding with Provincial Government Departments or agencies regarding matters that may be considered within the purview of the Family Court Committee should advise the Committee of their deliberations by means of supplying carbon copies of correspondence and memos exchanged.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. L. Beamish

D. A. Copen (Chairman)

D. M. Herd (Justice Liaison)

J. E. B. Holdom (Vice-Chairman)

M. Wells (Mrs. C.) (Secretary)

G. A. Whiten