

10. Re: Day Care Centre (Thouvenot)

Council on August 14, 1972, discussed a day care centre operated by Mrs. R. Thouvenot. According to information presented at the meeting, Mrs. Thouvenot appears to be operating without a licence, and contrary to regulations, providing care for more children than is allowed by law. She has been informed of the violation by employees of the Social Service Department, and on at least one occasion, told that she must reduce the number of children from six to two.

Council expressed concern about the attitude and conduct of Municipal employees who informed Mrs. Thouvenot about the regulations and the need to obtain a Provincial licence. When asked if the centre could be operated without a licence while parents found other day care accommodation for their children, a staff employee allegedly replied, "Why should we allow the children to be accommodated in unlicensed premises."

The Assistant Social Service Administrator investigated the allegation and reports as follows:

"On July 20, 1972, Miss McLean of the Social Service Department visited and found that Mrs. Thouvenot was giving care to four children without a licence. She was told to reduce to two children as quickly as possible.

On August 9, 1972, Miss McLean and Mrs. McDonell visited and found that Mrs. Thouvenot was caring for six children. She was given until August 11, 1972, to reduce the number to two. Even with a licence, the maximum permitted is five including the operator's own pre-school children. On this visit Mrs. Thouvenot was asked to produce records of children's names, birthdates, parents' names and emergency phone numbers. She either could not or would not produce these records. On both visits Mrs. Thouvenot was advised that she could apply for a licence, but she refused.

On August 10, 1972, a grandmother of one of the children, Mrs. L. Buchanan, phoned Miss McLean and Mrs. McDonell. Mrs. Buchanan was hostile and abusive. She also phoned Mr. Gaglardi's office, Mr. Camozzi's office, the Victoria office and Terry Spence of radio station CKNW. We have also received enquiries from Alderman D. Lawson and Mr. G. Dowding, MLA, Burnaby.

On August 11, 1972, an application for a Family Day Care licence was submitted by Mrs. Thouvenot. This has been forwarded to Victoria with a request for early inspection. Until such time that the application is approved, Mrs. Thouvenot will be allowed to care for only the maximum number of two children.

As of this time (August 22, 1972) Mrs. Thouvenot has in her care the maximum number of two children as permitted by the Community Care Facilities Licensing Act. It is therefore assumed that the parents of the other four children have found other suitable day care accommodations.

10. Re: Day Care Centre (Thouvenot) (cont'd)

The regulation in question is not a Municipal regulation, but a Provincial regulation under the Community Care Facilities Act. The Social Service Department does not have the authority to permit more than two children to be accommodated in unlicensed premises. This regulation was designed for the benefit and protection of children.

The problem for the parents would not have arisen if Mrs. Thouvenot had conformed with the regulation and not operated an unlicensed family day care centre. Almost three weeks lapsed between our first and second visits. It appears that the parents were not advised by Mrs. Thouvenot until after our second visit.

It is interesting to note, that to the best of our knowledge, none of the parents involved have requested information about licensed day care facilities from this office.

At all times our staff tries to be polite and understanding in their contact with the public. However, it is difficult to be effective or make a good impression when dealing with someone who is hostile and abusive.

I have every confidence that the staff members who were dealing with this situation at all times practice good public relations.

I trust this clarifies the situation."

This is for the information of Council.