

SDMRO

SOCIETY OF DIRECTORS OF MUNICIPAL RECREATION OF ONTARIO

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Special Newsletter on Government
as related to the
Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario

As a follow up to our regular January Newsletter, which contained an article on correspondence your 1970 and 1971 Executives have had with various Government Departments of Ontario resulting in considerable comments and interest by Society members, the Executive requested your President and Past President to prepare a Special Newsletter on Government concerns as they relate to S.D.M.R.O. members throughout the Province.

The following data will be a summary of correspondence carried out by the undersigned since January 1970, up to and including a letter received February 9th, 1971. Between January 20th, 1970, and March 13th, 1970, excerpts only have been noted, however, we feel that from June 12th, 1970, to the present time all correspondence should be reproduced in full. Comments have also been included with certain pieces of correspondence. We have "divided" the material into the following headings:

1. Concerns with Certification, Grants, Ministers Study Committee, Etc.
 2. Concerns with Status of Youth and Recreation Branch
 3. Miscellaneous Communication with the Government
 4. Other Correspondence
 5. Concern with University Degree Requirements for Government Positions
 6. Summation
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1. Concerns with Certification, Grants, Minister's Study Committee, Etc.

- January 20th, 1970 - Chairman, Provincial Certification Committee, corresponded with the Prime Minister of Ontario, outlining a delay of two years in matters relative to action that should have been taken by that time.
- March 2nd, 1970 - Reply to above letter was received through the Office of the Minister of Education advising that work was well advanced and decisions should be forthcoming "shortly".
- March 13th, 1970 - Letter was received from the Prime Minister of Ontario informing your Executive that the Government was sympathetic to the plight of municipalities in regard to their expenditures for recreation programs. It was further indicated that changes in the regulations, under which grants to municipalities are paid, would be considered for the 1970-71 estimates of the Ontario Department of Education.

November 10th, 1970,

The Honourable John Robarts,

Dear Mr. Robarts:

The Executive of the Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario is becoming increasingly concerned about the lack of progress on a number of matters relative to Government progress in the area of Municipal Recreation.

Mr. G. Kormos, Chairman, Provincial Certification Committee corresponded with your office on January 20th, 1970, outlining a delay of two years in matters relative to action that should have been taken by that time. On March 2nd, 1970, a replay was received by Mr. Kormos from the Office of the Minister of Education advising the work was well advanced and decisions should be forthcoming "shortly" -- it should be noted another eight months have passed, and no further action has been released.

On March 13th, 1970, you wrote a letter to Mr. T. J. Riley, of Etobicoke, who is a member of our Society Executive, which indicated that you were sympathetic to the plight of municipalities in regard to their expenditures for recreation programs. You further indicated that changes in the regulations under which grants to municipalities are paid would be considered for the 1970-71 estimates of the Ontario Department of Education.

We see by the papers that the Department's estimates have now been passed, but we have seen no reference to these legislative changes and wish an explanation from you on this matter. You are aware of the constantly increasing costs to municipalities to provide recreation programs for our citizens. You are also aware that these demands will increase as leisure increases and more programs are required. It is the opinion of our Executive and the opinion of the many municipalities our members represent, that the provincial grants on these municipal recreation programs should be raised to a more realistic level. Your letter to Mr. Riley indicates your acknowledgement of this principle.

The Honourable John Robarts

November 10th, 1970.

We have waited for many months for an announcement of the increase in grants but since no announcement was made after the Department's estimates were passed, we can only assume that no consideration will be given at this time. This actual fact seems to us to be directly opposite to the interpretation of your letter to Mr. Riley.

If municipalities are going to benefit from increased grants in this calendar year, based on municipal costs in 1969, then the time is short to pass the regulation and pay the grants.

I also respectfully point out to you that the failure of these regulations to be passed has delayed the passing of a regulation which provides certificates to municipal recreation personnel under the Department of Education Act. There are some members of this Society who have degrees in recreation, but who cannot obtain a certificate because of the out-dated legislation. They are performing competently in municipalities in Ontario, but these municipalities cannot draw maximum grants because the legislation is not relevant, considering the new training courses for recreation directors.

On June 24th, 1970, we endeavoured, by correspondence, to arrange a meeting with the Minister of Education to discuss the above subjects, and other matters relative to Municipal Recreation. A telephone call from the Minister's office revealed that an immediate meeting would not be possible, but likely arrangements could be completed for same by the end of July. No doubt, many matters have delayed this meeting, as we have not heard further, and possibly following our 1970 Annual Meeting another request will be made.

I may also point out that as President of our Society, many requests from members, recreation committees, etc., are anxiously awaiting public release of information contained in the report of the Government's Special Study Committee on Recreation Services. Many, many people throughout this Province contributed to this work, and are awaiting some action.

On June 12th, 1970, on behalf of the Executive of our Society, I also wrote a letter to your office regarding references to the Speech from the Throne and press reports, indicating the very real possibility of a transfer of the Youth and Recreation Branch from the Ontario Department of Education to the Department of Citizenship. The many concerns expressed in my letter have never been acknowledged.

The Annual Meeting of the Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario takes place at Ceneva Park, November 20th and 21st, 1970, and a reply to this letter prior to that time would be appreciated in order that I may report to the members representing Municipal Recreation in the Province of Ontario.

Yours very truly,

Blayne C. Rennick,
President, S.D.M.R.O.

November 19th, 1970.

Mr. Blayne Rennick,

Dear Blayne:

The Minister and I have discussed your letter to the Prime Minister, a copy of which you sent to Mr. Davis.

We are pleased to inform you that the proposed new regulations have gone to Treasury Board for consideration. This past Wednesday Don Garvie and I appeared with Lorne Johnston, Assistant Deputy Minister, before Treasury Board and a full and complete explanation of the intent and the content of the regulations was provided. We were informed by Treasury Board that they will review the expenditure increases with regard to the fiscal position of the Government and that a decision will be reached in the near future.

The Minister's Study Committee on Recreation Services have now presented their Report to the Minister. Contained in some of the recommendations are matters which require policy and fiscal clearance and these are being examined with a view to implementation where practical. It is proposed that the report will be released in a condensed form so that immediate release of most of the major points can be provided while still providing the opportunity for further study of those points which require more deliberation.

The Minister has asked me to inform you that once a decision by Treasury Board has been reached and once the condensation of the Study Committee's Report has been approved, he is anxious to meet with your Executive on these and other matters of mutual interest.

The Minister has asked me to thank you, the Executive and the membership for your continued interest in the above and related matters and to extend his personal best wishes to the membership.

I hope that this letter will assure you that your letter to Mr. Robarts did receive consideration and that action is being taken as a result of your letter and other submissions. I think you can be sure now that final decisions on these matters will be made in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

R. E. Secord,
Director, Youth and Recreation Branch.

December 1st, 1970,

Mr. Blayne Rennick,

Dear Mr. Rennick:

Thank you for your recent letter. I am sorry I was unable to reply earlier but I had asked for a report on this situation and was temporarily out of the province when the appropriate information became available.

Mr. Blayne Rennick

December 1st, 1970.

The question of increased grants to municipalities for recreational purposes has been reviewed again but the matter has been deferred pending further study. I am sure you can understand the growing demands upon the government's resources. It is not possible for us to meet all of these requests for additional assistance if we are at the same time going to retain reasonable levels of taxation and control the inflationary pressures in our economy.

We are now in the process of reviewing assistance programs to municipalities. This review will include all aspects of provincial-municipal financial relations in conjunction with our commitment to strengthen the machinery of local government and provide greater budgeting autonomy to municipalities.

I would like to add that we are very much aware of the important role that recreation plays in our society and I am sure that this role will become even greater as the time available for leisure activities by many people increases.

My office has now located your letter of June 12th and I regret any inconvenience which may have resulted from a lack of an earlier reply. As you may be aware, no change has been made in the organization of the Youth and Recreation Branch but I was pleased to learn of the opinion of your society on this matter.

I hope that your annual meeting was successful.

Yours very truly,

John P. Robarts.
Prime Minister, Province of Ontario.

COMMENTS - As your President and immediate Past President, we are highly concerned that no word has been received since November 19th regarding the preceding correspondence and promises of action we brought to your attention at the 1970 Annual Meeting.

- - June 24th, 1970 - Through correspondence on this date, an effort was made to arrange a meeting with the Minister of Education to discuss many concerns of our members relative to Municipal Recreation. A telephone call from the Minister's office revealed that an immediate meeting was not possible, but likely arrangements could be completed for same by the end of July. Your Executive did not hear further directly from the Office of the Minister of Education
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December 7th, 1970.

The Honourable William Davis,

Dear Mr. Davis:

Mr. Robert Secord, Director of the Youth and Recreation Branch, informed the

The Honourable William Davis

December 7th, 1970.

Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario of the action taken by your Department in relation to certification, grants, and your study committee on recreation services.

We wish to thank you for your interest and consideration on our behalf. Our executive is looking forward to the opportunity of meeting you concerning the above matters and other mutual concerns.

At our first executive meeting on November 22nd, 1970, the following resolution was passed:

"That all 1970/71 Committee chairmen be advised that any communication with the office of the Minister of Education relative to S.D.M.R.O. business will be handled through the office of the President."

Realizing the depth and scope of your ministry, the executive felt that for co-ordination and continuity of our mutual interests, one definite liaison would be more beneficial to your Department and the Society.

In closing, may I say on behalf of the Executive that we are looking forward to a continuance of the fine co-operation we have received from you and from the Youth and Recreation Branch in the past. We thank you for your efforts on our behalf, and would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours truly,

Robert G. Christie, President,
S.D.M.R.O.

December 16th, 1970.

Mr. Robert G. Christie,

Dear Mr. Christie:

I have your letter of December 7th, 1970, and extend congratulations to you and the new executive of the Society.

I have noted the resolution and I am sure that we will have an opportunity to discuss this and other matters when we meet.

Yours sincerely,

William G. Davis,
Minister of Education.

COMMENTS - Up to this date, we have not yet received any formal commitment from the Minister of Education regarding the proposed meeting.

2. Concern with Status of Youth and Recreation Branch of the Ontario Department of Education

June 12th, 1970.

The Honourable John Roberts,

Dear Mr. Roberts:

Information reaching the Executive members of the Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario through references to the Speech from the Throne and press reports, indicates the very real possibility of a transfer of the Youth and Recreation Branch from the Ontario Department of Education to the Department of Citizenship.

Since we look to the Youth and Recreation Branch for direction and advice about community recreation in Ontario and since membership in this Society is open to municipal recreation directors, we wish to inform you of our concern about this probability.

For many years, members of this Society have been in the forefront in developing relationships with boards of education on the community use of schools but when the consultants of the Youth and Recreation Branch became integrated with the regional offices of the Department of Education, we were able to make even greater inroads with the boards. Now, in the last two years, there are many community school programs being offered in the province, school facilities are being opened for community recreation programs, and better recreation activities are resulting. We feel that if the Branch continues in the Department of Education even greater results can be obtained in this regard.

We also are of the opinion that through the close relationship with the Department of Education we can develop, in cooperation, recreation curricula in the schools of Ontario so that the students can develop a positive philosophy of leisure and of recreation and so that they can develop skills, attitudes and knowledge about recreation activities in their school programs. In this age of increasing leisure, we do not want to have this opportunity withdrawn from us.

In addition, the professional preparation programs in recreation are, for the most part, conducted in Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and it is important that the Branch and the Applied Arts and Technology Branch be in close relationship to one another.

Finally, we who are employed in recreation feel that recreation is an educative process and that Government's function to recreation is now properly located in the Department of Education. We would hope that the staff and the resources of the Youth and Recreation Branch can be expanded to meet the increasing leisure and the increasing demands which are made on their resources, but we would be very much concerned if the Branch were moved from the Department of Education.

Yours very truly,

Blayne C. Rennick,
President, S.D.M.R.O.

COMMENT - For reply to the above letter, please note Mr. Robarts' preceding letter of December 1st, 1970, second last paragraph, which indicates our letter had been "lost" for approximately six (6) months.

December 16th, 1970.

The Honourable John P. Robarts,

Dear Mr. Robarts:

The following resolution was passed at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario.

T. Dojcak - A. Turner

WHEREAS: The Province of Ontario has indicated in the Speech from the Throne, the possible transfer of the Youth and Recreation Branch from the Ontario Department of Education to the Department of Citizenship

AND WHEREAS: the President of the S.D.M.R.O. has sent a letter to the Honourable John Robarts, expressing concern about this probability

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT this membership endorse the retention of the Youth and Recreation Branch under the Department of Education.

CARRIED

Sir, we are deeply concerned over the recent advertisement for Community Development Officers by the Department of Citizenship. I would respectfully point out to you that we have been waiting over two years for increased grants to municipalities plus updating of our legislation, and it would now appear that yet another financial commitment is being made by the Government. We would point out that the Youth and Recreation Branch has consultants in communities at present, and it would appear a duplication of effort is about to occur in the Department of Citizenship.

Thus, Sir, we would appreciate a reply from your office clarifying the roles of the two aforementioned departments, as it would appear they are duplicating efforts in an already complex municipal situation.

Yours very truly,

Robert G. Christie,
President, S.D.M.R.O.

January 21st, 1971,

Mr. Robert G. Christie, .

Dear Mr. Christie:

Thank you for your recent letter concerning the Youth and Recreation Branch. We have no immediate plans to transfer this Branch from the Department of Education and you may be sure that your comments will be considered should this matter be raised in the future.

I am quite confident that the machinery that we have established for inter-departmental liaison co-operation will ensure that there is no conflict or duplication involved in the work of the representatives of the Youth and Recreation Branch of the Department of Education.

Yours very truly,

John R. Robarts,
Prime Minister, Province of Ontario.

COMMENT - Please note, with special attention, paragraph two of the Prime Minister's letter. Also, your President felt there was a greater concern and had an informal talk with the Honourable Robert Welch, Minister of Citizenship. In further discussing same with your Past President, it was suggested we write Mr. Welch's Department regarding areas we felt should be of concern to the S.D.M.R.O.

December 16th, 1970.

Mr. Robert Welch,

Dear Mr. Welch:

At an Executive meeting of the Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario held last weekend, I was asked to correspond with your office relative to certain government actions, or lack of same, pertaining to community recreation in the Province of Ontario.

In 1970, when President of the Society, I corresponded with The Prime Minister of Ontario, June 12th, 1970, making references to the Speech from the Throne and press reports indicating the very real possibility of a transfer of the Youth and Recreation Branch from the Ontario Department of Education to the Department of Citizenship, and we informed Mr. Robarts of our concern about this probability.

Mr. Robert Welch,

December 16th, 1970.

On November 10th, 1970, we again corresponded with the Prime Minister pointing out lack of progress in the area of Municipal Recreation, particularly concerning the unnecessary delay in matters relating the certification procedures of recreation personnel, unrealistic recreation and programme grants to municipalities, the delay in public release of information contained in the report of the Government's Special Study Committee on Recreation Services, and certain other pertinent subjects.

We did receive information on November 19th, 1970, one day prior to the Annual Meeting of the Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario, that proposed new regulations had gone to the Treasury Board for consideration, together with advice that the Minister's Study Committee Report on Recreation Services would be immediately released in condensed form.

The Prime Minister replied to most of our queries on December 1st, 1970, pointing out the following:

- that increased recreation grants to municipalities has been reviewed again; and "it is not possible for us to meet all requests for additional assistance if we are at the same time going to retain reasonable levels of taxation and control the inflationary pressures in our economy".
- that the government is "very much aware of the important role that recreation plays in our society and I am sure that this role will become even greater as the time available for leisure activities by many people increases".
- that "no change has been made in the organization of the Youth and Recreation Branch". However, no comments were given as to future plans, as requested by our Society.

The above information and background of certain areas of 1970 communication between the Government of Ontario and the Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario should suffice for your office to understand a further "frustration" which has now reached the Executive of our Society, and the real purpose they have asked me to correspond with you as Past President, in order that there will be a continuity of dialogue commenced in my term as President from December, 1969, to November, 1970.

You are no doubt aware of various employment opportunities and new positions becoming available in the Department of the Provincial Secretary and Citizenship, and an ad for a Community Development Field Consultant appeared in the news media on approximately December 10th, 1970, copy attached for your ready reference.:

Community Development Field Consultant: \$10,500 - \$12,900

By evaluating present social, economic and educational resources in an assigned area, you will act as consultant for the DEPARTMENT of the PROVINCIAL SECRETARY & CITIZENSHIP in providing assistance to local community organizations on community development programs. You will encourage local self-help projects, advise on the feasibility of proposed plans, act as a liaison between local and government groups, and co-ordinate various projects toward a complete public service.

Mr. Robert Welch

December 16th, 1970

Applicants must have a degree from a university of recognized standing preferably in the social sciences; several years' full time related experience; demonstrated ability to work with government officials, community agencies and special groups; ability to communicate effectively. Applications must be submitted by December 29th, 1970.

File PS 112/70G.

The "job description" in this article certainly appears to relate to the actual aims, objectives, and philosophy of community recreation, and it appears that the Government of Ontario is now going to commence an "overlap" of responsibilities and service to the people of Ontario. May we respectfully request early answers to the following information:

1. How will the Community Development Field Consultant relate to the recreation personnel in Ontario, providing similar services, and to Youth and Recreation Branch personnel?
2. Will the costs to employ the Community Development Field Consultant, and additionally obvious administration costs, take the "place" of increased grants for recreation to municipalities requested for many years? Please note earlier in this letter that increased grants have been delayed to maintain "reasonable levels of taxation". If this is the government policy, why would the most recent increased costs for Community Development Field Consultants take priority over municipal recreation services performing similar work?
3. If you note the minimum qualifications listed, it is obvious the recreation personnel in possession of Permanent "A" and "B" Certificates from the Department of Education are not likely eligible. Our Society Executive would like to know why this is so, as many of the people practicing recreation in Ontario would certainly qualify for the positions of Community Development Field Consultants? They certainly possess, and I quote from the ad, "demonstrated ability to work with government officials, community agencies, and special groups, and ability to communicate effectively". Recreation personnel also, and I again quote from the ad, provide "assistance to local community organizations on community development programmes -- encourage local self-help projects, advise on feasibility of proposed plans, act as liaison between local and government groups, and coordinate various projects". In fact, your ad for this position actually reads similar to many by-laws presently establishing recreation authorities under legislation provided by the Government of Ontario. Why the duplication? Why not locate these consultants, if in fact they are even necessary, for which there is much doubt in the minds of our Executive, with the Youth and Recreation Branch?
4. If monies are available for leisure time work, which is a contradiction to the statements of the Prime Minister, why not put these resources into increased recreation grants for municipalities, and forget about adding a duplication of services and authorities for performing community development work?
5. Where does the present Citizenship Department "activities" leave the Youth and Recreation Branch and their personnel -- in other words, just what is going on?

Mr. Robert Welch

December 16th, 1970

6. Why make monies available for this new programme when, as the Prime Minister stated, our requests for increased grants are before the Treasury Board and, if approved, may place municipalities in a financial position to perform the "new" services without establishing new areas of costly government administration?

Our Executive will again be meeting in early January, and to be sure, one agenda item will be this entire subject. Your reply and comments would be appreciated as, not only do we want to have a report for that meeting, but we do want to bring all municipal recreation committees and recreation personnel throughout Ontario into the "picture". They should all be concerned. The duplication is not necessary and there are qualified people apparently "not eligible" for the newly created position.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters, and in order that I may report to the newly-elected President and Executive at our upcoming meeting, a thorough reply would be appreciated in order that concerned people throughout Ontario may be brought up to date. They should also be advised of your thoughts on the Youth and Recreation Branch being transferred to the jurisdiction of the Department of Citizenship.

Finally, the President and Executive of our Society have asked me to convey an offer to meet with you and discuss the preceding subjects at anytime.

Yours very truly,

Blayne C. Rennick,
Past President, S.D.M.R.O.

COMMENT - From the above correspondence, Mr. Welch invited representatives of your Executive to meet with the Deputy Minister of Citizenship Mr. Warren in Toronto on Tuesday, January 12th, 1971. On the invitation of your President, Mr. L. Branch, President of the Ontario Recreation Society, attended with Messrs. Christie and Rennick. We also invited Mr. T. Axelson, President of the Ontario Municipal Recreation Association, or his representative, but at the last moment they were unable to do so. The following memorandum will summarize the meeting.

January 13th, 1971.

Memorandum

Re: Meeting with Department of Citizenship Representatives on Tuesday, January 12th, 1971

A week has past since Laurie Branch and the undersigned met with Mr. Warren and Mr. Cole of the Department of Citizenship regarding various areas of concern outlined in my letter to them on December 16th, 1970.

- We should realize that the Department of Citizenship actually means business in this regard, and at this late date they seem committed to the program of community developments in these areas.
- We think as recreationists we should immediately follow-up the minimum qualifications for these positions, as I feel the university degrees should not be a criteria for positions with the Community Development Branch of the Department of Citizenship.
- We feel there is a definite conflict in some way between the Youth and Recreation Branch and the Department of Citizenship.
- We should make a report to our membership on our meeting in order that they can advise the various recreation committees throughout Ontario, as I feel all municipal recreation people should be informed of the development of the Department of Citizenship.
- We should encourage the Department of Citizenship to carry on this type of community development in areas throughout Ontario who do not have recreation directors or community people at this time, rather than the metro areas which they seem to be aiming for in the initial stages.
- Despite the fact that the members of the Department of Citizenship with whom we met indicated that the community development field consultants are not a competitive effort of the recreation programs in the province, we feel the community development program, in some areas, is a definite overlap of responsibilities, and this should be pointed out to our members of parliament throughout the province.
- We do not feel they explain properly how the community development field consultant will relate to the Youth and Recreation Branch personnel, and this matter should be pursued.
- The President should request a written answer from Mr. Warren and not just a copy of a speech from Mr. Welch, confirming the various things discussed at our meeting and still requesting answers to the questions in Blayne's letter of December 16th, 1970.
- We should receive the cost of the community development program under the Department of Citizenship in order that we may assess the monies being put into this activity, in relation to the money being set aside for grant purposes for recreation programs in this province.
- We were impressed with the gentlemen that we met with, and the above comments are not in conflict with their statements but we should be more informed and advise our members accordingly. We should follow-up with the civil service people on the qualifications of "A" and "B" Certificates, and through the Department of Education request explanation of Mr. Davis' statement regarding university degrees being a necessity for business and industry, and yet in his own Department of Education, through the Youth and Recreation Branch, they are requesting university degrees and not honouring certificates of his own department.

Memorandum

January 19th, 1971

- We should request the Treasury Board to advise if the program of the Citizenship Department will take priority over our numerous requests for financial increases to grants for municipal recreation programs.
- We should follow-up our relationship with this department by meeting with them on at least one more occasion this year to ascertain just how the program is going, and even suggest to our Training Committee that possibly the community development program be part of our Training Institute either in 1971 or some future time.
- It would be interesting if our Executive organized a joint meeting with representatives of the Youth and Recreation Branch and the Department of Citizenship, and appropriate consultants of their respective departments, and members of our Society, to discuss the entire undertaking. It would be enlightening to find out just how the relationships of these two groups would come about through conversation.

January 13th, 1971.

Mr. Blayne C. Rennick,

Dear Mr. Rennick:

Enclosed is a copy of an address by Mr. Welch in which he announced the formation of the Community Development Branch and described in some detail its objectives and activities. This will help to clarify I am sure, any confusion which may still remain about the role of the new branch and its terms of reference.

I am enclosing too copies of the booklets -- "Discussion Leaders' Guide" and "Planning Conferences for Involvement" which are part of a series currently being developed to assist in the community development process. We have now underway three others, "A Guide to Organizing Community Groups", "Sources of Assistance to Ontario Community Groups", which may also be useful to you. However, with your expressed interest in the community development process as it relates to recreation, we are adding the names of your association and societies to our mailing list.

May I say again that Mr. Warren and myself found our discussions yesterday stimulating and informative. While we may not have been able to fully respond to all of your questions, we do have a better understanding of your concerns and difficulties and hope that you may better appreciate our current position as well.

It was a personal pleasure for us to meet with all of you and we extend our best wishes for your continued success.

Sincerely yours,

David R. Cole,
Director, Community Development Branch.

"An Address By The: Honourable Robert Welch, Q.C.

Minister of Citizenship and Provincial Secretary

TO: Conference for Involvement

St. Lawrence Centre Town Hall,
Toronto, Ontario

Sunday, October 18th, 1970

2:00 p.m.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

First of all I would like to express my personal thanks for your invitation to speak to you this afternoon. My involvement and that of my Department with groups like your own and with similar conferences makes this occasion particularly important to me.

The words "involvement" and "citizen participation" which are used in the title of today's conference describe not only the subject matter for discussion but the very experience and activity in which we find ourselves, and while each may interpret these words and experience these activities differently, we can all acknowledge the emphasis which these terms place on people.

Let us begin with the assumption that people are important beyond all else, and further that they should feel important. Of course we all know that many people have either never felt important, or have lost the self-esteem they once may have had. There are those whose self-concept has been marred through some form of disadvantage, and there are others who, while not appearing to suffer any disadvantages, seem content to let the world go by while they only "observe".

We may assume then that both the disadvantaged and the "observers", in our society are not the creative and contributing people they might be -- and that without some assistance to develop more fully their potential, they can never feel that they are important people.

People are important and we need to help them feel that they are. When we come right down to it, isn't that really what citizen participation is all about? Are we concerned with getting people involved only to get a new playground; to change a zoning by-law; to improve the quality of the environment; get out the vote; to get new sewers or decrease taxes? Of course not. Oh I don't mean that these things are not important. They are.

But even more important is the meaning of the experience of participation in the life of the individual. If he or she is to be a whole person he must have an opportunity to experience involvement for its own intrinsic reward if for no other reason.

Now, I know that none of you has to be convinced of the need for increased involvement of people in determining community goals, or for more participation by individuals in the decision-making processes that affect their lives, or for governments to be responsive and open to the views of the public. This afternoon, instead of restating the case for these important principles in the form of a keynote address, I thought you might be more interested in learning about the wide range of services that my Department is providing to help advance these concepts in a practical way.

Honourable Robert Welch

Sunday, October 18th, 1970

Many of you here are already aware of the citizenship program in my Department, and that during the past two years we have been giving increasing attention to the subject of participation and involvement. Throughout this period, while carefully feeling our way and learning, we have been quietly working out what we feel to be an effective role.

We have now developed to the stage where we feel that this subject deserves greater focus in our Department. With this in mind, I am pleased to be able to announce this afternoon the formation of a new community development branch to be concerned with people and their involvement. Its programs will be directed by Mr. David Cole -- who is well known to many of you -- formerly the Assistant Director of our Citizenship Branch.

The creation of this new Branch will enable us to become even more active, and we hope, increasingly effective, in this field. Its objective will be to encourage and assist individuals and community groups -- to identify the concerns of their own communities; to work together in articulating their own goals and priorities; to choose a course of action; and to set about solving their problems, either directly, or by communicating with government and other agencies, in a co-operative process of development and growth.

As a foundation on which to build this New Branch structure, the community development program already includes the following five activities which I would like to briefly describe for you.

- 1) Staff Assistance
- 2) Community Development Conferences
- 3) Community Development Grants
- 4) Material Assistance
- 5) Community Advice Centre Program

By staff assistance, I refer to the staff services provided by our community development officers. These are knowledgeable and mature individuals, experienced in the use of group process, who as well as having a high degree of personal integrity and skill, are warm, responsive, and pleasant people. By virtue of the demands and expectations involved in their jobs, they have established a wide variety of personal contacts within government, and possess a good understanding of its structure and organization. At the same time, they are familiar with the private sector and are well acquainted with the resources available to citizens within the local community.

Our community development officers provide consultative services to other departments of government, act as liaison for citizens' groups as requested, work directly with citizens to assist in the establishment and organization of neighbourhood associations, help with the preparation of briefs and reports, aid in the planning of meetings and seminars, and provide consultation, advice and referral services.

A second activity designed to facilitate citizen participation is the community development conference program initiated over two years ago, in response to what appeared to be the need for increased communication among citizens, local agencies, and with elected representatives.

These community development conferences have been held in Windsor, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Cornwall, and Brockville. Next week a sixth such conference will be held in Hamilton. You will be interested in knowing that the conferences are planned and organized by a local committee which as much as possible reflects a cross-section of the people in the community.

Honourable Robert Welch

Sunday, October 18th, 1970

The volunteer planning committee undertakes the planning of all aspects of the conference, is assisted in administration by community development staff and with finances by the Department. There is a particular effort made to have participants representative of the total community. These conferences have on all occasions received the support of the host municipality, and on others have been held in co-operation with the Federal government as well.

A third activity which has received a great deal of attention, is our community development grants program. The objective of the \$60,000 fund for this fiscal year is to assist the establishment of citizens' groups concerned with increasing participation in community affairs during their initial developmental stage.

Perhaps I might take just a minute here and briefly describe the criteria used in considering grant requests and the nature of the grants themselves.

While C.O.R.R.A. (Confederation of Residents & Ratepayers Association), M.T.A. (Metro Tenants Association), and O.F.C.A. (Ontario Federation of Citizens' Associations), among others here today have received grants this year, with a relatively small grants fund, we have done little on our own to stimulate applications. Even so however, since April of this year we have received forty-four requests for financial assistance from various types of organizations. Twenty-two of these have been approved to date.

In general, funds are available to new community groups interested in achieving more effective involvement of local people in their own affairs. Membership must be open to anyone and the group should reflect in its membership a cross-section of the people in a defined locality. The group should be able to indicate some degree of stability and have established liaison with other community organizations.

Groups with a single issue orientation or with politically partisan affiliations are not considered for grant assistance.

Grants are made where it can be demonstrated that financial assistance is necessary and in the best interests of the group, where no other source of financial assistance is available, or in co-operation with other funding agents

Although this fund is primarily developmental in nature, provision has been made for established organizations to be assisted with special projects which are felt will help further the Community Development Branch program objectives.

All grants are for one year and are non-recurring.

While this may sound rather restrictive and complex, let me assure you that there can be considerable flexibility within these criteria. I might also point out that while we have certain guidelines with respect to procedures for application and evaluation, these too are quite flexible.

In fact, in many cases, it has been possible to process a grant request in two to three weeks. Our Community Development Officers assist in the preparation of request material if required and may be able to indicate within a few days whether it would appear that a group may qualify for grant assistance. In all cases, we try and determine what other sources of assistance may be available and attempt to elicit the support of other departments or agencies which may have more direct responsibilities in a certain field than ourselves.

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Of considerable importance as well, is the program designed to provide various kinds of material assistance.

This may mean the provision of publication services for promotional, research or report data developed by community groups for their use and distribution. This conference has been assisted in this fashion for example. Or, it may refer to the development of printed or audio-visual aids for use by community organizations.

We have at present for example, a brochure on conference planning and another on discussion groups, and currently underway are such things as, a guide to sources of assistance available to citizens' groups in Ontario, a directory of Ontario community groups, and a handbook on how to organize and establish a neighbourhood association.

We have been developing a library of community development reference materials over the past two years and have now available for use on request one of the best collections of books and periodicals on this subject.

The fifth and last activity in which I believe you will be interested is our Community Advice Centre Program. We are currently involved in a fifty thousand dollar action research project aimed at examining the possible role of the Ontario Government in the establishment and operation of community advice centres.

It has been demonstrated by a number of studies in the past few years that while we may be in fact, one of the best informed societies in the world today, we still do not know enough about those things which are necessary and relevant to the satisfaction of our individual daily basic needs. It would seem to follow that if one is to be truly involved in his community there must be an awareness of the existing facilities and services which are available for his own use and for the use of others.

In response to this apparent general communication problem regarding existing community resources we have entered into agreements with local groups in Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Hamilton, Toronto, Brockville, Orillia, London and St. Catharines. We have deliberately set out to work in partnership with other levels of government and the private sector in investigating different kinds of operations which might provide advice and referral services at the community level.

At the end of this year, after evaluating this group of community-based advice centres, we hope to make some definitive statements about the operation of such centres and the role which the Ontario Government might play, if any, in the dissemination of information for advice and referral purposes at the neighbourhood and community level.

We have been most impressed by the energy, skills, and competence possessed by the majority of community associations. We have seen several instances in which a well organized effort from a neighbourhood association has been successful in achieving in a relatively short time, improvements in such things as recreational facilities, zoning, schools, local communications and special assistance programs, which had long been recognized but had never been acted upon.

These things were not accomplished by the people alone of course. And perhaps this has been our most encouraging observation. That there seems to be today a greater readiness and desire on the part of all sectors in the social service field, for co-operative ventures.

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We think that this indicates an important and significant shift in the past, tradition-oriented approach, or service agencies and organizations -- both public and private.

For many years we were over-specialized and tenaciously guarded our narrowly defined roles and responsibilities. There seems to be a broader perspective today and an increased ability of people to grasp the relationship of individual response programs to the larger network of society.

We believe that increased activity in this field is required if our democratic government is to continue to be effective and responsive; if improvement in quality of life is to be more than a nice idea, and if the myriad of groups, organizations, and associations in our society, are to achieve a more harmonious and creative result.

I hope I have assured you today that the province has accepted its responsibility to encourage and assist people to approach all aspects of their lives including government -- with a sense of critical examination and evaluation. If we can be successful, you and I, in involving the disadvantaged and "observers" I mentioned earlier, this new stance may not only prove to be one of the most significant achievements in this decade, it will serve as an invaluable contribution in revitalizing our whole system of democratic government and politics -- a system whose very foundation is the process of citizen participation itself."

February 2nd, 1971.

Mr. David R. Cole, Director,

Dear Mr. Cole:

I extend to you my congratulations on the two fine booklets produced by your department, and I am looking forward to receiving the rest of the series as they are printed.

We are pleased to have our Society added to your mailing list, and our Secretary will be sending you a membership list of all current members. We would appreciate any listings of meetings you will be having in the province so we may notify our members in that area to attend where possible, thus having our people better understand your role in the community.

We would appreciate it if you would add our members to your already growing list of mailings so we may all be informed to the betterment of the people of Ontario.

Yours truly,

Robert G. Christie,
President, S.D.M.R.O.

February 9th, 1971.

Mr. Robert G. Christie, President,

Dear Mr. Christie:

Thank you for your letter of February 2nd and for your kind remarks concerning our two booklets. I am delighted that they could be of some value to your society.

At the moment we are in the process of updating our mailing lists and as soon as a category has been established for such recreation organizations as your own we will be pleased to add the name of your society to that list.

In the meantime, I am enclosing a copy of Emphasis on People which will give you an idea of the programs immediately under way within our Department.

I look forward to closer contact with your society in the future.

Yours sincerely,

David R. Cole,
Director, Community Development Branch.

Community Development Branch

Community development is a process of assisting individuals and community groups to work together to define their needs, choose a course of action, and set about solving their problems -- either directly or by communicating with the appropriate agencies.

Branch programs include the following activities:

- 1) Staff assistance by trained community development workers who provide information, advice and consultation to individuals, citizens' groups and other government departments.
- 2) The community awareness conference, initiated and sponsored in co-operation with local organizations and other levels of government. These conferences are aimed at improving communications between private citizens and their governments, developing greater people participation in community life, and increasing communication within communities. While organized by broadly based local voluntary planning committees, the Department provides administrative and financial support. Since 1968, six such conferences have been held.
- 3) Community development grants are also given by the Department to assist the establishment and initial development of citizens or neighbourhood groups. The grants, which are relatively small, have been directed mainly to groups that can demonstrate a wide range of community interests, that are not politically partisan, that are without other sources of financial assistance, and whose membership is open and reflects a good cross-section of people in the neighbourhood or community involved. Where requesting groups do not fit the criteria, other appropriate sources of assistance are explored.

Community Development Branch

4) Material assistance of various kinds is provided to community groups. This may include publication services or provision of printed or audio-visual aids. Manuals are currently available on conference planning and discussion groups. Currently underway are such things as: a guide to sources of assistance available to citizens' groups in Ontario; a directory of Ontario community groups, and a handbook on how to organize and establish a neighbourhood association.

5) An experimental community advice centre program has been established this year in response to a demonstrated lack of information regarding existing community resources. In order to examine the possible role of the Ontario Government in establishing and operating such centres, the Department has entered into agreements with local groups in Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Hamilton, Toronto, Orillia, Brockville, London and St. Catharines. This is a co-operative effort in partnership with all levels of government and other organizations.

6) In the field of municipal education, the Department is now an active participant in the Ontario Conference on Local Government which operates courses in municipal affairs, on request, throughout the province. These courses are open to all people who wish to learn more about the structure and operation of their municipal government, and about how they can become involved.

Indian Community Branch

Main objective of this branch is to help Ontario's native peoples achieve an increasing social, economic and cultural development of their communities. Using the community development process of involvement, assistance is provided in three areas:

1) Assisting local people and their leaders to manage their own affairs. Trained workers, knowledgeable about the Indians' cultural heritage and current situation, act as catalysts in the community. They establish relations between the communities and outside agencies and organizations. Their work is primarily aimed at assisting local people and their leaders to manage their own affairs.

2) Project development and financial assistance. Often development focuses around an important local project...a small industry, a cultural event or provision of a needed service. The workers help the community evaluate the project, establish its requirements and secure the needed resources. Where necessary, the Branch provides assistance in the form of unconditional grants. Financial aid is also given to projects operated by Indian Friendship Centres, and to native organizations such as the Union of Ontario Indians.

3) Co-ordination and information. As the only Ontario government agency solely concerned with native people, the Branch acts as an information clearing house, through the Interdepartmental Committee on Indian Affairs and a network of contacts. It is also involved in interdepartmental task forces, whereby project teams respond to specific needs in Indian communities.

February 2nd, 1971.

Mr. R. M. Warren, Deputy Minister of Citizenship,

Dear Mr. Warren:

We have received from Mr. Cole a copy of the Honourable Mr. Welch's address to the Conference for Involvement, and two of your excellent booklets on the community.

Mr. Rennick and I are in the process of writing a supplementary newsletter to our membership on government. We are hoping to include Mr. Welch's address in the section on the Citizenship Department, as well as recent statements made by Mr. Davis and our Prime Minister, Mr. Robarts. We will be including all correspondence with government agencies so that we can bring our total membership up to date on legislation, government roles as they affect our profession, etc.

I would appreciate a letter from you regarding questions one through six of Mr. Rennick's letter to the Honourable Robert Welch dated December 16th, 1970. Thus, we could give the membership direct answers to the points raised.

We have found our discussion of January 12th with you and Mr. Cole to be both informative and of vital interest to our profession, and hope that we may continue our dialogue with you during the year. We have also discussed the possibility of including a period of time at our Annual Training Institute for presentation of the role of "Community Developer" as he relates and affects recreation.

If the above can be given time on our Training Committee's Agenda, we will definitely be contacting your Department for speakers and discussion leaders.

Yours truly,

Robert G. Christie,
President, S.D.M.R.O.

COMMENT - We have not received any further replies to our recent correspondence, but as members of the S.D.M.R.O. you can be sure we will continue to keep you informed of our correspondence in this regard.

3. Miscellaneous Communication with the Government

December 10th, 1970.

Mr. Robert Christie, President,

Dear Sir:

At a "special meeting" of our Zone a call was placed to Mr. R. E. Second in reference to "resolution #4" (enclosed) passed unanimously at the "Society's Annual Meeting".

Mr. Robert Christie

December 10th, 1970

He recommended that a letter on behalf of the Society be forwarded to the Minister of Education, Mr. Wm. Davis by registered letter marked confidential as soon as possible for his action on this matter.

The group here feels that we would like to contact our local MP's if there is no action from the Minister. It would be appreciated, if the Minister's reply could be forwarded to us as soon possible.

Your co-operation in this matter would be sincerely appreciated and be a big step towards improving recreation in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Thomas F. Dickson, Chairman,
Leamington Recreation Commission

December 21st, 1970.

The Honourable William Davis,

Dear Mr. Davis:

Enclosed is a resolution passed at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario.

The Executive, along with the membership, are deeply concerned about this matter. The Youth and Recreation Branch is looked to by municipal recreationalists for both leadership and resources. In many cases, Branch personnel are working with people having no professional recreation staff, and their effectiveness and availability to communities is extremely limited due to a lack of finances, resources and staff. To cite one example, in South Western Ontario, one Branch person is expected to service seven counties and one hundred municipal recreation committees.

I have received mail from a number of recreation people concerned with the aforementioned and would request from you a reply on this matter so that I may forward it on to them.

Yours very truly,

Robert G. Christie,
President, S.D.M.R.O.

January 26th, 1971.

Mr. Robert G. Christie,

Dear Mr. Christie:

Mr. Christie

January 26th, 1971.

We have your letter of December 21st, 1970, attached to which is a copy of the resolution passed at your annual meeting.

We in the Department recognize that some areas of the province are in need of more services than can be provided by the existing staff of the Youth and Recreation Branch. The southwestern area you mention is certainly one of these. We have for some time requested additional staff people for the Branch and these have been granted to some extent. However, the increase in staff has not been consistent with the demands placed upon the Branch resources.

Again, on the matter of operating funds, continuous increases have been granted in the budget of the Branch, but these are not sufficient to permit the Branch to meet all the requests which it receives.

The final decision on matters of complement and budget increase reflects priorities which must be established by the government.

We are most grateful for your views.

Yours sincerely,

William G. Davis,
Minister of Education.

4. Other Correspondence

February 2nd, 1971.

The Honourable Mr. Wells, Minister of Health,

Dear Mr. Wells:

A few years ago, the Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario produced a swimming pool operations manual. This technical manual on the operations of public swimming pools is the only book of its kind in Canada today. Included in the manual are the Ontario regulations made under the Public Health Act in respect to swimming pools. As present, they are the Ontario Regulations 142/65 as amended by Ontario Regulations 450/67.

We understand that your Department is now in the process of changing these regulations, and you will be presenting them to the legislation. Our Society is financed solely by membership fees, and the sale of our swimming pool manual assists us greatly in added revenue. As this manual is available to any community or person operating public swimming pools in Ontario and contains the provincial regulations governing public pools, I wish to enquire from you, sir, the possibility of receiving monetary assistance in updating this manual when provincial regulations are finalized.

The Honourable Mr. Wells

February 2nd, 1971.

Any funds made available to us for this work would be appreciated not only by our Society but also by the people in the field using this manual.

Yours very truly,

Robert G. Christie,
President, S.D.M.R.O.

February 15th, 1971.

Mr. Robert G. Christie, President,

Dear Mr. Christie:

I wish to acknowledge your letter of February 2nd, in which you request financial assistance for your Society in the updating of your swimming pool operations manual. I am advised by my officials that funds are not available within the estimates of the Department of Health to assist your Society in a production of this type.

However, we would like to support you in this very worthwhile endeavour, and, consequently, I am ensuring that an adequate supply of the revised regulations is obtained so that your Society can be provided with as many copies as you may require, free of charge.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas L. Wells, Minister.

February 3rd, 1971.

Mr. John Pearson, Municipal Affairs Department,

Dear John:

Greetings and salutations from the S.D.M.R.O. Naturally, I am writing to you for help and trust you will be able to aid an incumbent President.

The Society has had a Committee studying the five per cent Land Dedication Act over the past two years. Sam Jacks from North Bay has very capably chaired this Committee. However, John, we have now come to the stage of the study where people like planners, parks personnel, Jack Wright, Municipal Affairs, etc., should be involved. Sam has proposed a task force of the above persons to come together for a solid two day meeting to exchange ideas and solidify a recommendation to the government regarding the updating of this legislation.

Mr. John Pearson

February 3rd, 1971

The Society, which is presently operating without the aid of government grants, does not have monies available to host such a meeting. Therefore, my question is this. Would Municipal Affairs sponsor such a meeting? As this act falls under your Department's jurisdiction, and the brief would be directed to Municipal Affairs, sponsorship by you would alleviate the Society's financial burden considerably and assure total co-ordination by all parties concerned.

Looking forward to hearing from you, I remain,

Yours truly,

Robert G. Christie,
President, S.D.M.R.O.

5. Concern over University Degree Requirements for Government Positions

During a recent Leadership Campaign Speech, Mr. Davis hit out at the Canadian "degree syndrome", and we quote hereunder news story in the Toronto Telegram dated January 12th, 1971:

"I am all in favor of young people moving into university and getting a degree, but not for the sake of getting it," he told 200 people at a civic award dinner here.

Many occupations can be filled by young people who have gone through the high-school programs and into community colleges. However, some personnel departments in business and industry, artificially include a BA degree as a qualification, Mr. Davis said.

This causes alienation and frustration and greater efforts must be made to "see that opportunities for people emerging from our educational institutions are meaningful in the true sense of the word."

Your Executive is carrying out correspondence with the Government regarding degrees required for provincial government positions relating to recreation, including the Youth and Recreation Branch. All such correspondence will be made official after our next Executive meeting, and when further communication is received, we will supply the membership with copies of this correspondence. The Executive is highly concerned with correspondence to date as to government opinion of the qualifications of recreation people, and thus they feel same must be followed up immediately.

Comments from members on this subject would be appreciated.

6. Summation

In conclusion, although your President and Past President could duplicate in words the foregoing material with direct comments relative to the frustration and concerns of the entire Executive regarding lack of Government action in this province, and the fact the recreation profession does not have a clear picture of its role as the Government sees it, we prefer to allow the members, to use their own thoughts in perusing the foregoing material.

All members can be sure that we will continue to carry their concerns to the Provincial Government for the betterment of the entire recreation movement.

We would appreciate your comments and guidance as we continue to "fight" for the cause of municipal recreation in the Province of Ontario.

Robert G. Christie,
President, S.D.M.R.O.

Blayne C. Rennick,
Past President, S.D.M.R.O.

February, 1971.