

Grand Jury Plans To Continue Hearing On Juvenile Problems

By Jane Haas

"There's been a lot of comment on the part of people that the judge refuses to hear cases in the (juvenile) court," J. Ernie Balke, county probation officer said yesterday, during a grand jury investigation into the juvenile delinquency problem in this county.

"I've never been refused, although it might have taken a little time. The stop gap has probably been at my office, as no petition (citing a juvenile into court) can be filed until it has been approved by the probation officer," Balke explained when he was called to give testimony.

Balke was the next to the last witness yesterday afternoon in the meeting called by the grand jury, with the audience attending by invitation only. This consisted of representatives of the various service clubs, individuals who have evinced particular interest in the welfare of juveniles, and the press.

At the conclusion of yesterday's testimony, Hayden said the grand jury would review the record of the meeting, as taken down by a shorthand machine operator, pursue some other courses brought up during the day's testimony, and call the grand jury together to discuss the findings again, in a public hearing similar to the one yesterday.

Then, he said, if it is found that recommendations are necessary, such recommendations should be made "toward the betterment of our juvenile procedure."

The meeting was called after a similar one was held several months ago which ended in utter confusion and produced a chaotic aftermath of protests from the men and women who attended it.

The first meeting was called at the request of Superior Court Judge James J. Atteridge. He himself conducted the meeting and propounded the questions.

Yesterday's hearing was held without benefit of any judge, and the written questions, prepared in advance, were directed to the witnesses by Richard L. Hayden, foreman of the jury.

After his questions were completed, members of the grand jury asked questions if they wished, followed by the representatives in the audience.

The meeting was well conducted.

Juvenile officers who testified yesterday were asked to confine the facts and figures they brought with them to the period between January 1, 1952, to April 30, 1953.

Those who testified included James Cunningham, for the Watsonville police department, Sgt. Charles Derby of the Santa Cruz police department, Robert Mondelle Jr., for the sheriff's office, and Don Latta, chief of police of Capitola. Max Caldwell, attendance officer for the Santa Cruz schools, also testified.

Cunningham said that during the given period, he had processed 357 cases at the Watsonville police department. This included formal and informal disposition and of those, 249 were boys and 108 girls, he said. A number of repeaters were included in the compilation, he said.

Of these, 54 boys and eight girls were actually arrested. Going still further, only 28 boys and two girls were held at the detention home.

Asked how many of these cases ever came up in juvenile court, Cunningham replied that he had requested the information from Balke, but probably because the latter was overburdened, had received no answer.

In none of the instances were traffic cases involved, Cunningham said. He said that since Judge Atteridge had allowed Judge Gilbert Perry of the Watsonville municipal court to handle juvenile traffic cases and that it was working out "terrifically."

Cunningham said that Balke was supposed to visit Watsonville each Wednesday when the two of them would go over the cases and discuss the problems involved.

He said that in his own personal opinion, lack of help in the probation office was one of the factors causing some of the trouble, and for this reason there was no opportunity for follow up.

Cunningham said that most parents are willing to help with their children but that in the habitual cases, it usually works out that the parents are unable to cope with them, and have reached stone walls. He said, however, that he felt the juvenile court should be the last resort.

Asked if he felt there was an increase in juvenile delinquency, considering the population in-

crease, she said. "This seems to be the very crux of the entire matter."

Derby, the Santa Cruz officer, answered questions along the same lines as those given to Cunningham.

He said there were a total of 893 cases during the same period. There were 615 boys and 278 girls, of which 140 were referred to juvenile hall for detention. He said these figures included repeaters, too, and that they did not include some 700 traffic cases which have been heard by the lower courts.

Derby said that there were about 20 cases that should have been petitioned into court, which were not.

He said that he felt that those 20 delinquents, by the very fact that they did not receive corrective treatment, were setting a bad example for their associates who realized that the 20 youngsters involved were getting by without punishment.

He told of one delinquent who was about 12 when his record of crimes began in 1949. It ran the course of throwing rocks, burglary, car theft, etc., for dozens of entries.

Derby said the boy had reached juvenile court once, but that he is back in town again, after spending some time with relatives in the east.

He said that in the last five years, the case load had increased. He said one of the reasons for this is because the public is referring many cases to the police department that used to be settled between neighbors.

"However," he said, "for each case we do solve, there is one we miss."

Derby estimated, later, that the increase was about 50 per cent over the last five years.

Derby said that he thinks the situation could be improved locally if he could have the assistant juvenile officer replaced with another man, and obtain the services of a police matron.

He said that the accepted the fact that Balke was very busy, but that until he received additional help, he shouldn't be allowed to transport prisoners.

Deputy Sheriff Robert Mondelle Jr. said that there have been 620 cases during the period referred to. Of these, 523 were boys and 97 girls. He said probably 25 per cent were repeaters.

He said he was granted 12 petitions last year and three so far this year. He said he considered about 50 per cent of the cases minor, and that the case load has increased.

Mondelle said he had asked for but had not received filing equipment, filing cards, etc., in order to keep better records in his office.

He said he felt that if the inferior courts could handle juvenile cases, it would be a big help.

"Judge Atteridge doesn't want to be bothered with minor cases," he said.

Caldwell, who served the schools for four years, said he had resigned. The city schools were not going to replace him, he said, and the principals were going to take over his duties.

He said he had 25-40 cases a year classed as habitual truants.

Don Latta, Capitola police chief, said he handled all of his juvenile problems by contact with the parents. He had 42 in all last year, he said.

Of these 30 were boys and 12 girls. He said he had never had a formal juvenile court hearing, and that he found that taking the parents to task helped the situation all around.

Balke's testimony followed at the conclusion of other witnesses.

He said he is trying to find an assistant probation officer at a salary of \$244 a month. It is difficult, he said.

He agreed with Caldwell that a work program was necessary, and that then juveniles would be able to go out and earn money which they received otherwise from stolen goods.

As the hearing concluded, Mrs. Alice Wilder mentioned two surveys that had been made in this county on the juvenile problem, the first in 1942. Hayden said the grand jury would avail itself of the reports and study them with the other data obtained at the hearing.

Local Scouts On Way To Jamboree

court should be the last resort.

Asked if he felt there was an increase in juvenile delinquency, considering the population increase, he said "no" that he felt they were holding their own.

He said that he felt Watsonville should have additional facilities for working and also needed the approval of temporary holding facilities. He said a probation officer in the southern end of the county would aid the situation a good deal.

Cunningham said that if Judge Atteridge would name Judge Perry as a referee in juvenile matters, it would lessen the load.

It was then that Mrs. Chester Johns, one of the audience, presented a letter from the state judicial council, stating it was permissible for the superior judge to appoint the municipal court judges as referees.

"I can't think why he doesn't

Way To Jamboree

Led by Jamboree Troop Scoutmaster Darrell Cardiff, 35 Santa Cruz area Boy Scouts left yesterday for the national jamboree at the Irvine ranch near Santa Ana.

Official opening date for the Boy Scout Jamboree, to be attended by 50,000 boys from all over the nation, is Friday.

The Santa Cruz district jamboree troop is due back here a week later, July 24.

Assistant Scoutmasters for the local jamboree troop are Newell Maddock and Ralph Reader.

Through the week-long jamboree on the 3000-acre campsite, the boys will consume 600,000 quarts of milk and 175,000 loaves of bread, using six million paper cups and plates, a tabulation shows.