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THE TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM IN AMERICAN SOCIAL WORK

Including an Account of the Origin and Development of The Transportation Agreement

BY

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FOREWORD

THOUGH the principles of social case work are as applicable to transient and homeless clients as they are to resident families and children, the greater difficulties of dealing with the transient and homeless have resulted in comparative neglect of that important field. In 1900 and 1902—to prevent abuses which had become common, and to encourage agencies in the development of higher standards—two committees on transportation were organized, the first by the National Conference of Jewish Charities and the second by a section of the National Conference of Charities and Correction. It is the purpose of this pamphlet to review the work of the latter committee, with brief reference also to the activities of the former. The history was written while the first nationwide program for the care of transient and homeless persons—under the Transient Division of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration—was in operation. That Division had adopted in general the principles for which the two committees have been contending for thirty-five years. However, before the manuscript could be published the program, hailed by social workers as a happy solution of a most difficult problem of relief, was turned over in its entirety to the jurisdiction of the various states, in common with all other forms of direct relief.

If the principles herein set forth provide a new point of departure for further experience by American communities with this problem, this history may become a milestone on the way to a better order for transients.

The Committee on Transportation is indebted to Dr. Brackett for preparing this historical sketch, and to Fred S. Hall for preparing the manuscript for publication.

C. C. CARSTENS, Chairman
Committee on Transportation of Allied National Agencies

January, 1936
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FROM its beginnings history has recorded the wide-spread
habit of moving about by persons and peoples. Sometimes
it was removal from one place to another in order to make life
more livable. Sometimes it became an aimless wandering. The
Children of Israel went long and far to their land of promise. The
Crusades, and later the New Worlds of India and America, lured
the adventurous. The potato famine in Ireland in the nineteenth
century gave to Boston and New York City much influential
Irish-American population. Railroads and finally automobiles
have made wayfaring easier, while crops which mature in succession
in different areas have stimulated migrating groups.

Alongside of this tendency to move or to wander is another—
the tendency to give easy material help to those who ask for it. The
motive may be selfish, even if unconsciously so. Very few have
understood that those who beg for food or shelter usually have
other and greater needs, or have tried to learn what these other
needs are in order to supply them. Most persons have given pit-
tances or nothing at all.

THE NEGLECTED GROUP

These two tendencies have largely produced the homeless and
the transient, as they are known to social work—persons who be-
come needy in communities where they do not definitely belong
according to local law or custom. In a few places only, the world
over, have such persons been treated with sympathy and wisdom,
and these exceptions—until 1933—had made slight impression on
general practice. Three cities on the eastern seaboard may be
cited as illustrations.

In Baltimore, fifty years ago, there were many homeless men
each winter. This was due in part to the city's location on a high-
way between North and South, but chiefly to the great seasonal
industry of oyster-dredging. There was a private Wayfarers'
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Lodge, where a man could work in a woodyard for bed, supper, and breakfast, but which generally limited his stay in some mechanical way because of an insufficient number of beds; a few missions also gave free but inadequate shelter. The police stations were crowded at night with men lying on the floors, to be turned out in the morning to beg for food. The city almshouse, several miles away from the center of the city, accepted hundreds of men, lodging and feeding them chiefly in its cellars. They often came from long distances; one inmate reported himself as from South Africa, where there had been rumors of Baltimore’s hospitality in winter. Many men stayed on until spring warmed up life in the open. The supervisors of the city charities were apparently not concerned with the situation. For transporting homeless persons the mayor received yearly a small appropriation, administered by his secretary, an amiable gentleman of many varying duties. So long as the funds lasted, which was during a part of the year only, he sent off a few persons who especially appealed to his pity, paying their fare usually to some nearby city where they might try their chances, to be relayed farther on. In that process Baltimore followed the custom of local officials the country over.

Since 1875 the city of Boston, through its Overseers of the Poor, had maintained a Wayfarers’ Lodge for homeless men. Bed and some board was provided, but usually for an arbitrarily limited time. There was also a woodyard in which the men were required to work for a few hours. At about the same period the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity maintained several woodyards and a central office for non-residents. In both of these agencies treatment was based on inquiry which aimed to be kindly and helpful—a significant step in advance, but usually proving in practice to be a short step only.

BEFORE THE TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT

For some years there had been correspondence, as to the transportation of needy persons, between officials of New York State and Massachusetts; and in 1880 a conference was held of their Boards of Charities. These states were unique in recognizing the “state poor,” as they were called—dependents who had no local settlement but for whom state responsibility was accepted. Little was accomplished, however, largely because of differences in the settlement laws of the two states. In New York, for example, settlement was gained by residence in a locality for one year and was lost by absence of a year. In Massachusetts at least five years was required to gain or lose settlement. Persons or corporations by whose means paupers had been brought into the state might be compelled to remove them, and railroads and steamboat companies had, in fact, removed considerable numbers—largely from the state almshouse and other institutions.

Such measures, however, touched only the fringe of the problem. It was then rapidly growing as the states of the Middle West became the highways from the East. There were also many wayfarers at harvest times, many were idle during the winters, and marked local or temporary accentuations occurred, caused by such events as the Chicago fire and the hard times of the seventies.

The subject of vagrants and their care was discussed in 1877 at the sessions of the recently organized National Conference of Charities and Correction, reports on tramps being submitted by Rev. Edward Everett Hale of Boston and Prof. Francis Wayland of New Haven. The “reckless generosity of our people” was one cause assigned for the increasing vagrancy, and the two leading remedies suggested were a requirement of work in woodyards or elsewhere in return for help and uniform settlement laws and administration. The problem became acute as a result of the hard times of 1893–1894. The Forum for August, 1893, included a thoughtful article on “Tramps” by Prof. J. J. McCook of Hartford, and Josiah Flynn in the Century for February and March, 1894, told of his experiences as a tramp. In that year also Amos G. Warner’s pathfinding and classic volume, American Charities, was published, containing a chapter on “The Unemployed and the Homeless Poor.”

In 1891 the National Conference of Charities and Correction had enlarged the scope of its “Committee on Immigration” by adding to its title the phrase “and Migration between the States.” At the session in 1892 a notable address was delivered by Rev. Samuel A. Eliot of Denver, later president of the American Unitarian Association, on the migration of invalids in the light of increasing knowledge of climatology. He pointed out the dangers of assisting such persons along the long way westward without adequate provision
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for them on arrival. "The saddest thing," he said, "about the life of a Denver minister is the number of lonely funerals that he is called upon to attend." His chief suggestion was merely more adequate institutional care for consumptives at Denver and other health resorts, but he had lifted attention to a group above tramps and hoboes!

In 1895 and 1896 one of the leading members of the National Conference contended that only a federal law could effectively regulate interstate migration, but apparently no attempt was made to obtain such a law.

By this time it had become evident that the transportation of persons in need presents peculiar difficulties. "Clients may have reached the agency's locality without assistance, or they may have been sent there by an agency elsewhere; they may apply for help as soon as they arrive or not until months or even years afterward; they may ask to be sent to the proposed destination, or such a plan may be proposed by the agency, the clients consenting to it only when assistance locally is refused. Whatever decision is reached—whether to furnish transportation or to accept responsibility for the client where he is—the agencies concerned must consider the welfare of the clients, the resources of the communities concerned, and frequently also the question of legal residence."  

To meet a problem of such complexity a few of the leaders had come to recognize that the principles of social case work should be applied. In caring for needy resident families these principles were then being successfully developed by charity organization societies, and were also being used somewhat in the child welfare field. By means of a practical demonstration made during the hard times of 1893 the Charity Organization Society in Baltimore induced the Mayor's office to use the Society's agents for inquiry and treatment whenever application was made for transportation until the city should have its own skilled workers. In 1896 a committee of the National Conference reported that of 49 charity organization societies replying to a questionnaire, 19 had stated that whenever they sent applicants away they invariably arranged transportation for them through to the places where they presumably belonged. The committee added that if no such destination could be established, the proper course was to do the best that is possible for the applicant where he is. Merely to shift a man, as well as one's responsibility for him, was not, it contended, a solution of the problem.

In 1899 the Associated Charities of Los Angeles sent a significant letter to the leading societies of that type in the country. This circular letter included the following:

It is our very frequent experience that not merely individuals but large, dependent families, often with seriously ill members, are thrown upon us without right or reason, and unjustly to the indigent themselves. We have long since adopted the invariable rule of never knowingly sending or assisting to send any applicant to another community without reliable assurance that the applicant will not become a public charge upon the other community. And we have lately felt compelled to adopt the rule, whenever possible, of immediately returning to the places whence they came all indigents who have been imported to us without maintenance. We are happy to acknowledge that a number of other cities are now faithfully observing the rule of not dumping needy persons upon us!

This action by the Los Angeles society prepared the way for the joint agreements which are next to be described. The first step was taken by Jewish charity workers who in the same year as the Los Angeles circular began the organization of a National Conference of Jewish Charities.

It was then decided that some regulations must be introduced for the handling of the dependent transient that would lessen the waste and hardships caused by the "passing on" and "dumping" policies practiced by many relief societies. Transportation rules were introduced and finally adopted at the first Conference in Chicago in 1900 and since then they have been recognized as a law—a gentlemen's agreement—obeyed and followed by all constituent societies.

As could be expected, the rules did not cover all possible cases and at times proper interpretation was required. For this purpose a Standing Committee on Transportation was appointed. There were only a few cases brought to the attention of the Committee, and in nearly all instances the decisions were cheerfully obeyed and accepted without a protest.  

1 From Transportation Rules and Digest, published by the National Conference of Jewish Social Service, 1929, p. 7.
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Interesting details in this important bit of history are that membership in the Jewish National Conference implied acceptance of the transportation rules; that transportation was not to be furnished without the consent of the society in the place of ultimate destination; that constituent societies might consult the Committee on Transportation as to a proposed course of action before it was taken; and that "residence" in a locality, fixing responsibility for an applicant, depended on a definition of that term in the transportation rules rather than upon legal enactments.

Up to the close of 1933, 41 formal decisions had been made by this Transportation Committee. In the Transportation Rules and Digest of Decisions, published in 1929, it is stated that the decisions show "a gratifying change in the social viewpoint" of the persons concerned with problems of the dependent transient. Most of the earlier disputes related to the allocation of financial responsibility. "The present day dispute concerns itself more with a proper plan for the migratory family itself." The decisions more frequently take the form of advice to the agencies in dispute to make a joint arrangement for carrying out constructive plans. In 1934 the secretary of the National Conference of Jewish Social Service could state his belief that while some exceptions had been taken to decisions of the Committee, in all instances these differences of opinion were eventually adjusted.

THE AGREEMENT AND THE FIRST COMMITTEE, 1902

The other Transportation Agreement, and the one with which this account is primarily concerned, originated at the National Conference of Charities and Correction in 1902, in a session of the Section on Needy Families in Their Homes in which the subject of transportation was discussed. At least two leading members of the Jewish National Conference took part in this discussion, a result of which was the appointment by the Section of a Committee on Transportation of Dependents. Members of the Conference were invited to underwrite the cost of publishing and circulating a set of rules which the Committee was instructed to draft. The Committee consisted of Charles F. Weller, general secretary of the Associated Charities of Washington, D. C., chairman; Professor Frank W. Blackmar, of Kansas University; James L. Dawson, of the Mayor's office, St. Louis; and Max Senior, of the Jewish Charities of Cincinnati.

At the session of the National Conference in 1903 much interest was shown in the subject of tramps and vagrants, and a bibliography was offered on methods of dealing with them. The following were among the points emphasized. Tell the whole truth, one speaker urged, about Sunday breakfasts, curbside sociology, and "similar debauchery of generous impulse." And he suggested that responsibility for wanderers be placed upon the state governments. While one speaker praised the methods of the Boston Wayfarers' Lodge, another—on the staff of the Chicago Bureau of Charities—threw down the challenge that municipal lodging houses did not solve the problem. She urged that the railroads be induced to stop carrying wanderers, that cheap lodging places be watched, that all agencies interested in the problem should co-operate, and above all that, in place of existing mass methods, the methods of individual treatment should be applied to the homeless and wanderers.

At the same Conference the Committee on Transportation of Dependents circulated its proposed rules for criticism, and in January of the following year they were issued in printed form. The booklet, which was entitled a Handbook Concerning the Issuance of Free Transportation and Charity Rates, gave the principles, rules, and a telegraphic code. It had been stipulated that as soon as 100 agencies or public officials had agreed to the rules, they would be held to be adopted and the signers would be bound to observe them. The first 139 signers represented public and private agencies of many kinds. The plan was well started!

This Handbook of 1904 expressed the belief that observance of its rules would eliminate or greatly diminish the pauperization and cruel humiliation and hardships which frequently follow the granting of free transportation. It was asserted that applicants were often being sent to places in which no provision for them existed and that charitable resources were thereby wasted and communities to which they were sent and their agencies were unjustly burdened.

The rules required that before transportation should be granted the organization or official having the matter under consideration must be satisfied, by adequate and reliable evidence, that the applicant is unable to pay the regular fare; that his condition and
prospects will be substantially improved by sending him to the place in question; that he will have such resources for maintenance at the place of destination as will prevent him “from dependence on public charity”; that he “has a legal residence” at the destination or is “a proper charge upon the charity of that community.”

Important details of method included the following: The statements of an applicant are to be substantiated by definite, reliable evidence. When this is lacking, he shall be cared for, if necessary, until the needed testimony is secured. Transportation shall always be adequate, and shall be provided for the applicant through to his ultimate destination. If he has been passed along to an intermediate place without means for reaching his destination, he shall be given no further transportation by a signer of the Agreement without communicating with the agency which has sent him to the intermediate place, that agency being asked to provide means for sending him to his destination or back to the starting point. “In no case shall he be ‘passed along’ to another community which has no adequate responsibility for him.” Records of transportation cases shall be kept and made available for workers in other cities. In addition to these mandatory rules certain recommendations were added. Before a person is given transportation a report on conditions concerning him at the destination should be secured from an appropriate charitable organization or official there. If he is sent without the approval of such an agency and becomes “dependent on public charity within nine months after his arrival,” then those who have sent him should be asked to provide for his return to the sending place or for his care at the destination. Provision was also made for appeal to appropriate state officials, or to the secretary of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, if disagreement should arise in any case as to the facts or interpretation of the rules. If a person should be transported in violation of any of the rules, as decided after such an appeal, the agency which sent him should be asked to provide the means for “proper disposal of the case.”

Without question much good resulted at once from this Agreement. The third edition of the Handbook, published in 1910, recorded 338 signatory agencies. Nevertheless such incidents as the following were reported to the Committee:

The mayor of a large midwestern town stated “with a show of honest pride” that, although he had no money officially provided for charity, whenever paupers got off the train there was always money ready to pay their way to the next place. “We never let the sun go down on them in our city.” Again, a man of thirty-eight, whose home was in Wisconsin city, went to St. Louis to work. He became paralyzed there, entered the city hospital, and partly recovered. But because he was unable to support himself he was sent by the city officials to Chicago, and was there given transportation by the county agent to Milwaukee. Picked up by the police of that city he reached the office of public relief, where, happily, a socially minded official communicated with the Superintendent of Poor in the man’s home city, to which he was later sent.

The agent of a private society in “X,” a large eastern city, “was quite impressed” by a young woman, with three attractive little children, who asked for transportation to New York where, she said, work as a designer of costumes awaited her. She had lost her railroad ticket. Inquiries showed, however, that she was untruthful, that near relatives had no use for her, that societies in three other cities had had dealings with her, one of them for seven years. Another society knew of a local warrant for her arrest for defrauding. It was also discovered that during her stay of about a month in “X” she had “worked” at least two Episcopal churches, two Roman Catholic convents, several homes, and one hotel. A prominent city mission there finally listened to her story and sent her to New York, although told that the society first mentioned was dealing with her. She was back in “X” in three days. The children, who were believed to be illegitimate and were her “stock in trade,” were finally taken from her by court action and put in charge of the Society to Protect Children from Cruelty. The woman went on her way.

One other story, taken from the same source, illustrates treatment of quite a different kind.

An old and ill man turned up in “Y,” a middle western city, and asked for transportation to his three sons on the Pacific coast. No addresses could be given for them, however, or for a daughter who he said lived in Chicago; but he knew the address of a niece in California. Correspondence brought word that she and her husband would give the old uncle a home, but could not provide the transportation. He was accordingly sent on by the socially minded agent of the Associated Charities in “Y” and word soon came back: “My uncle arrived safely and we have him under the doctor’s care, who says his case is a serious one. I wish to thank you a thousand times for your kindness to one in a strange land.”
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THE SECOND COMMITTEE, 1910

The continuance on a large scale of practices of the first type here illustrated indicated that the Transportation Agreement, to be effective, needed an administrative agency behind it. The committee which drafted the original rules and obtained the earliest signatures had gone out of existence, and no agency had responsibility for the movement it had inaugurated. In 1910, to meet this need, Francis H. McLean proposed to the Executive Committee of the National Conference that it establish a permanent Committee on Transportation, its members to be appointed annually. The proposal was adopted, the first appointees being Ernest P. Bicknell, national director of the American Red Cross; Jeffrey R. Brackett, a member of the Massachusetts State Board of Charity and director of the Boston School of Social Work; and Amos W. Butler, secretary of the Indiana Board of State Charities. The secretary of the National Conference, Alexander Johnson, was ex-officio secretary of the Committee. All these persons had had unusual experience in social work, public and private, and all had been presidents of the National Conference.

This Committee was authorized to interpret the rules through decisions in cases presented to it, and to suggest amendments or additions. For the educational activities which were greatly needed in connection with the Agreement, and for conducting arrangements when appeals were made in disputed cases, the Committee secured the help of the Russell Sage Foundation, and its Charity Organization Department was appointed as the agent of the Committee. That Department, in turn, designated Margaret F. Byington, and after 1911, Fred S. Hall, to have charge of this work.

With responsibility thus definitely assigned, the movement developed new strength. In 1911 a pamphlet was published, entitled Passing On as a Method of Charitable Relief. Its content emphasized the life-saving, constructive elements of real help for the persons sent, rather than the saving of trouble and money for the senders. The compilers were fortunately able to draw upon the rich resources which Mrs. Alice W. Sollenberger had accumulated in four years' experiences among homeless men in Chicago—experiences published by the Russell Sage Foundation in 1911 under the title of One Thousand Homeless Men. That volume covered all important phases of the transportation problem, describing adventurous children who ran away from good homes, as well as confirmed vagrants.

THE THIRD COMMITTEE, 1920

The Committee on Transportation, organized in 1910, carried on the work for ten years. During that period strong national agencies had developed in each of the larger fields in which the transportation problem was faced. Since it seemed more appropriate that these agencies, rather than the National Conference and an endowed foundation, should be responsible for the movement, the administration of the Agreement passed in 1920 into the hands of a new body—the Committee on Transportation of Allied National Agencies. The four original agencies were the American Association for Organizing Family Social Work (now Family Welfare Association of America); Child Welfare League of America; National Association of Travelers Aid Societies (now National Association for Travelers Aid and Transient Service); and the National Tuberculosis Association. Three other national agencies have been added subsequently—the National Council of the Church Mission of Help, in 1925; the Salvation Army, in 1931; and the American Public Welfare Association, in 1932. Each agency named one member of the Committee, and these chose additional members at large. Expenses were covered by dues of $100 a year or less, paid by each agency. The Committee designated three of its members as a “Decisions Committee” to consider disputed cases which might be submitted.

Though the American National Red Cross—for reasons connected with its form of organization—has never become a member of the Committee, its official adoption of the principles of the Agreement, and its embodiment of them in the Home Service Manual prepared for the use of local units of Civilian Relief during the World War, were very important factors in the promotion of case work procedure in dealing with homeless persons in this country. The organization has subsequently reiterated its position in relation to the problems presented by ex-service men.
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In 1923 an important rule was adopted, specifying that signatures to the Agreement should be renewed yearly. The object was to keep before the more or less changing management of enrolled agencies the obligation which had been assumed, and to promote an understanding of the Agreement generally. When this rule took effect the number of signers was reduced by nearly one half. An increase soon followed, however, and by the close of 1927, 685 agencies were enrolled in the United States and 23 in Canada. In 1933 the number was 1,099.

On several occasions since their first formulation—particularly in 1925–1926 and in 1931—the transportation rules have been modified for the sake of simplification or in order to bring them into harmony with changes in general social case work standards. In each revision there was less that was mandatory or that dwelt on the rights of the agencies concerned. An important addition, which came with the increasing use of the automobile, was that the rules applied to transportation of all kinds—whatever the type of conveyance.¹

The Committee has always refused to render decision in a case before transportation has been furnished. In this particular its policy differs from that of the corresponding Committee of the National Conference of Jewish Social Service, for the latter will consider cases in which transportation is merely contemplated, the agency wishing assurance that the proposed action is not in violation of the rules. Reasons for the first-named Committee’s refusal to give advisory opinions have been the necessarily slow procedure involved in obtaining a decision by correspondence from a committee of three members and the probability that the situation might change in particulars of importance while the case was under consideration. It was felt, moreover, that each agency should think questions through, rather than easily turn to others to do so.

The two transportation committees have always worked in cooperation. For example, when the first Handbook was issued by the Committee of the National Conference of Charities and Correction in 1904, the Jewish National Conference urged its own members to use the telegraphic code which that Handbook con-

¹ See “Gasoline Gypsies” in the Survey, December 1, 1924.

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ained. To obtain copies many members of the Jewish Conference signed the other Agreement. In 1928 a joint committee was appointed to consider the relations of the two bodies and the possibility of combining their work. It appeared, however, that in several particulars varying procedures and rules had become established in the two groups, and it was felt that there was no advantage in disturbing these, particularly since transportation disputes rarely arose in which the agencies concerned were constituents of the respective committees.

CHARITY RATES AND SETTLEMENT LAWS

In the early history of the Committee on Transportation of Allied National Agencies the obtaining of “charity rates” for clients was used as one means to induce agencies to sign the Agreement. Several of the passenger associations of the country, representing the railroads of their respective areas, consented to establish the rule that their ticket agents would grant the desired rates only to social agencies which had signed the Transportation Agreement. The arrangement undoubtedly increased the number of signers, but agencies which enrolled solely for that reason had little understanding of the meaning of the Agreement, as was demonstrated subsequently in correspondence with certain of them when violations of the rules had been charged. These railroad agreements were terminated when the United States entered the World War and the United States Railroad Administration was set up. Though the Committee made no efforts after the War to revive them, on the ground that such a step would be unwise, an unfortunate identification of “charity rates” with the Transportation Agreement still persists in certain parts of the country.¹

Throughout the Committee’s entire history, in spite of its aim to place emphasis in transportation cases on the welfare of the client rather than on his legal residence, the problem of settlement laws has necessarily had consideration. Reference has already been made to the early proposal for a federal settlement law. In 1930 the American Public Welfare Association attacked the problem by the appointment of a Committee on Uniform Settlement Laws and the Transfer of Dependents. In its first report, in 1931, ¹ See Appendix Two (p. 36): “Charity Rate Transportation.”
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the Committee made the following reference to the operation of the Transportation Agreement:

The transfer of dependents has always been one of the most difficult problems with which the public welfare official has had to contend. Such progress as has been made has been largely due to the splendid work of the Committee on Transportation of Allied National Agencies. The so-called “passing on” of dependents has been very much reduced since this Committee began to function.

The Committee proposed “that for interstate relations at least, legal settlement should be set aside as a basis of relief or transportation, and decisions in individual cases be governed instead by the welfare of the clients, the proper responsibility of the states concerned being determined by mutual agreements. By the proposed plan states were urged to give authority to their state welfare officials to enter into the suggested agreements, following the precedent of those already existing between a few state departments in relation to the dependent insane. Local public welfare officials, it was recommended, should be forbidden by law to send dependents to other states without the approval of the proper state officials of their own state.”

This noteworthy recommendation was adopted by the Association.

In the August, 1934, issue of the Survey, an article by an official of the New York State Department of Social Welfare uses a case story effectively to indicate how a spirit of reciprocity between the states is necessary before uniform laws can be agreed upon.

The family was named Jones—a father, mother, and two children. The father had been unsuccessful in business and had closed his shop in California. New York City, where the wife had relatives, seemed a possibility for a fresh start, so the four trekked from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic. But after ten months of discouragement the father hitch-hiked back to California, to try his luck again in the place where he was known. He obtained a business start but could not afford the transcontinental fares for the others. Accordingly, fifteen months after they had left California, the wife and children applied to the Division of State Aid in New York State, asking to be returned to their home. Settlement in California is lost by absence of one year, and there was some uncertainty as to how long

1 Fred S. Hall in “Transportation of Clients.” (Social Work Year Book, Russell Sage Foundation, 1933, p. 509.)

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the man had been away. “The human thing to do,” the article explains, “was to reunite the family, and this was done at New York’s expense and with the consent of the California authorities. In fact, California stretched a point here when she could have stood upon a technicality and refused to receive them.”

In the New York State Department of Social Welfare, it appears, an elastic policy prevails. Not all persons are removed to the places where they have settlement. A thoughtfully made decision may require weeks, with inquiries directed to public officials in the proposed destination; and pending such a decision, needed relief and care are given in the place where the application has been made.

CONTRASTING ATTITUDES OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES

Few public officials have ever signed the Transportation Agreement. In 1916, as part of a special effort to enlist their support, a leaflet was published entitled What Public Officials Say Who Have Tried the Transportation Agreement. This included testimony as to the value of the Agreement from five state and city officials, and called attention to the then recent action taken by a conference of over one hundred mayors of southern cities or their representatives. The mayor of Jacksonville, Fla., had called the conference to consider if means could not be devised to stop the purposeless passing on of transients—a practice which at that time seemed very serious in the South. After full discussion it had been voted to advise the use of the Agreement in all the cities represented. As a result of an educational campaign, in which this leaflet was widely circulated, more signatures to the Agreement were obtained from public agencies; and yet, ten years later, only 11 public officials were enrolled out of a total of 648 signers. In 1933 they were but 64 out of a total of 1,099.1 The fact that so few public welfare officials have signed the Agreement may be ascribed in part to the frequent changes of personnel in public offices—as compared with the private agencies whose executives are less subject to change and are themselves under the direction of fairly stable boards of directors—and

1 The other groups were as follows: family welfare societies, 343; Salvation Army branches, 266; travelers aid societies, 116; children’s organizations, 69; tuberculosis associations, 46; American Red Cross chapters, 30; Church Missions of Help, 11; unclassified, 154.
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in part also to the fact that until 1930 there was no national association of public welfare officials. More important at first, however, was the necessarily cautious attitude of public officers. There was much force in their contention that they had no legal right to agree to a course of action which in individual cases might be in violation of statutory requirements. Therefore the rules had been amended very early by the addition of a proviso to the effect that public officials were not bound by the Agreement at any points which might be found to conflict with procedures required by the settlement laws of their states. This proviso seems to have had little influence in obtaining signatures to the Agreement. However, some public officers, even where there was possibly question as to the legality of their course, had the courage and kindness to decide in accordance with the welfare of the clients, as ascertained by careful inquiry.

In contrast to the public officials, most private case working agencies not only signed the Agreement but used their influence to induce others to sign. For many years the Family Welfare Association of America and the Child Welfare League of America made signing of the Agreement by local agencies one of their membership requirements. Similar educational efforts have been made by other private agencies. For example, only 16 of the local branches of the Salvation Army were signers of the Agreement when its national office joined the Committee in 1931, but as a result of efforts by that office the number of branches enrolled was increased to 198 in the next year. Articles of an educational nature have been published in the Family; in 1925 a paper on intelligent transportation was presented at the National Conference of Social Work by Ruth Hill, then the secretary of the Committee; and at the session in 1926 Dr. Brackett, of the Decisions Committee, explained the operation of the Agreement.


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CASE DECISIONS

In the twenty-one years since the Decisions Committee was appointed 21 decisions have been rendered. Each of these represented a case in which a signatory agency complained against another, alleging that the latter had violated a specified transportation rule. Since the sending agency denied any violation, each decision was in effect an interpretation of the rules.

The largest number of decisions related directly or indirectly to the term "proper charge." The question first arose in a case in which the client had legal settlement nowhere.

A wandering peddler, elderly and badly crippled, turned up in a town to be called S. Though he had legal residence nowhere he had for years spent more time in a city called D than in any other one place. But the state in which that city was situated had no law of settlement. A charitable agency in the city, being consulted by S, advised against sending the man on, although it had helped him at least four times during a period of about eleven years. He had been away for a year, and in the absence of a settlement law, the poor-house officials had ruled that they would not receive persons in their institution who had been absent for more than that period. Nevertheless, the society in S sent the man to D, believing that he was "a proper charge upon the charity" of that city. The Committee sustained that course, holding that the controlling question was which community was most responsible for the man because of previous dealings with him. That place evidently was D.

A later case was similar in that legal residence for the family could be established in neither of the cities concerned, but the problem was much more difficult because the family's connections in the two cities concerned seemed quite evenly balanced.

An agency in a Pacific coast city combined the work of public welfare and private charity. By advice of the district attorney in the city that they had no residence there, it sent a man and wife and three children to a city on the Atlantic seaboard. They had some ties in both cities, but the public welfare authority in the Atlantic city declared that the family had no residence there. Because the weight of evidence as to "proper charge" seemed to be on the side of the western city, the agency there was held to have violated the rules in sending the family away.

Decision on this point in another case was difficult for a quite different reason. Though the client had legal residence in one
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state, he was held to be a "proper charge" upon a community in another state.

In 1916 a family was cared for, more or less, for over a year in a Pacific coast city, and had thus obtained a legal residence there. The family had come from a middle western city in which the man had lived for forty years previously, having received public relief there during several recent winters. The coast city society sent the family to its former home, contending that although it no longer had legal settlement there, it was a "proper charge" upon the charity of that community. The Committee supported that contention, basing its decision on the broad ground that the middle western community was the one more responsible for the family because of previous dealings with its members.

In another decision, in 1931, it was pointed out that because of the proviso already referred to public officials are not subject to this obligation to give precedence to "proper charge" where it conflicts with legal settlement.

Increasingly during the Committee's history emphasis has been laid upon the spirit rather than the letter of the Agreement. This was strikingly shown in a decision rendered in 1926. The Committee concluded that there had been no violation of the exact requirements of the rules, but that both agencies concerned had failed to observe the spirit of these rules. They had not used thorough social case work methods in their dealings with the client, nor had an agency in a third city which had been involved. These three agencies, the Committee pointed out, all had information which by careful inquiry might have been made more available than it was for the purpose of treatment. The same emphasis appeared in a decision, rendered in 1919, in which it was held that under certain circumstances a signatory agency is responsible for transportation which it has not itself furnished.

In a small New England city the secretary of the Associated Charities was also assistant to the county commissioners. The society was a signer of the Transportation Agreement but the county commissioners were not. A man with his family, who had applied to the commissioners for help, was sent by them to New York City, where he soon came under the care of a private society. It complained that there had been no verification of

1 Supra, p. 32.
2 This case story is told in the Family for February, 1926, under the title "Transportation a Case Work Problem."

the man's statements in the New England city, and that the Associated Charities there had violated the rule which required such verification. The secretary of the latter replied that the society "had nothing to do" with the transportation. The Committee's decision was that the society was a party to the action since its secretary had knowledge of the granting of transportation (it had written to the New York society concerning the matter) and had apparently acquiesced in the plan.

In 1920 a case was decided in which the client paid for his railroad ticket to the place of destination, the agency's part being merely to assist him by obtaining the reduced rate which the railroad would not grant on the man's personal application. On account of that assistance the agency was held to be responsible for the transportation and to have violated the Agreement.

In most of the cases submitted to the Committee the contending agencies seemed more concerned to obtain an interpretation of their responsibilities under the rules than to receive or avoid reimbursement for the expenditures involved. In the following quite exceptional case, rendered in 1914, when the Committee's ruling in the matter of reimbursement was not accepted by the offending society its name was stricken from the published list of signers.

An unmarried woman in advanced pregnancy was sent by an Associated Charities to a nearby city to be cared for in its Crittenden Home. The Associated Charities had wired to several other places where the woman claimed to be known but the persons addressed could not be found. It then sent the woman to the second city without communicating with any persons or agencies there to learn if she would be cared for, accepting the woman's unverified statement that she had just come from that city, her fare having been paid by a policeman who collected money for her in the station. The Associated Charities in the second city, because the Crittenden Home had no room for the woman, incurred an expense of $8.69 in getting her into a similar home in a third city. The Committee held that the sending society violated the rules in three particulars: it had obtained no reliable evidence that the woman's condition would be improved by the transportation or that she would have resources for maintenance at the place of destination; there had been no verification of her statements; and no inquiry had been made of the second Associated Charities, which was also a signer of the Agreement.

In a few early cases controversy related to the rule which required a sending organization to communicate with a signatory
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agency at the proposed destination, if there was such an agency there. The rule on this point was not clear in its original form. It was, however, interpreted by the Committee—and was later modified in accordance with that interpretation—to require "reasonable effort" to be made to obtain a report, from an appropriate agency at the destination, as to the necessary facts in the case.

RESULTS OF THE PRESENT DEPRESSION

By 1933 there were significant changes in the conditions which the Committee had previously faced. The continued and unparalleled economic depression had increased the number of homeless and wandering persons. Thus, in New York City in 1931 breadlines, soup-kitchens, and the like had sprung up overnight.

These were run by various individuals, churches, and organizations, all anxious to help the situation, but each determined to do it in his own way... The "breadline urge" is a most difficult one to stifle... There was an enormous increase in actual numbers of homeless men... whatever the causative factors underlying their homelessness, whatever their symptoms... It may be almost impossible during a crisis to work out a community program for the homeless, to individualize treatment or to press a case work plan; but it is not necessary to go to the other extreme—to accept breadlines as a necessary evil, to allow the community to be swamped by non-residents, and to set up unnecessary organizations to duplicate the work done by existing agencies.1

By 1934, however, conditions had so improved that a very able student of current relief practices was able to write that breadlines and soup-kitchens—the hasty expressions of the emotional—had already largely disappeared. But she had to report as follows in regard to much of the country:

The custom of "passing on" the transient to the next town or county was well rooted among public relief departments... In the early years of the depression, hundreds of thousands of people, old and young, mostly men afoot, but sometimes with women and children in broken-down cars, were to be found wearily shuttling back and forth across the land, traveling the road to nowhere. One southern city permitted a village of shacks, where families might winter under the most forlorn and unsanitary conditions, on land so subject to floods that the settlement was twice

1 G. M. Hallwachs, superintendent of the Joint Application Bureau, in the Family, February, 1931.

swept away... More transients passed through one southwestern town in a month than the entire population of the town. So great was the influx of homeless wanderers into the states which had advertised themselves as winter resorts that Florida posted armed guards at its Georgia borders to turn them back... At one time, the police of Detroit examined everyone on incoming trains to determine whether he had a legitimate reason for coming to the city and money enough to maintain himself while there.

And then this writer could add, happily, that California had established 27 forestry camps in which several thousand wanderers were provided with work;... that Congress had created a Federal Transient Division in the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and had set up camps and shelters for the homeless, the country over.1

In the establishment of the Federal Transient Division, with its country-wide program, the Committee on Transportation and its constituent agencies were indirectly an important factor. In 1931 the Family Welfare Association of America published Community Planning for Homeless Men and Boys, a study by Robert S. Wilson. Another study made under the auspices of the National Association for Travelers Aid and Transient Service was entitled A Community Plan for Service to Transients. It had been made in 1931 at the request of the President's Organization on Unemployment Relief and was published by the United States Government. In 1932 also an important specialized agency was organized in this field by the National Social Work Council. It was known as the Committee on Care of Transient and Homeless and its object was "to explore the size and content of the problem, to plan experiments for its handling and to bring together more closely the agencies working in the field."2 On this new Committee were five members of the Committee on Transportation. "When the Act was prepared in July, 1933, creating the Federal Emergency Relief Administration the Committee [on Care of Transient and Homeless] was influential in having a provision included that special funds were to be designated for the care of the transient and home-

1 Joanna C. Colcord in the Annals, November, 1934.
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less, and later, at the request of the Federal Relief Administrator, the Committee made available to him its accumulated experience and material.1

The creation of the Federal Transient Division greatly heartened all who had been thoughtfully concerned with homeless and wandering folk. The old practice of passing on was practically discontinued, and at strategic points throughout the country nearly 300 centers for treatment and care of transients were established. With some rather confusing exceptions, however, the Division, by its definition of "transients," limited its responsibility to persons who had been less than one year in the states where they applied. Obviously, therefore, only a part of the problem was attacked. The most comprehensive appraisal so far made of the work is contained in a report entitled The Federal Transient Program—An Evaluative Survey, published in 1934, by the Committee on Care of Transient and Homeless. The Committee's conclusion is that, although the program leaves much room for improvement, it has been "one of the greatest and most significant achievements in the field of social work in recent years." Permanent national direction is needed, in the opinion of the Committee, for without it the country would soon revert to the old conditions.2

To an important degree these gratifying changes must be ascribed to the educational efforts of the Committee on Transportation, the corresponding Jewish Committee, and the conferences and schools of social work, and to the higher standards which have thus been developed among the private agencies of the country during the years since this particular movement began. With the extension of these standards to public agencies the Committee on Transportation finds that to a large extent it seems to have successfully completed its work. If all relief to transients is to be controlled by the Federal Division, operating generally in accordance with the principles of the Transportation Agreement, the necessity for that Agreement will have apparently passed, in so far as interstate clients are concerned, provided that the federal activity is ade-

1 Dr. Ellen C. Potter in "Transient and Homeless Persons," supra cit., p. 592.
2 The FERA order of September 6, 1935, was issued after the manuscript of this pamphlet had been prepared. That amazing order announced that federal funds for transient applicants would not be available after September 20th, and that the entire transient relief program would be liquidated on November 1st. Though the order has already been modified and there are indications at this writing (October 15, 1935) that further modifications will be made, the fact that the order could have been issued indicates that the essential federal nature of any program for transients in the United States has not been realized by the Administration at Washington.

1 Ibid., p. 499.
2 See the paper by Miss Colcord referred to on page 27, The Jewish Transient, a study made in 1932 for the Bureau of Social Research by Dr. Emma S. Schreiber, and The Federal Transient Program, 1935, published by the Committee on Care of Transient and Homeless.
APPENDIX ONE
TRANSPORTATION RULES, INTERPRETATIONS, AND PROCEDURE
(AS IN FORCE JANUARY 1, 1933)

RULES

Before any transportation shall be provided, the agency considering it shall be satisfied by adequate and reliable evidence that:

1. The prospects of the applicant in opportunities for normal living are not decreased by sending him to the proposed destination.

2. The applicant
   a. Will have such resources for maintenance at the point of destination as will save him from becoming dependent on relief from an agency, public or private, or
   b. Is a proper charge upon the agencies there, or
   c. Has legal residence there.

3. Reasonable effort has been made to obtain from an appropriate agency at the proposed destination a report as to the facts included in Rules 1 and 2.

4. Provision has been made for the applicant through to the ultimate destination which has been determined by the sender.

INTERPRETATIONS

1. The word “agency” as used in the foregoing paragraphs may mean a public department or official as well as a privately organized agency.

2. Public agencies are not obligated by these rules at points where the rules may be found to conflict with the transportation procedure required of public agencies by the settlement laws of their states.

3. The word “he” means he, she, or they, as the context in any case will suggest, and the word “applicant” includes the family group for whom transportation is desired.

4. The Agreement applies to every act whereby an applicant is helped by money, goods, advice, or encouragement to go from one community to another. If an agency is plainly informed of transportation proposed by another agency which seems to be in violation of the Agreement, the first agency becomes itself a party thereto unless it tries to discourage transportation.
5. Transportation by rail, boat, automobile, or any other means is covered.

6. The statement of an applicant is a matter to be verified. The statement of another person, as a member of the applicant's family, is not by itself conclusively a verification. Locating at the proposed destination a person who is believed to be willing to care for the applicant is not enough. A definite reply, verified if necessary, should be obtained from a reliable source of information.

7. When employment is the reason for transportation, definite, reliable assurance of employment must be obtained as a part of the necessary evidence. A general report that conditions of employment are better, or that the applicant would be "better off" in the place specified, shall not be considered sufficient.

8. A temporary stay, as in an institution, without further plans for later care, is not sufficient reason for providing transportation.

9. An agency at an intermediary place which changes the plans made by the sender, without explicit approval of the sender, becomes responsible for what follows.

10. If an application for further transportation is received from a person who has been "passed along" in violation of this Agreement, or whose plans are changed en route, then the agency applied to, in so far as concerns the furnishing of further transportation, or transportation back to the point of sending, shall proceed in accordance with the Agreement as in the case of any other application for transportation.

11. The agency through which transportation is procured shall, in each case, preserve a full record of all the essential facts upon which the furnishing of transportation has been based; and a copy or summary of such record shall be furnished promptly on request of any signer of this Agreement.

Procedure

1. If any agency signing the Agreement feels that it has a just complaint against another signer in an actual case of transportation, it may appeal for advice to the Decisions Committee of the Committee on Transportation with specific charges of failure to observe the Agreement. An agency which believes that it cannot accept a decision of that Committee shall report its specific reasons to the Committee on Transportation.
APPENDIX TWO
CHARITY RATE TRANSPORTATION

I. THE CHARITY RATE PRIVILEGE—A RAILROAD REGULATION

The issuance of charity rate transportation is in the hands of the railroads and has no connection with the Committee on Transportation of Allied National Agencies and is not secured by signing the Transportation Agreement. The privilege of securing charity rate tickets is granted by passenger associations or railroads in the various divisions of the United States. The decision as to whether one or more organizations in a given city have the privilege of charity rate transportation is a matter for arrangement by the railroads in that vicinity and organizations involved. There is no national agreement on this subject either on the part of the railroads or social agencies. Information is available from railroad officials in any city as to the passenger association responsible for charity rate transportation in the district. The emphasis is placed by the railroads on the ability of the passenger to pay full fare. Anyone who secures a charity rate ticket for a client vouches to the railroad that such reduction is necessary.

II. INTERSTATE COMMERCE LAW

Interstate Commerce Law, Federal Statutes Annotated, 1916, Volume 4 (Section 1 E), p. 259:

No common carrier shall issue or give any interstate free ticket, free pass, or free transportation except to employees, etc., inmates of hospitals and charitable and eleemosynary institutions, and persons exclusively engaged in charitable and eleemosynary work; to indigent, destitute and homeless persons, and to such persons when transported by charitable societies or hospitals and the necessary agents employed in such transportation.

III. DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING APPLICATION THROUGH ANOTHER ORGANIZATION FOR CHARITY RATE TRANSPORTATION

1. If the organization applying for a charity rate ticket from another organization is a signer of the Transportation Agreement, two points must be kept in mind:

   a. Facts in evidence that client cannot pay full rate (This is in line with the provisions made by the railroads regarding the issuance of charity rates);

   b. Facts in evidence that the destination arrangements have been made. (This carries out the Transportation Agreement.)
APPENDIX THREE
MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES ON TRANSPORTATION, 1910–1935

Note: Numerals indicate the member agencies which the specified persons have represented. The years of service include the periods covered by the Committee on Transportation of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, 1910–1920, and by the Committee on Transportation of Allied National Agencies, 1920–1935.

**Members**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bicknell, Ernest F.</td>
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<td>Cross, William T.</td>
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<td>Strawson, Arthur J. (4)</td>
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<td>McColl, Bertha (3)</td>
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<td>Conant, Richard K. (6)</td>
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<td>Parker, Edward J. (7)</td>
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<td>Bane, Frank (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Hallwachs, George M.</td>
<td>1933–1935</td>
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**Member Agencies, 1921–1935**

2. Family Welfare Association of America 1921–1935
3. National Association for Travelers Aid and Transient Service 1921–1935
4. National Tuberculosis Association 1921–1935
7. The Salvation Army 1931–1935

*Member at large.

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