

10/5/72

Social Attitudes and Present Day Problems (Bianchi)

Before getting down to subject, let us consider choice of career.

1. Our Choice of Career - how and why we chose it.

e.g. Student answering professor on why chose teaching

Student writing why she chose nursing.

(Sense of power - causes others to respect)

Attitude useless to community service.

All have this temptation - must resist.

We did not choose our station in life, our

race, our colour - but we CAN choose how we USE

what we are given, for ourselves, selfish purpose

or for the community.

Even personal happiness is greater when we

serve others.

Selfishness breeds discontent; service breeds

contentment.

Therefore, in choosing a career, our first choice is:

what will be our attitude: to command, or serve.

2. The Ward Office, and Types of Cases

Own job - teaching. But on U.C., dealing with ward cases, we become social welfare workers, from experience, if not from study of the subject.

Main types of cases, four groups:

Housing; 50% - 60%

Making; 10+%

Social Welfare; 10%

Legal Cases 10%

Miscellaneous cases complete 100%

3. Housing:

Two problems ; ~~no house~~ (1) need a house
(2) overcrowded living conditions. *need a bigger one*

(a) Need for Housing: three ways to get it:

1. L.C.H. or H.A. estates, e.g. Ping Shek, Wah Fu, Chei Hung, Kwai Chung.

Must register on waiting-list - may wait many years and still fail.

Salary limits: G.L.C.H. - below \$500

H.A. - \$500 - \$900+

Present system unreasonable.

e.g. 3 persons - \$500 can get it;

10 persons - \$520 - "too much salary!"

Thus Social Welfare allowance is "too much".

Suggestion: per capita income.

Case workers sometimes harsh - talk as if client is cheating. Most are really in need, and system not reasonable.

Takes long time to change system.

In dealing with cases, if we find policy unreasonable, should try to change it, not just apply it blindly.

2. Second way of getting housing - resettlement - demolition for Government development or dangerous building.

If Government orders demolition of registered hut or dangerous building, they will give resettlement. Some try to get it - move in just before demolition in hope of succeeding.

Government calls them "imposters" - strong term for desperate people trying to get a place to live that they can afford.

Resettlement does not always improve conditions - it can cause hardship if the family is moved miles from work or school, or lose livelihood.

3. Third way of getting cheap housing - Social Welfare grounds. Must have permanent need, e.g. very old, handicapped, not just poverty or homelessness.

(b) Overcrowding

Numerous cases applying for larger houses in resettlement.

Official minimum per head in world standards - 35 square feet. In Hong Kong, given maximum of 24 square feet, half for child.

In 1950s that was more than some had in squatter huts - but since resettlement, families have grown up and more children have been born.

In older estates they now have as low as 10 square feet, half for child.

How can they get more space? Almost impossible.

Empty rooms on estate - may apply, given to one with highest density. Hundreds may apply for one room, all but one disappointed.

Situation at present absolutely hopeless for most overcrowded families. Some have to go back to huts. Married sons and daughters no longer allowed to stay in resettlement - offered hut far away.

When approached by clients, we may cut them off angrily and tell them the policy. Or we may explain the policy, sympathise, and try to change the policy.

Some Governmentworkers treat policy as god - will not try to change it, causing suffering.

Some people blame me for doing so many ward cases. But it is the ward cases that teach me where our policies are wrong.

4. Hawking

An increasing problem. Used to be less than 10%,
In past few months, Government issuing no licences
and taking tougher measures - now over 10%.

Hawkers, to some, are only a nuisance.

But they do supply all vegetables and most fruit
to community at cheap prices.

(1) Need for
licences.

(2) Govt's lack
of planning

Government determined to reduce number by not issuing
new licences. Result, will be increase in illegal
hawking.

Becomes tiring, telling people not to hawk, to
look for other work.

Fact is, it is a social problem.

(3) Social
Security

Untrained, unskilled, uneducated in some cases,
too old, cannot find other work.

Industry gives no security - unemployment, sick
leave, slump, economic depression.

Hawking can always earn a little. Security for
times of unemployment or sickness - others in family
can help. Widow can care for children and also hawk.

Provides more money than unskilled job in industry.

BUT - constant fear of prosecution, often graft.

Solution - should have been tackled long ago -

with bazaars off-street, well set out, clean,
attractive and convenient. Government refuses to
use much land for this.

5. Social Welfare - Public Assistance

Very little demand originally for this - dry rations and nothing else, or only \$33.

This year, quite reasonable:

1 person...	\$110+rent+ feed for sick.
3 persons.....	\$80 each
next 3 #.....	\$65 each
others.	\$50 each

Very good for old or handicapped unable to work.

But for others, too limited, can never rise above meagre existence.

Social worker needs tact - too often refuse hawker licence and offer money. Man dislikes this and prefers to earn living.

Some social workers good, try to be tactful and understanding; others have no intention of trying to find a proper way for client.

e.g. inadequate investigation of widow - used old report and said she had a husband.

Refused to help family because 13 year-old girl was working in factory.

Refused hawker licence to woman, because she was earning a few hundred dollars from illegal hawking.

If you take social work, remember to treat people as human beings.

6. Legal Cases

e.g. Road accidents, industrial disputes, assault, divorce.

Land problems in N.T. sometimes come - rather too complicated and need lawyer.

Need to try to understand cases and this takes more time.

Peer often have no way because cannot afford to engage lawyer.

Legal Aid fairly easy to get, but takes years for case to go to court.

Concerned about the state of justice in H.K.

Remember: If case is difficult, should not just be angry and refuse help. Client may have no other way to find help. Needs to be treated as human being. Should not be passed round like tennis ball.

Conclusion: As at beginning, if we feel superior because of education, we shall be of little or no use.

10 Command means to fail.

10 Serve brings success.