

Throughout its operation, the philosophy of the project was based upon the idea that if youthful hands and minds are kept busy in organized recreational activities, they will not be forced by idleness into mischief-making gangs that frequently run afoul the law and inevitably lead them toward criminal careers. On this foundation was the structure reared as a service to the people. From the financial standpoint the logic employed was that it is far cheaper to prevent the creation of a criminal by removing the cause than to punish the offender against our social codes after the offense has been committed.

The amazing thing about the project is that the narration of its progress bristles with an array of achievements, both from the standpoint of the induction of people into its activities and its prevention of delinquency. One could not reasonably expect such a pioneer movement to succeed from the outset, as did this project. Yet the evidence is conclusive. The records are so voluminous with accomplishments that we can but wonder at their scope and finality.

During the latter part of August, 1933, the average weekly attendance at playgrounds served by the project in Los Angeles County vaulted to a total of over 1,750,000 persons. The average weekly number of participants in playground activities for the same period rose from slightly less than 50,000 for the first part of July to close to 600,000 by the end of August. As the personnel of the project was enlarged, and as the workers became more efficient in their labor during the following months, the weekly average of participants increased rapidly until in February, 1934, it attained the staggering peak of 2,574,000.

In Russian Town, a tough section of Los Angeles where delinquency had always been troublesome, there was a total of 45 cases reported for March, 1933. When the project went into this field the doubtful ones wagged their heads dolefully. Here was a spot that would defy corrective measures; yet the workers applied themselves so assiduously that the number of delinquency cases began at once to drop until in March, 1934, they had been reduced to 9 cases, a decrease of 80% over the same month of the previous year.

South Gate is a small town in the industrial district lying south of Los Angeles. It had meager recreational facilities for its youngsters and, as a result, the delinquency problem was prevalent. Project workers changed all this. They were influential in securing