

Block parents co-operate with police

The need of involving citizens directly in crime prevention and the intention of police across the country to encourage just such participation was one of the ideas most clearly spelled out at a recent meeting of chiefs of police in Toronto.

"A police department functions on information...the efficiency of the police department suffers drastically if an apathetic public is unwilling to report a crime or become involved in crime prevention," stated a report of the association's committee on crime prevention.

Thus, at a time when Canada is becoming increasingly urbanized and cities less personal and humane, police are consciously stressing programs, such as the "block parent" project, which encourage a sense of community and concern for others.

The idea came into being in London, Ontario, in 1968 as a result of action taken by members of the National Council of Jewish Women, who had become deeply disturbed by the prevalence of child molestation and purse snatching. They implemented an actual working program whereby several residents of a given block displayed signs indicating to children that in these houses they could find refuge from bullies and get help when lost or faced with other problems.

Today more than 7,000 London residents display the block parent sign, a beacon of help to young people in trouble. In Sarnia, Ontario, where the program is also operating, attacks on children dropped from 42 to nine in one year.

Ottawa has also joined the plan with a pilot project involving five schools and 2,000 residents in the Riverside Park district. Residents involved in the plan accept screening by police. "We can't be too careful," says Pat Downing, chairman of the Ottawa group.

Training

Block parents everywhere are trained to give help where needed and all have a list of telephone numbers they can call to receive more specific help for the youngsters who knock on their doors. They are also encouraged by police to report the presence of sus-



Ryan Downing of Ottawa would be quick to turn to a "block parent" for help. The whole Riverside Park community, including schools and police, have been involved in the scheme.

picious-looking cars or strangers in the neighbourhood.

While child molestation is not regarded as a serious problem in cities such as Ottawa, police feel confident that the program will provide a most effective crime prevention device, not only within its own particular terms of reference, but beyond these in bringing the community and law enforcement officers closer together as a co-operative unit, and taking up the challenge so forcefully enunciated by the police chiefs in Toronto.

OECD Canadian education review

Federal and provincial government officials have been, in general, very impressed with a review of education in Canada that was conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and expect that the report will be the subject of intense discussion among education officials during the next few years, says Education Minister Ben

Hanuschak, of the Manitoba provincial government. Mr. Hanuschak was chairman of a 19-member Canadian delegation to the meeting of the OECD Education Committee, held December 9 and 10, 1975, in Paris, at which the report was presented.

The two-year Canadian review, which will be published by OECD, embraced the entire range of public education from early childhood to adult continuing education and, Mr. Hanuschak said, covered a scope never before attempted in the history of Canadian education.

Review format

The review was in two parts. The first was a series of extensive analyses and research studies concerning the state of Canadian educational systems, conducted by the provinces and certain federal departments. These were submitted as a six-volume Canadian Internal Report to OECD, comprising a foreword, reports from the Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario and Western regions and a Federal Government report that discussed federal participation in education and education in the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

This format, said Mr. Hanuschak, enabled the unique aspects of Canadian education to be examined, such as the diversity of education and education policy, the control of education, population distribution and other issues as perceived by the various provinces.

Overseas examiners

Following submission of the internal report, five education examiners from other OECD nations came to Canada and consulted with many groups and individuals representing a broad cross-section of community interests in education.

The examiners prepared a preliminary report on findings on Canadian education which, together with the internal report, formed the basis for discussion at the OECD Education Committee Paris meeting. There, discussions focused on intergovernmental relations, the policy-making process, school governance, bilingualism, levels of the school system, educational opportunities and educational research, information and dissemination.

The Canadian review was the eighth review of education conducted by OECD; earlier studies were carried out