tions of the programs of the lesser known agencies represented in the group. Descriptive literature relating to each agency was circulated among the group. As a formal or informal part of each meeting, those present would discuss their activities and exchange notes on community reactions, changes in leadership and other items of information of common interest to all. A more or less permanent small group, including representatives of Joint Distribution Committee, American Jewish Committee, Jewish Agricultural Society, Jewish Welfare Board and the CJFWF, constituted itself as a program committee. However, efforts were made to have the total group, whenever possible, decide on the subject and content of discussion at each meeting.

Following the first stage of "getting to know each other" came the second phase of the group's discussion—examination of trends in American Jewish life. To open the series of discussions on this general topic, the writer gave an overall presentation of the history of American Jewish community life, leading up to the present day. This introduction was followed by specific discussions on "Present Trends in Jewish Education" (given by the Director of Chicago's Board of Jewish Education and College of Jewish Studies); "Minorities and the President's Civil Rights Committee Report" (a panel discussion with participants from American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress and Anti-Defamation League): "Cultural and Recreational Trends in American Jewish Life" (a round table by representatives of JWB and based on the Janowsky survey). Each of these meetings was held in the office of an agency concerned with the problem under discussion. The chairmanship of each meeting was rotated among the group according to the subject.

The group then moved into the area of community organization techniques as carried out in the field. It was decided to take a large community with which several of the agencies had contact, program-wise. As a basis for a discussion of how these and possibly other agencies related to each other and to the community, a broad picture of that community's organization was given by the writer, since CJFWF had an overall relationship to the total Jewish community and specifically to its member organization, the Jewish Federation. Each of the other representatives then described his own agency's program and relationships to the community.

Out of this discussion on field techniques in a specific situation came the next topic, a consideration of field work practices in general and how field service professionals could work together for the benefit of the community. This was discussed at the last meeting held in April. It also took up the subject of the problems facing national agencies in their relationships to, and contacts with, local communities. It was pointed out that field representatives had a primary responsibility for serving as effective liaison between agencies and communities to the end that the standards of work of both would be improved. As practitioners of community organization, regardless of the specific agency program, field professionals had to work together.

This was a reaffirmation of the original view expressed by those who helped create the larger group, but it came with greater validity after the eight meetings of the group, plus discussions between individuals in the group, either in Chicago or as they met one another in the field.

This last discussion also brought out that since the group felt it had made a

fair start in its objective of achieving better understanding among themselves, a more permanent type of organization should be fostered, retaining however, the original concept of informality. To this end, it was suggested that in addition to the agencies' representatives attending more or less regularly, other agency professionals should be invited to the next meeting so as to have a group which would include representatives of all national agencies serving the Chicago area proper as well as the region outside of Chicago.

This was held as a dinner meeting and 28 representatives of 18 national agencies attended. The guest speaker was Samuel A. Goldsmith, Executive Director of the Jewish Charities and Welfare Fund of Chicago, whose topic was "National Agencies and the Local Communities." After group discussion, the decision was made to organize on a permanent but still informal basis. The group will have three purposes: social, greater knowledge and understanding of each other's agencies and programs, and lastly, a continuing analysis of the place of professionals

in agencies dealing with the national-local Jewish scene.

And so we come to the end of a story an unfinished story. As an experiment in "free association" of professionals representing national agencies in a given geographical area, this group project has already shown some tangible results. Various members of the group have consulted with each other on occasion, itineraries are being exchanged in some cases and a better personal feeling is manifested when the group gets together. As to the tangible effects on the communities, there are probably none, because of the varying programs and demands of the agencies on their field staffs. But what has been slowly developing from these group meetings and individual contacts is a better understanding of the programs of agencies other than one's own, and a greater professional appreciation of field work in general as a means of strengthening local community organization. Whether it can go any farther than that is conjectural. What is fairly certain is that the group will continue its existence, if only to reinforce the results already achieved.

A CENTRAL PURCHASING PLAN IN A FEDERATION

By BERNARD BERNBERG

Director of Purchasing, Jewish Charities of Chicago

THE two general hospitals, one special hospital, two Homes for Aged, and the Child Care Institution affiliated with The Jewish Charities of Chicago use during the course of the year a very substantial quantity of food, maintenance, medical, institutional, and other supplies. For a number of years a single contract for the supply of coal

and a similar contract for the supply of milk had been arranged centrally for all the institutions, and the success of these two single projects had stimulated discussion as to the advisability of extending central purchasing. A Committee was therefore established by The Jewish Charities to consider a central purchasing program.

This Committee met with representatives of the Institutions to analyze the possibilities of such a program in relation to the particular needs of each Institution. Two possible plans were canvassed. The first involved the establishment of a Central Purchasing Agency which would buy the goods required by the various Institutions and then "re-sell" them to the agencies. The second plan involved the engagement by The Charities of an experienced purchasing agent who would act in an advisory capacity to the agencies and would, in fact, as their buyer. The latter plan was finally adopted as it was felt that it did not interfere with the autonomy of the agencies, made better provision for meeting the somewhat different needs of each agency on a more individualized basis, kept them in direct contact with their suppliers, and at the same time made available to them the services of an expert which they could not secure by themselves, and brought to bear the effects of the combined buying of all the organizations through a single purchasing agent. It was also decided that the plan would be initiated with the purchasing of food and would later be extended to other supplies.

In October of 1947, therefore, the writer, who had had some 20 years' experience in one of the leading retail food chains in Chicago, was engaged as Director of the Purchasing Department of The Jewish Charities. He first visited each of the agencies in turn, spending about a week at each one to become thoroughly familiar with the particular kinds of food they needed, methods of preparation, etc. He then began to take over the work of buying, commencing with a limited number of articles (which happened to be produce) and gradually

taking over the buying of all foods for all the Institutions.

In the course of his work, it was also possible for him to assist the staffs of the Institutions to become better acquainted with the various kinds of grades and qualities of foods, how to store and use them, and this was an important by-product of the particular method of organization which was adopted. A most important fact to consider in such a program is that all foods are purchased by actual inspection, rather than over the telephone or by standing order. This cannot be stressed too highly for only by inspection can one be sure that he is buying the proper kind and quality.

To carry out this program the Director of Central Purchasing has worked out a schedule whereby the affiliated organizations order certain commodities and receive them on certain days. For instance, meat and poultry are received three times a week; butter, eggs and cheese three times a week; produce, twice a week; fish, three times a week; groceries once a week, etc. In this way the Director of Central Purchasing is able to spend his time at the different markets shopping around to fill his orders. His time is now organized so as to spend about three-fourths of the day in direct contact with the Institutions and in the markets, and about onefourth on central administrative activi-

The agencies are enthusiastic about the plan as they feel that without interference with their autonomy of functioning, it gives them the benefit of expert advice and of the economies which can be affected by large-scale buying. Financial records indicate that the cost of food in the Institutions has not increased in proportion to the increase in the general level of food costs.

CENTRAL PLANNING IN THE FIELD OF AGED CARE

By ESTHER BECKENSTEIN

Secretary, Council on the Care of the Aged and Chronic Ill, Chicago

OR many years the two Jewish homes for the aged in Chicago, like the majority of such institutions all over the country, were self-sufficient units which admitted "needy" well old people after investigations made by Board members. During the 20's there were indications that the community was interested in improving the kind and quality of services provided for the aged. The family agency which had always cared for old people established a separate department for the aged. The Orthodox Iewish Home for the Aged requested The Jewish Charities to make a study of the Home to determine, among other things, "the status of the residents and applicants with special reference to their need of institutional or of community care." One of the findings of the study was that 35 per cent of the residents did not appear to need institutional care and could have adjusted outside the institution. In 1929, on the recommendation of The Jewish Charities, the homes for the aged turned over their applications to the Jewish Social Service Bureau * for investigation.

Case work evaluations of the needs of old people for institutional care, as presented in the reports of the investigations of the family agency, were difficult for the Board members of the Homes to understand and to accept. It was clear that the people from the separate agen-

cies needed a medium for discussion of the problems in which they were all concerned.

The instrumentality for getting together was the Council on the Care of the Aged and Chronic Sick, promoted by The Jewish Charities and initiated in 1931. Originally the membership of the Council was made up of the Boards and executives of the two Homes and of the Iewish Social Service Bureau with representation from The Jewish Charities. A working committee, named the Case Committee, was set up to deal with the immediate issues-the differences in points of view regarding the individuals who should be admitted to the institutions. This Committee undertook to review the investigations of applications and to discuss the recommendations for the care of each applicant. After several vears of joint working and thinking together, many changes occurred. The Admissions Committees of the Homes, and subsequently the majority of the Board members, recognized that institutional care should be provided for people who could not adjust in the community and that the groups of aged who were most in need of a protected environment were the sick and the socially isolated and maladjusted old people. As the populations of the Homes began increasingly to include the sick, additional facilities for hospital and infirmary sections were provided and medical and nursing services were increased and improved.

^{*} The Jewish Social Service Bureau changed its name in 1947 to the Jewish Family and Community Service.