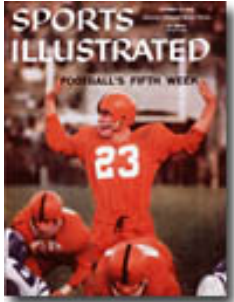


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October 27, 1958

Washington Asks For Advice And Gets It

Some 120 weeks ago, to the widespread satisfaction of his countrymen, **President Eisenhower** took the first steps to establish a federally directed program for youth fitness. Two key groups were set up: 1) the President's Council on Youth Fitness, a compact Washington-headquarters agency of five Cabinet officers, originally headed by Vice-President Nixon and thereafter by **Interior Secretary Fred Seaton**, and 2) a 129-member **Citizens Advisory Committee**, drawing on the skills and civic-mindedness of distinguished men and women across the country.

For two years the Council, in the words of its executive director, **Shane MacCarthy**, has been serving as "a catalytic agent" to encourage the existing fitness programs of the cities and towns of **America**; the results of its "crusade"—much of it a one-man traveling and speaking program by Shane MacCarthy—have thus far been hard to measure.

How should the President's Fitness Council blueprint its future course?

The Council last month called the **Citizens Advisory Committee** into annual session at Fort Ritchie, **Maryland** to ask advice. Some 97 citizen advisers paid their own way from all over the **U.S.** to attend. Moreover, they did their job and did it well. The record of their meetings, and the substance of their advice, has just been published in a document addressed to the President of the United States entitled *Fitness of American Youth*. It is well worth the attention of the President and of other Americans who care specifically about the "physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual strength of this country's youth," and it is also a document worthy of careful study by those who may have some haunting doubts about whether a citizens advisory committee can ever pierce the protective hide of bureaucracy.

Among the citizen advisers present were such men and women as Harry Bullis, board chairman of **General Mills**; Carter Burgess, president of American Machine and Foundry; Philip E. Ryan, executive director of the National Health Council; V. J. Skutt, board chairman of **Mutual of Omaha**; **Biggie Munn**, athletic director at **Michigan State**; and Dorothy B. Taaffe, president of the American Recreation Society. But perhaps the key figure was the new chairman of the President's Advisory Committee, a 45-year-old **Kansas City** foundation executive named Homer Wadsworth, who collected the facts and recommendations from 18 discussion groups and

summarized them with brilliant force and candor for Secretary Sea-ton, **Shane MacCarthy** and the other **Washington** figures present.

Here are the high points of the advice the President's advisers have just passed on to him:

?The President was right to establish a Council on Youth Fitness ("The problem is here and now"). The Council's job is to alert the nation to a concern for youth fitness and to serve as a clearinghouse for information—its job is not to "control" local or state programs for youth fitness nor "to develop an additional branch of the federal government."

?But the President's Council should do more than it has done so far to show communities, states, business corporations and welfare agencies how to increase, and increasingly knit, their efforts for youth fitness.

?This means learning more than the President's Council now knows about the scope and value of the fitness work now being carried out across the country. It does not—and the President's advisers emphasize this—mean setting up the sort of overblown "research study" to which government bureaus are notably addicted. Let the Council pull together existing knowledge. "This group," said Wadsworth, "believes we had better take some of our research and use it." But new data to measure fitness should be dug for where needed.

And then Wadsworth and his fellow citizen advisers got even more specific and pointed. They suggested, for example:

That a work kit of positive suggestions be developed by the Council (with the help of outside experts) and sent to local communities.

That a systematic public relations program be presented to the people of the **U.S.** regarding the program of the Council and the President's Advisory Committee. "Here a caution is imposed. You can't deliver to people what you haven't got." With the edge of an edge in its tone, the citizens group recommended that "the Council develop and issue a clear statement regarding its aims and purposes, the scope of its activities and the resources it has available."

That representative young people themselves be added to the President's Advisory Committee.

That an executive committee be created, from the membership of the President's fitness advisers, so that his advisers can act more than once a year. Wadsworth turned to **Interior Secretary Seaton**: "Here you will recognize our candor, Mr. Secretary. It is suggested that, to the limit possible, members of the Council [the Cabinet officers] come in and have a working part in the future sessions of the President's Advisory Committee, sitting arm in arm with us, looking at the problems as we look at them.... This is perhaps a pious hope, but I think that when you consider the sacrifice made by all in attendance here you will appreciate the spirit in which this suggestion is offered."

As if recognizing that it is almost impossible to discuss government programs, President's Councils and President's Advisory Committees without bogging down into business-and-government English, Chairman Wadsworth did his best to say what he, as one American, wants for his own children (he and his wife have seven): "What I want for my children I want for all other children and youth in America—a decent home in a decently arranged and stable neighborhood; the opportunity to acquire that kind of liberal education which will best equip them for the responsibilities of citizenship and enlighten their ultimate vocational practice; the protection of soundly conceived and well-administered community services, including those activities designed to promote healthy physical growth and development and the acquisition of modest skill in the constructive arts of leisure....

"This is a great deal to hope for. Yet it is within our grasp as we measure our knowledge and consider our resources."

His advisers described **President Eisenhower**'s interest in fitness as the source of the drive's inspiration. They added: "We hope that the President will be able to lend his voice and his assistance as we attempt to go forward."

Before they adjourned, the advisers made a strong bid for quick action. They asked **Secretary Seaton** and **Shane MacCarthy** to publish their advice and present it to the President within 30 days. **Seaton** and **MacCarthy** have done so, and the document entitled Fitness of American Youth is the excellent result.

And in 30 days more, the advising citizens said, they would like to have the reaction of the President and his Council to their advice. Thus, in 30 more days, the **Citizens Advisory Committee** will know how truly effective a citizen group can be.

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