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UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM.  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

May 1965.

Thesis for the Degree of M.A.

"COLONIES DE VACANCES"

IN FRANCE TO-DAY.

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Dissertation presented by D. J. Gibson.

"L'enfant sain, équilibré, placé dans des conditions idéales se développe parfaitement de lui-même."

A. FERRIERE.

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"Vivre est le métier que je lui veux apprendre."

J.-J. ROUSSEAU.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N .

## I N T R O D U C T I O N .

Although over one million children frequent Colonies de vacances in France during the summer months alone, it is very difficult to find any general information about them. There are only two men at the present day who can be said to have written authoritatively about the historical aspect of the institution. It is perhaps fortunate that each represents the opposing tendency.

Rey-Herme's work - his thesis for a Doctorate in Letters - was born of a doubt (1): the doubt that the Colonie de vacances might not date socially from the reforms of the ministers Sellier and Lacore (which resulted in 1937 in the first legislation concerning Colonies de vacances), and pedagogically from the foundation of the Confédération des Oeuvres Laïques d'Enfants et d'Adolescents and of the Centres d'Entraînement aux Méthodes Actives in the same year - which was the official view put forward by Inspector General Bécart.

Rey-Herme's detailed examination of the growth of the Colonie de vacances from its origins until 1936 shows beyond doubt that Herme's own experience was indicative of the situation in general. The reforms of 1937 were the culmination of a period of growth and not the start of a new institution.

It will be the object of the present study to survey this growth in order to discover whether the institution has changed essentially in nature and whether or not it has

(1) P. A. REY-HERME. (Thèse principale pour le Doctorat ès Lettres) Les Colonies de Vacances en France de 1906 à 1936. L'institution et ses problèmes. Biarritz, 14th. April. 6

achieved its aims and ceased to progress.

The sources of information consist of Rey-Herme's works and articles by Etienne Bécart (2), the magazines, books and brochures published since the Second World War by the principal organisations concerned with Colonies de vacances and information supplied by the head offices of some of these organisations. Other material was gained by personal experience of a basic training course for monitors ("stage") run by the U.F.C.V., four colonies and a special course ("stage de perfectionnement") run by the C.E.M.E.A. Personal contact with the leaders of the principal organisations, including the Inspector for the Department of the Youth and Sports office (Inspecteur Départemental à la Jeunesse et aux Sports), made it possible to verify these sources by actual contact with the institution in operation today.

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Because of the inadequacy of translating French terminology in reference to Colonies de vacances into English, the original terms are used throughout this study. An explanation of these terms is provided in the glossary.

(2) E. BECART. "Congés, vacances, voyages". Chapter XXXVI of the Encyclopédie pratique de l'éducation en France. I.P.N., Tours, 1960.

E. BECART. "L'Evolution des Colonies de vacances", in Belles Vacances Eté-automne, 1958: No. 7 - 8.

E. BECART. "Conclusions", a speech by E. Bécart reported in Belles Vacances, Printemps, 1960: No. 13.

P A R T I.

THE COLONIE FROM ITS ORIGINS TO THE PRESENT DAY.

S E C T I O N I.

The Rise of the Colonie.

Chapter I.

The Pioneers.

A. The Earliest Beginnings.

1. The "Trois Semaines".

Between 1882 and 1893 a series of bills brought about universal and free primary education for children in France. These were the direct result of a desire to give a new lease of life to the nation which, although proud, had had to suffer under the conqueror's heel.

The sudden growth of charitable institutions, especially for women and children was part of this movement to give the less fortunate a fresh chance in life. It was in keeping with the times that Mme. Bonnet and her daughter, who had already gained some knowledge of Bion's work in Switzerland, should have been deeply interested in all that pastor Lorriaux had to tell them. He had discovered a new kind of work in aid of poor children in America during a trip he had made there to attempt to gather funds for his parish at Clichy.

In 1876 Bion had begun sending children from Zürich to the mountain village of Appenzell (1) for a holiday in what he termed "FerienKolonie". Here, in groups of about ten, accompanied by a devoted school-teacher, children were to have a holiday which should give them wholesome holidays

(1) M. BION. Les résultats des Colonies de vacances quoted (p.96) by P.A.REY-HERME Les Colonies de vacances en France.

"fondée sur les principes mêmes de l'éducation". This was something more than a mere "Milchkur" for children of bad health. Bion carefully selected healthy children whose parents could not possibly afford to take them away for a holiday. From 1880 onwards the growing numbers of children were no longer placed in families, but were lodged by a local innkeeper. Very quickly other towns in Switzerland, Germany and Austria saw the value of Bion's work and colonies were soon thriving in each of these countries.

A year after Bion an American clergyman, William Parsons from Pennsylvania, began to take children away for a fortnight's holiday. Here too the movement spread rapidly so that in the second year some 1,077 children benefitted from the scheme.

Although Lorriaux, in later discussion with Cottinet over the origins of the Colonie de vacances, claimed to have been chiefly influenced by Bion, the system he adopted was that of Parsons which Bion had dropped by 1880, that is to say the system of "placement familial" whereby children are sent to different homes under the supervision of a person who is responsible for seeing that the children are properly cared for while at the same time arranging certain activities in common from time to time.

Under the influence of Lorriaux, Mme. Bonnet was the first person to attempt a colonie in France when she sent three small girls to spend three weeks with a countrywoman at Nanteuil-les-Meaux in 1881, and came back with "their

cheeks sparkling with health and their hearts filled with joys never experienced before". This experiment convinced Lorriaux that the scheme could work in France and accordingly the "Trois Semaines" sprang into being a few months later.

Much discussion occurred in militant Protestant circles during the following winter in Paris and in 1882 five centres came into being and took care of 79 girls and boys ~~of~~ of three to sixteen years old, who were sent to live on farms where the farmer's wife, caring for anything from two to ten children, would undertake to look after them and take them for walks. "Devoted friends", teachers or others kept an eye on both the children and the families who took them in. The system was not ideal and in 1891 "La Clef des Champs" at Montjavoult was inaugurated to provide space for forty to fifty girls every summer.

#### ii. The "Chaussée du Maine".

Just after the Liberation of Paris, a Free Church clergyman's wife, Mme. Pressensé, had been responsible for beginning charitable work in the Chaussée du Maine in Paris, which included providing work for widows and starting some of the first primary schools in Paris.

In 1882 a gentleman from Strasburg sent 1,000 francs to send "a number of anaemic or sickly children" for a stay in the country. With this sum of money Mme. Pressensé sent some twenty children to Lorriaux's centre at Montjavoult. Since

the gift was renewed the following year Mme. Pressensé was able to send away eighty children - this time in three groups to a big farm at Bézard. An outbreak of measles in 1885 did not stop the good work as the farmer's wife nursed the children back to health without asking anything for her pains. When the farm became too small other homes had to be found. By 1888 one hundred and thirty-eight children were being sent away under the care of fourteen supervisors and the railways helped matters by allowing a twenty-five to fifty per cent reduction for the parties. In 1890 the new organisation received official recognition of "utilité publique".

Both the Chaussée du Maine and the Trois Semaines began the experiment of sending away some mothers. In 1899 and 1901 the Chaussée du Maine obtained its first two buildings in order to run collective colonies de vacances. By the year 1902, the year following the death of both the presidents of the committee formed in 1898, the Chaussée du Maine was sending 1,387 children to colonies de vacances, representing 1,870 months of holiday, and besides this number about sixty children were also sent into the country to stay with relatives. A big industrial firm, Colin, Damon & Cie. of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, sent forty-six sons and daughters of their employees to the Chaussée du Maine and thus formed what was in all probability the first colonie run by private enterprise.

Despite the first fatal accident in 1903, when a child had been killed after walking behind a loaded haycart, a

governmental Order in 1904 officially recognized the colonie de vacances as part of the charitable work of the Chaussée du Maine. Seven municipalities sent children to their colonies and the annual sale in the hall of the Naval Ministry brought in quite an appreciable revenue: the work was well established on a charitable basis. The colonies were open to all, regardless of religious background, and the organizers were not at <sup>all</sup> concerned to proselytize or try out educational theories.

### iii. School Colonies.

A writer and philanthropist, Edmond Cottinet, quite independently of the first two movements, had also discovered Bion's work in Switzerland and, encouraged as Mme. Pressensé had been by a gift for the purpose, decided to run a colonie. This was not a reward for clever pupils, similar to the holidays run by the revolutionary Turgot School; it was not an "excursion de vacances" such as Teepffer had tried in Switzerland as early as 1823, but it was an attempt to better the health of poor children by taking them away from the boredom and unhealthy conditions of their town life -

"Les colonies devaient n'avoir rien en commun avec les "voyages" quelque divertissants et profitables qu'ils soient, dont d'autres Caisses d'Ecoles gratifient leurs écoliers méritants de certains arrondissements de Paris. Notre visée, toute différente, était purement hygiénique, d'hygiène préventative, nous désirons enlever des écoliers étiolés au méphitisme ambiant de la grande ville, au confinement, à l'oisiveté, à l'ennui qui sévissait sur eux - - -"

(1)

(1) E. COTTINET. La colonie scolaire du IXe arrondissement (report given to the Caisses des Ecoles, 1883).

Young teachers and their wives ran these colonies in schools in the country.

In order to carry out his work more effectively, Cottinet was elected administrator of the Caisse des Ecoles of the ninth Arrondissement of Paris (the Caisse being a fund, supplied by voluntary contributions, to aid primary schools in many areas). After ~~four~~<sup>period of four</sup> years, Bion was asked to give a report on his own work to the Caisse. Following this a "Comité Parisien" was formed. This committee was so successful and provided the work with such a solid foundation that three years later the committee was able to be disbanded, leaving the work of organisation in the hands of the local "comités d'arrondissement".

#### B. The Movement Begins to Take Shape.

In the early days of the colonie de vacances in France there was no really fresh initiative and nothing which did not directly owe its origins to the Swiss founder of the institution.

Up until the time of pastor Comte, those who had organized colonies had almost stumbled upon the idea by accident or had formed colonies because others had promoted them to do so. Comte on the other hand was a man who possessed not only the strength of his convictions but also a dynamic personality with which to carry out whatever work he undertook.

In 1891 Comte lost one of his children and a second child

who was anaemic, was restored to health by a stay in the country. Comte realized that if so much good could be derived by his own children from such a holiday then others also would derive equal benefit; and once this idea had become firmly rooted in his mind there was nothing which could shake his purpose. Through the generosity of two ladies, and with the aid of the diaconate of the Evangelical Church of the Cévennes, he was able to send fifty-two children away for a holiday in the country, forty from Saint-Etienne and twelve from Lyons - and so the "Oeuvre des Enfants à la Montagne" was founded.

Comte was inspired by all the early organisers of colonies de vacances but tried to place the institution upon a more practical footing, making it less costly and more supple at the same time -

"Nous n'avons donc fait, à Saint-Etienne, qu'imiter ce qui se faisait ailleurs. Si nous avons eu quelque mérite, c'est de provoquer par notre propagande orale et écrite, et par l'exemple, la fondation, dans ~~des~~ ~~nombreuses~~ localités, d'oeuvres similaires, et d'avoir donné à la nôtre une organisation plus pratique, plus souple, moins coûteuse, plus apte à produire avec un minimum de dépenses un maximum d'effets utiles."

Spurred on by Comte the new organisation grew rapidly and in 1894 it was able to send away one hundred and sixty children; by 1900 the number was well over a thousand, most of whom came from Saint-Etienne itself. In 1898 Comte formed an organizing committee of which he was elected President until he resigned two years later to take up the more active post of General Secretary.

The children were chosen with extreme care to ensure that only really necessitous families were able to send their children to the colonies. From 1901 onwards there was always medical supervision to eliminate any who might constitute a risk to those in contact with them. After a time, six weeks was found to be the shortest acceptable duration for a colony, and before long, special colonies were formed for those who were too ill to be accepted in a normal colony. In Comte's colonies, children were not merely encouraged to come once, and often came for two, three and four years in succession; some even came for as many as eight years. The physical benefits were undeniable and there was no question of losing interest in children as soon as they reached school-leaving age, unlike the colonies belonging to the primary school Caisses which were reluctant even to accept children during the summer following their last year at primary school.

As the whole movement of colonies de vacances began to take on larger proportions, Roman Catholic circles took notice of it, for, more and more frequently, Catholic children were being accepted both in Protestant colonies and in the school colonies where religion was frowned upon even if it did not come under overt attack. Thus although Roman Catholic circles had remained dubious about taking up an institution begun by Protestants and which had a basis of very liberal pedagogy for the more conservatively-minded

Catholics, they nonetheless set about creating their own colonies. The first to come into being was the Colonie Édouard at Arcachon to which children from Paris were sent from 1897 onwards, others such as the Saines Vacances at Lyons and the Vacances à la Campagne of Saint-Etienne followed rapidly on its heels. These Catholic colonies were very frequently offshoots of the Patronages. The Patronages came into being during the first few years of the nineteenth century, but took on much greater importance when, in 1882, Thursday was made a holiday for State primary schools so that parents would have the opportunity of providing religious education if they so wished for their children during this day. As the Patronages had often been largely a religious club for apprentices, many of the early supervisors in the colonies were apprentices.

The scope and extent of colonies de vacances increased more rapidly as time went <sup>on</sup>, but their growth was haphazard and there was sometimes illwill generated by the uninformed who objected to bands of what they took to be disease-ridden paupers invading their quiet village or sea-side town.

### C. The Situation by 1906.

Thirty years after the first colonie in Switzerland, the movement in France had grown so that something approaching two hundred organisations were sending 26,000 <sup>children</sup> on holiday.

Social work in the latter half of the nineteenth century in France had assumed considerable proportions. Social

reformers, especially in Protestant circles, began to discover that much could be done to improve the state of health of children, many of whom suffered from tuberculosis, the flail of the times, or suffered through lack of a balanced diet, air and exercise. As early as 1882 Dr. G. Warrentrapp in his report to the International Congress of Hygiene at Geneva showed the very positive value of colonies de vacances. (Warrentrapp published this report a year later under the title of "Über die ~~Kolonien~~ bisherigen Ergebnisse der Ferienkolonien" in Brunswick).

By 1888 colonies de vacances were so well known in France that no lesser person than the Inspector General of public schooling attended the first International Congress of colonies de vacances in Zürich with quite a large delegation. The value of the colonie de vacances was evident ~~at~~ the International Congress of Hygiene in Madrid some ten years later once again acknowledged <sup>them</sup> as being one of the most efficient means of improving the health and morale of children and parents -

"La sixième Commission recommande ce genre d'oeuvres comme l'une des plus capables de fortifier la santé des enfants et d'améliorer leur moral, en même temps que celui de leurs parents."

(1)

The idea behind the work of the early Protestant workers in colonies de vacances and of Cottinet was undoubtedly to better the health of the children, spurred on as they were

(1) DELVAILLE (a member of the French delegation). Revue Pédagogique, 1898: Compte rendu du Congrès International d'Hygiène de Madrid. Quoted by REY-HERME. Les Colonies de vacances en France (1881-1906). Paris 1954. Page 111.

by the movement against tuberculosis. But for all Cottinet's claim that his colonies were "purement hygièniques" there remained the danger that school teachers, most of whom found themselves in charge of the same pupils whom they had had in their classes the whole year round, would become to treat the colonies as nothing more than the extension of the classroom - it was demanding great self-possession of the teacher concerned to expect him or her to set aside traditional discipline, which was extremely formal and strict, and become the child's friend and companion for the space of a few weeks.

Few of those who ran or took part in the running of early colonies expected any remuneration and there is no doubt of the real devotion of all those concerned. The children derived real benefit from their holidays, often lessening the burden on their families, financially, and from the point of view of the mental strain of mothers having to care unceasingly for their ailing children in crowded living quarters. But the institution as a whole lacked any form of cohesion.

## Chapter II.

### The First Steps Towards Organisation.

#### A. The Second International Conference.

As early as 1903 Comte had had the idea of holding a conference at Saint-Etienne which would bring together all the leaders of organisations concerned with improving the health of children. He obtained the support of many people in influential positions and launched an appeal in the "Relèvement Social". The conference had to be postponed - nonetheless Comte succeeded in bringing together a group of people to study the legal responsibility of directors of colonies de vacances in cases of accident or illness to the children under their care.

From this first gathering a circular letter was sent out by Mme. Puaux of the Protestant Chaussée du Maine and by Comte, who had been appointed the leader of a special commission to study colonie de vacances by the Minister of the Interior, expressing the need for colonies to form some kind of organising body: a date and place for a meeting were suggested.

During a preparatory meeting by the organising committee, it was categorically decided to exclude representatives of the Catholic movement, however Comte and the Bureau insisted and they were finally included amongst those to be invited. On the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th April, 1906 the second "Congrès International des colonies scolaires de vacances"

took place at Bordeaux. The city received its guests with the traditional round of banquets, special performances at the Grand Théâtre and excursions: topics of vital importance for the smooth running of colonies de vacances were broached during the lecture and discussion meetings of the conference. Reports were also presented by three special commissions.

A number of subjects of particular importance were dealt with. The question of providing proper insurance for colonies was raised; and it was decided to establish a "fiche médicale" for all children going to colonies, which would be in two parts - one giving a statement of the general condition of the child, and the other containing personal details concerning the child's background, inherited defects and physical deficiencies (a copy of which would remain in the possession of the organisation receiving the child). The Chaussée du Maine had had such a card in use since 1906. The perennial question of group tickets on the railways was discussed and it was agreed to call for a universal reduction of 75%.

Most of the current problems in colonies were discussed in the course of the four days, including the placing of children in individual homes ("placement familial") or sending them to a place where they could be lodged collectively ("vacances collectives"). Many views were aired and, most of all, the colonies were brought to the notice of the

general public.

The last and most important item, which had been in Comte's mind for some years, was the formation of a Federation to unite all the different organisations. The president of the "Enfants à la Montagne" of Saint-Etienne had the task of formulating the proposal. The Federation was to give complete independence to all its members and in return for a small financial contribution it would enable its members to obtain certain benefits, such as medical cards and a standard rate of reduction on the railways; the Federation would be able to create commissions to study and report upon the progress of the work in general and would be able to make the movement known to the public at large; it would also be able to represent its members in approaching public bodies with a view to obtaining financial aid. Such a link between organisations would also enable individual bodies to exchange children in order to send them to the mountains, to the countryside or to the sea-side as their particular physical state might require.

The members of the organisations from Bordeaux refused to agree to the proposed Federation if Catholic bodies were to be admitted on an equal footing with themselves. This led to further attacks upon the Catholics and it was not without difficulty that the president managed to prevent their representatives from leaving the conference altogether. Agreement was reached when it was decided that a clause

should be added to the statutes stating that the Federation would not become involved in any religious or political question.

Thus, in theory, the "Fédération Nationale des Colonies de vacances et Oeuvres de grand air" came into being, for the purpose of improving the health of anaemic, lymphatic or poorly developed children through holidays at the sea-side, in the countryside or in the mountains. Gustave Théry, who organized one of the groups from Bordeaux, withdrew with his organisation when he was outvoted in an effort to have the description "non-confessionnel" added to the nomenclature of the Federation. In the concluding vote of forty-two, there were only two opposing votes - Mme. Puaux probably withdraw as she had no need of financial support and the Catholic organisations refrained from voting in all probability. However time progressed and nothing matured.

## B. The First Move Towards Generalized Organisation.

### 1. The First Federation.

Shortly after the Bordeaux conference, during April, 1907 Boureille founded the "Union des Colonies de vacances et Oeuvres de Grand Air de la Région Parisienne", no doubt in full agreement with Comte. Boureille was younger than Comte and more impatient to have the wheels set in motion: this union was to provide every possible material advantage for its members and ~~would~~ do its utmost to promote the creation of new colonies. Lorriaux and Adrien Seignette

were the first vice-presidents - Adrien Seignette was at the same time president of the "Association des Instituteurs pour l'éducation physique et le patronage de la jeunesse". At its outset, the union grouped together twenty-four bodies, which had increased to forty-nine bodies by the following December, combining twenty-seven Catholic, three Protestant and nineteen neutral organisations - the 55% of Catholic organisations however only accounted for 27.5% of the children actually present in colonies de vacances.

By the beginning of 1909 there was still no sign of the Federation which should have resulted from the Bordeaux conference since no one had made a move to come to Paris to carry out the necessary organisation. So, as many groups outside Paris had long wished to be included in the Union, Boureille gave way, while still leaving an open door to full cooperation with the Federation. On the 13th January, 1909 the Union became the "Union Nationale des Colonies de Vacances et Oeuvres de Grand Air", and was shortly followed by a number of regional federations such as the "Fédération du Sud-Ouest" after a regional congress in Toulouse, or the "Fédération du Sud-Est" after a congress in Avignon, both during the following summer.

#### ii. The Early Congresses.

At the end of 1909, Comte had gathered together the members of organisations favourable to him in Paris and seventy of these were elected to be responsible for a congress

in the following year. The Congrès de Paris was the first great congress concerned with the actual practical running of Colonies de vacances. A detailed programme was elaborated and five commissions dealt with the material organisation, rules and regulations concerning colonies, propaganda, statistics and financial questions. Out of the 640 organisations which Planted and Delpy had found to be in existence in the previous year, 156 were represented, and also about one third of the 300 doctors who had been present at the Bordeaux Congress were also present. Three days were spent hearing and discussing reports, and matters such as "placement familial" and collective holidays were broached, but no mention was made whatsoever of forming a federation, no doubt to try and avoid once more a complete rupture with the Catholic organisations.

The Catholics, feeling that the Paris Congress had not dealt with many essential matters related to colonies decided to hold a congress of their own in the following year. The 1911 Congrès de Ivree was concerned far more with the educational aspects of colonies: it included a review of the work of Catholic colonies, and discussion of devotional aspects, discipline, and other similar topics, took place. However even this Congress did not result in any form of federation as might have been expected, although such a proposal was made and accepted - this was no doubt because Catholic regional organisation was already efficient and stood in no need of any central direction.

In 1912 the Congrès de Lyon followed upon the 1910 Congress in Paris organized by Comte, for although no federation had resulted from it, there was at least an executive committee in existence. The 1912 Congress was held under the patronage of the Ministers of the Interior, Public Instruction and Social Provision, and of the Ligue de l'Enseignement (the school-teachers' association), the Alliance d'Hygiène Sociale, and the Touring Club de France. Two days were spent upon the hearing of reports, but the third day was given up to the full discussion of the creation of a federation.

C. The Era of the Officially Recognized Colonie Begins.

i. The F.N.C.V.

The "Fédération Nationale des Colonies de Vacances et Oeuvres de Grand Air" was officially declared during March in 1913. It was to cooperate with the Catholic organisations and the U.N.C.V. and those regional unions which joined the new Federation were to retain their entire independence. Its aim was to promote the work of Colonies de vacances using the money entrusted to it by means of lectures, publications, grants, prizes, congresses and by the creation of offices to supply information and organize the placing of children in those organisations which had vacancies. Exhibitions were to be held from time to time

and committees would be called to carry out research into particular problems. Also the Ministry of the Interior was to have the right to inspect the colonies belonging to the Federation's member organisations. Thus State aid was sought, whereas the Catholic organisations and the U.N.C.V. would under no circumstances accept State aid, knowing that official recognition and aid would be bound to bring some State intervention in their work.

ii. The Development of the U.N.C.V.

The Union Nationale already had 99 organisations belonging to it by 1909. By 1913 there were 172 organisations belonging to it, of which about 80% were Catholic and accounted for about 60% of those children frequenting colonies within the scope of the Union - only about 28 of the total number were officially declared. When the news of the Federation reached the Union Nationale it was welcomed, but there was now no question of the two organisations joining forces as the Catholic organisations were much too wary of anything too closely linked with the State. The Union itself had been officially declared on the 11th September, 1911 and was therefore very capable of carrying on a separate existence, and although Comte delayed the annual general meeting by some months in his efforts to bring about an amalgamation with the F.N.C.V. when the matter was put to the vote, an overwhelming

majority decided against the step. This resulted in the resignation of the President and the Vice-President, but only a few militantly non-religious organisations withdrew as for instance the Association des Instituteurs and the Oeuvres de Voyages Scolaires, both of which were to become pillars of the Federation.

#### D. The Situation by 1914.

At the time of the Bordeaux Conference about 30,000 children were being sent to colonies de vacances; by 1913 the figure stood at between 110,000 and 120,000. Colonies were expanding rapidly and were becoming better organized. The public was becoming more aware of the need to send children ~~children~~ away for this kind of holiday and the Press was becoming more interested in the work. On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the work of the Chaussée du Maine in the field of colonies de vacances, Madame ~~Bonnet~~ Puaux had been invited to give a talk to the General Assembly of the Ligue de l'Enseignement, and this speech, which was circulated to every State primary school, did much to spread interest in the work in teaching circles.

Religious issues had led the Catholics ~~into~~ ~~to~~ ~~include~~ ~~the colonies~~ - by the 1886 Act they had been prevented from having any hand whatsoever in State primary schooling and they had been made uneasy by the 1904 Act which prevented

religious sects from running schools at all. The Catholics could not afford to see their own children, who often attended State primary schools, spending their holidays in Protestant-organized colonies. Once they had begun, the Catholic colonies spread quickly, often as the natural corollary of the Patronage. Sometimes, as was the case with the Secrétariat Catholique des Colonies de Vacances de Marseille, a number of colonies would be grouped together so that resources could be pooled and the work rendered more effective: prior to the First World War this organisation was handling 1,149 children in 37 different colonies.

From 1907 onwards some professional organisations had begun to send children to colonies. One or two organisations began to provide for children of wealthier parents (for instance the "caravanes scolaires" of the Oeuvre des Agennais à la Montagne, begun in 1899), and in 1908 a society was founded in order to provide international exchanges for the children of workers.

Although the progress of colonies de vacances was almost general, there was little progress made by the school colonies of the Comité Parisien des Colonies de Vacances - Cottinet's work. After their initial expansion and recognitions it was difficult for them to tap new sources of funds and equally difficult to persuade the Caisses or municipalities in the different Arrondissements to increase their grants.

Not only was the work increasing in its extent, but new experiments were also being tried. Both the Trois Semaines and the Chaussée du Maine had tried sending away some mothers with their children, and Comte had arranged for some Algerian children to take part in certain colonies in the Loire valley. There is no doubt that this expansion would have continued had not the War intervened.

### Chapter III.

#### The First World War.

##### A. The First Three Years.

In 1914 many colonies were cancelled and some of those which actually did leave had difficulty in returning. For many people the colonies became of only very secondary importance compared to the War effort. Nonetheless, the organizers of the two founder colonies realized once more the vital part that the Colonie could play. It became harder to raise the necessary funds, and besides this, it was no easy task to find either sufficient food or suitable places in which to hold the colonies, since many of the buildings which had been used previously had been commandeered to be turned into hospitals or barracks for the War effort.

The following year saw the small beginnings of a new movement to help the children of the mobilized. Yet only five of the Caisses des Ecoles managed to continue running colonies, although fifteen Caisses between them sent 2,415 out of the City to spend days in the open air.

If the Trois Semaines was sending quite a few children less to colonies de vacances than immediately before the War, its efforts had not slackened and much benefit was derived by mothers, and War widows in particular who were sent away with the children. The Chaussée du Maine was handling nearly as many children as before the War, and had extended its field of action by sending 428 children to

Algeria, and by finding homes for some 400 refugees in France. The Colonie became, at this period, specifically a Colonie for soldiers' children and orphans. The Society was now handling altogether more children than before the War. Elsewhere however, despite many heroic efforts, the majority of organisations had been forced to cease their activities entirely.

In 1916 seven Caisses sent children to colonies de vacances, but amongst the remaining Caisses fewer children were sent out of the City to spend days in the open air. Madame Lorriaux found things harder and harder, and only managed to tide the Trois Semaines over its difficulties by buying charcoal and dried vegetables in bulk, since the invading armies had left the peasants with nothing to give. Even still numbers of mothers and war widows were still sent away. The Chaussée du Maine on the other hand was able to send over 1,300 more children to colonies - an appeal launched by the Franco-Australian Society of Sydney had brought in sufficient funds for a new building to be established opposite the already existing "Maison Bleu" at Coutainville which was named "Australia".

During the winter of 1915 and 1916 some 467 families had been left with only the Chaussée du Maine to depend upon. These were joined during the spring by 500 more children, mainly war orphans or children from bombed-out homes; so the Society entered upon the extensive work of placing these children in suitable families.

1917 proved the most difficult year of the War and only the Chaussée du Maine managed to increase the number of children it sent to colonies slightly. This was only possible due to help from America and support by the French Press. Once again during the spring of this year, homes were found for nearly 500 orphans in France, Switzerland and Algeria.

### B. The New Impetus.

With the bombardment of Paris the general public became aware of the urgency of sending children away from the capital during the danger-period. The Hôtel de Ville became the home of the Commission de la Sauvegarde de l'Enfance and 80 different organisations were given official status in order to organize the massive evacuation of children. The Municipalities of Paris were responsible for sending 9,712 children away under the care of school-teachers in groups of about thirty to what had been "centres de placement" prior to the War. There was a great ferment of activity amongst these school-teachers - educative rambles, group activities, games, sing-songs and outings became the order of the day - their energy was boundless.

The Ligue de l'Enseignement played an important part in this work and also the Fédération Nationale des Co-opératives. The latter had run a service handling only a few dozen children previously, but during this period

it made use of its contacts throughout the country, sending children from the capital to all the larger towns where branches of the organisation existed.

## Chapter IV.

### The Years From 1919 to 1936.

#### A. The U.N.C.V.

In April 1907, under the guidance of Dr. Boureille, the colonies de vacances of Paris founded the Union Parisienne des Colonies de Vacances et de Grand Air under the presidency of Emile Loubet, a former President of the Republic. At the outset this Union only admitted organisations north of a line from Besançon to Nantes and grouped non-confessional, Catholic and Protestant as well as Israelite bodies. Very quickly the pressure of demand was so great for the Union to extend its work that the Parisian Union of 1907 became the Union Nationale in 1909, and extended its work beyond the Loire.

According to the "Bulletin Officiel", the Union, which had grouped 180 organisations prior to the War, grouped 211 after the War, although no statistics are available for the War period. As we have seen, the Chaussée du Maine extended its work, but the Union as such probably played a very minor part in this for it is not until July 1919 that the "Bulletin de l'Union Nationale" reappeared.

As the work of the Union increased, the majority of new member-organisations were Catholic, so that, when in 1922 the Municipal Council of Marseilles offered to publish the bulletin of the F.N.C.V., Penel-Beaufin's request for similar facilities to be offered to the U.N.C.V. was turned

down on the grounds that, unlike the Federation, the U.N.C.V. did not maintain a "neutralité absolue". Although Penel-Beaufin replied quoting the U.N.C.V.'s second article excluding "toute immixtion dans les questions politiques et religieuses" - all involvement in political and religious questions.- the mayor of Marseilles remained unconvinced, and justifiably so. It was well enough to make such a claim when it was a question of applying for grants, but in fact 97% of the organisations were Catholic and the bulletin itself showed this bias.

In the years following the War a number of unions had sprung up in the provinces, which had soon absorbed the diocesan unions formed on Catholic initiative, and in 1928 the first Union Régionale came into being for the South of France.

In 1925 some groups of the Scouts de France had become member-organisations of the U.N.C.V. and in 1927 their Chaplain General was elected Vice-President of the Union, although this led to the withdrawal of two of the big neutral organisations: the Trois Semaines and Zuydcoote.

From January 1929, the sub-title of the bulletin of the U.N.C.V became "Groupement des Colonies de Vacances Catholiques sous le haut patronage de l'Archevêque de Paris" and the April number explained this initiative.

Three years later, in April 1932, Penel-Beaufin finally retired due to old age, as he was then eighty-two years old. He was replaced by Girardet, who was the

Commercial Director of the Catholic Organisations grouped together under the Union des Oeuvres. Thus the U.N.C.V. came overtly under the direct control of the Catholic Church, and, during the General Assembly in the same year, twenty-five members of the committee and four out of five of the Vice-Presidents were ecclesiastics.

As early as the Congress of Limoges the Catholic organisations had been so concerned with the educational aspect of colonies de vacances, that Rey-Herme described this Congress as the first great educational congress concerning colonies de vacances. Many of the Catholic colonies formed part of the Patronages and the same educational theories and techniques were used in both institutions. Girardot had been the founder of "Vie au Patronage" some twenty-five years before becoming President of the U.N.C.V., therefore the change in the bulletin of the Union in January 1933 was to be expected; also the Union was now strongly supported by the Catholic Scouting movement with all the planned system of training and methods which Baden-Powell's movement implies.

The new bulletin, "Saines Vacances" was designed to keep members of the U.N.C.V. informed not only of everything concerning practical matters of hygiene or installations but also to keep them up-to-date with new educational methods, physical education, games and everything concerning the day-to-day life of the child

in the colonies. During the following year the magazine carried out an important survey of Scouting in France in order to discover whether or not it was possible to adapt methods used in scouting to the narrower field of the colonies de vacances. In the second issue, a column was introduced to put seminarists into contact with one another to enable them to exchange views and information. Under these circumstances it was not surprising that when the "Comité d'Entente" began its first "cours pour dirigeants" - lectures for the leaders of colonies de vacances - in 1936, the U.F.C.V. took part in arranging them.

It was during an extraordinary meeting of the Union in 1933 that it was decided to apply for official recognition of "utilité publique", despite the modification of the statutes which this would involve. This was granted in May 1934. Under its new statutes, the Union Française des Colonies de Vacances was to admit declared and non-declared organisations; the clause relating to non-involvement in political and religious matters was dropped. Local and Regionally groupings were recognized and it was also possible for organisations to belong directly to the central body. The Union was placed in dependence upon the Ministers of Public Health and the Interior who thus had the right to inspect those groups which were founded by the Union itself: normal member-organisations were not affected by this new situation.

## B. The F.N.C.V.

Before the first World War, Comte had already been the driving force behind the great congresses in Bordeaux, Paris and Lyons. These were continued in 1920 in Paris, and in Marseilles in 1922, and, from then onwards, occurred approximately every two years. The first three congresses set a tradition of practical topics which each congress in turn thrashed out - the most important question before the War had been the formation of the Federation itself. But the groundwork had been completed, the empiricâ stage was giving place to the "scientific" stage, and for Comte these conferences every two years were essential for the drawing together of the threads of the work.

As early as the 1922 Congress the desire that the "the State should intervene as an enlightened guide and benevolent support" in the organisation of colonies de vacances had been expressed. This idea reoccurs in "Air et Soleil" and in the following congresses.

On the death of the President, Dr. Beauvisage, in 1923, Dequidt, who was also Inspector General at the Ministry of the Interior and charged with the task of writing a report on colonies de vacances, became Honorary President. Robert Lorriaux, whose father had been the founder of the Trois Semaines became Treasurer of the Federation (although the Trois Semaines remained on the books of the U.N.C.V. for two more years, it had already given its support to the

F.N.C.V.).

The first step towards greater cooperation with the authorities was taken in the following year when the Federation decided at its General Assembly to become the "Comité National des Colonies de Vacances". A committee permitted the full adhesion of official bodies, whereas a Federation could only legally federate bodies similar to itself. A committee was entitled to be a fully-fledged go-between vis-à-vis public bodies and private organisations; this step immediately placed the C.N.C.V. one step in front of the U.W.C.V. The new committee was officially recognized in 1925 and received recognition of "utilité publique" on the 30th June, 1926.

During the same year in the new magazine "Air et Soleil", which now replaced the bulletin of the Federation, Dequidt paid homage to Conte, who had <sup>been</sup> sick since the War and who died in July, 1926.

The Comité National became affiliated to the Comité National des Sports and was then able to consider itself on an equal footing with the Comité National Contre la Tuberculose.

Dequidt had long been pressing for official aid for colonies de vacances, but there had still been no direct aid except in the case of the "Camiers" camp established by the Ministry of War in three hundred huts left behind by British troops at the end of the War. All the aid which existed came from individual efforts of certain

municipal councils. In 1925 Dequidt pressed the Comité National Contre la Tuberculose to allocate a part of the funds it gained from the national "campagne du timbre" of street-to-street collecting to colonies de vacances without eliciting any response.

1928 was the first time that grants were made specifically for aiding colonies de vacances through the Ministry of Hygiene although a few colonies had previously received some aid from the Minister of Public Instruction or the Minister of Physical Education. Some 517 organisations representing a total of 130,000 children were aided; appreciable aid was continued until 1933 when the amount given was halved due to the difficult straits in which the country's economy had fallen at the time. Thus in 1934 Dequidt formed a committee under the presidency of the President of the Republic, bringing together the Ministers of the Interior, of Public Health and of National Education, and representatives of the chief organisations under the patronage of the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris.

Dequidt sent a circular letter to all organisations concerned with colonies de vacances explaining what he proposed to do, and enlisted the aid of several radio-stations and the national Press in order to advertize the "Carnet National" he intended to organise to raise funds for the colonies. In the following year, committees were set up in the individual Departments to organize the work at local level. Fifty per cent of the money gained remained

in the possession of those organisations which participated in the fund-raising, and the remaining amount was distributed centrally. The money raised by the Carnet was not solely restricted to the C.N.C.V. By 1938 the sum collected was in the regions of 1,200,000 francs.

As regards the organisation of the C.N.C.V. certain modifications had been made in 1927, since the General Assembly agreed to elect nine permanent members to represent the Head Offices of the Assistance and Hygiene and of the Primary Education of the country, as well as nine members from regional delegations. Thus Dequidt had, from this time onwards, the delicate task of balancing the action carried out by the organisations themselves, the regional federations (the first of which had been the Fédération du Nord et de l'Est in 1909) and the National Committee.

Hand in hand with the progression of the actual organisation went the progression of educational thought behind the whole movement. As early as 1929, Guérin-Desjardins, Rolland and others had given a series of lectures to thirty young leaders of colonies de vacances; these "cours de perfectionnement" dealt with such topics as the rôle of the "surveillant" (who today would be termed the "moniteur"), the planning of daily activities and suitable games. In the following General Assembly, as the minutes record, it was strongly recommended that some kind of leader's diploma should be created, and that, until such

time as this should be instituted, every care should be taken by the organisations in obtaining all possible references and guarantees concerning the leaders accepted to look after the children under their care.

The congresses during the next few years were orientated more and more towards educational questions, as in particular the 1931 Conference in Geneva which laid down the structure for an International Committee for Colonies de Vacances, which came into being in 1937 under the General Secretaryship of Dequidt.

## S E C T I O N II.

### The Colonie Under State Control and Guidance.

#### Chapter I.

#### The Beginning of the Era of Legislation.

##### A. The Legislation.

In his report of 1930 to the C.N.C.V., Dequidt called for control for colonies receiving State aid - such colonies should conform to ministerial directives, and grants given should be awarded upon a basis of "une sélection médicale et sociale". In the previous year Dequidt had already made a step towards achieving his aims by forming a parliamentary group within the Conseil d'Administration (the Administrative Committee) of the C.N.C.V. This group formed a proposal for an Act dealing with colonies de vacances in 1931, but this was passed over without debate. When, in 1935, at the Congress of Lyons, Doussain reported upon the progress made by this group he was only able to express its powerlessness in the face of a Right Wing government, which took no interest in social reform.

By the mid-thirties even the U.F.C.V. was beginning to feel that some kind of official intervention was necessary in those colonies which received State aid, although Catholic circles were wary lest the State should have too much authority as far as the running of their own colonies

was concerned.

The first move came in 1935 when the Conseil Supérieur d'Hygiène Publique, of which Dequidt was a member, produced an Order in Council, calling upon the Préfets at the head of each Department to establish health and hygiene control throughout their jurisdiction. Three official Circular Letters were sent out in the following year bringing Departmental Committees and Departmental Unions into being: these were to be administrative councils which would have to be consulted on matters of health and hygiene, and which would, in particular, be responsible for the distribution of any sums of money which might be at the disposal of the Department for the work ~~with~~ which they were ~~constituted~~. The Unions were to coordinate the work of private organisations while leaving them "complete autonomy and complete independence".

By 1931 the total sum of money provided by different Ministries towards the running costs of colonies de vacances amounted for 7,000,000 francs, which was distributed among 848 colonies. After the 10% reduction upon all governmental expenditure in 1933 ~~the~~ total fell to 5,850,000 francs, and this figure was even smaller in the following year. A mere 3,000,000 francs were granted towards the running of colonies in 1935 and 1936.

Then came a great move towards social reform under the Ministry of Sellier and the Front Populaire. The sum of 5,000,000 francs was granted towards the running costs of

colonies and a further 7,000,000 francs were granted towards the creation of new colonies. Two Orders in Council (28th April and 18th May, 1937) specifically laid down the conditions which were attached to these grants. The first Order allowed a maximum grant of 50% <sup>towards</sup> ~~of~~ the running costs of a colony, and certain minimum requirements were made concerning the colonies which were to receive this aid; for instance, the Order required each child to be provided with dormitory space of at least 6 sq. metres, <sup>measuring</sup> ~~by~~ 2.60 metres in height. The second Order laid down that no organisation having commercial aims should benefit from these grants, which were only to be awarded to camps, centres de placement and colonies de vacances which were officially authorized by the Préfet of the Department. This authorisation was to be given upon the advice of the Departmental Inspector of Hygiene and the Inspector of Public Assistance in consultation with a committee comprising two representatives of Public Assistance, the Inspector of the Academy or his delegate, two representatives of primary education, and two doctors representing the Departmental Council of Hygiene. Thus those colonies receiving grants were from this point onwards obliged to conform to certain specified standards and had to undergo periodical inspection to ensure that these standards were met with.

The rulings laid down by these Orders followed very closely those suggested by Robert Lorriaux at the Congress

of Reims in 1935 and published in 1935, in an amplified form, as "Statut Sanitaire et Administratif des Colonies de Vacances", by the C.N.C.V.

A consultative committee was created within the Ministry of Public Health which was to be responsible for the grants towards the opening of new colonies and the giving of authorisations for public fund-raising campaigns, as well as being responsible for ~~the~~ declaring an organisation to be of "utilité publique", and the whole carrying out of the two Orders in Council in detail.

In 1938 a further Act placed children of the age of obligatory attendance at school under the care of the Préfet of the Department while in colonies de vacances within his jurisdiction.

#### B. The Accompanying Re-shuffle of Organisation.

##### i. The U.F.O.U.A.L.

Although the Ligue de L'Enseignement had shown interest in colonies de vacances to the point that Mme. Puaux had been asked to report upon them to their General Assembly in 1912, little ~~real~~ interest was taken in them until 1927. In this year, one of the leaders of the Confédération Générale des Oeuvres Laïques, which in 1925 linked together all the organisations connected with State schooling, was forced to resign from the C.N.C.V. - according to the Committee, Conlombant had failed to organize the Fédération

Parisienne des Colonies de Vacances in a satisfactory manner.

In 1933 and 1934 a Monsieur Belliot sent <sup>out</sup> a questionnaire to which eighteen of the Regional Federations replied. Reporting his conclusions to the Congress of Reims on the 50th anniversary of the Ligue de l'Enseignement in 1934, he suggested that a new organisation was required. The U.F.C.V. implied an acceptance of religious belief and the C.N.C.V. did not exclude it, thus there was room for a truly non-religious organisation, for only such an organisation was fully entitled to claim aid from the State which stood strictly aloof from religious matters. Colonies de vacances were capable of being an excellent educational medium and there was every reason to encourage their attachment to the Ministry of National Education.

On the 14th November, 1935, the Union Française des Oeuvres de Vacances Laïques, <sup>was created</sup> under the presidency of Mademoiselle Géraud (Inspecteur Général des Ecoles Maternelles); Monsieur Aurert was appointed to the position of General Secretary and the Administrative Committee consisted of sixteen members, one of whom was Conlombant, who had remained President of the Commission de Colonies de Vacances au Cercle Parisien. The first of the three big non-religious organisations had come into being.

In 1929, the C.N.C.V. had held its first few lectures for "surveillants" in colonies de vacances, and during the 1933 Congress, Guérin-Desjardins had produced a remarkable

report ("le problème des cadres") in an attempt to form a training course for those who were to become leaders or monitors in colonies de vacances. ~~The~~ series of lectures arranged under the auspices of the "Comité d'Entente" in 1936 were insufficient and in the following year, the C.N.C.V. formed its own "Centre de Formation" for which it received three hundred inscriptions.

The U.F.C.V. continued the system of giving lectures but introduced "semaines de pédagogie" (educational weeks) for its leaders, followed up by a correspondance course, in 1938. The need for trained leaders in colonies de vacances was by now so great that an entirely new organisation sprang into being.

#### ii. The C.E.M.E.A.

The Scouting organisations, touristic and cultural organisations, as well as <sup>the</sup> Youth Hostels <sup>Association</sup> and the colonies de vacances had been calling for trained leaders. André Lefèvre, Commissaire National des Eclaireurs de France (the non-religious scouting organisation), and Giselle de Failly, a member of l'Hygiène par l'Exemple, in conjunction with their organisations, the Fédération Française des Eclaireuses and the U.F.O.V.A.L. carried out the first Centre <sup>de</sup> d'Entraînement for the training of personnel for colonies de vacances and Maisons de Campagne des Ecoliers (children's holiday houses) from the 25th March to the 2nd April, 1937.

André Lefèvre wished to free scouting from its religious trammels and put into practice the proposals of Guérin-Desjardins. Mme. Mascart, the General Secretary of the Hygiène par l'Exemple, was responsible for bringing together Giselle de Failly and André Lefèvre and she also placed her secretariate at their disposition. A grant of 10,000 francs was obtained from Henri Sellier, the Minister for Public Health, and Jean Zay, the Minister of National Education, was persuaded to allow a circular letter to be sent to the Inspectors of the Academies to inform them of the creation of the first Centre d'Entraînement aux Méthodes <sup>d'Education</sup> Actives under the patronage of these two Ministers. In 1939, as well as organising basic training courses, the C.E.M.E.A. also organized a special training course for directors of colonies de vacances.

### iii. The J.P.A.

In 1938, Theodore Steeg and Georges Lapierre (an active member of the National Syndicate of School-teachers) founded the Fédération Nationale des Oeuvres Laïques <sup>et</sup> d'Enfants et d'Adolescents, grouping certain trade-unions, the Ligue Française de l'Enseignement, La Confédération Générale du Travail, La Fédération Nationale des Oeuvres Départementales, Les Pupilles de l'Ecole Publique, <sup>et</sup> l'Hygiène par l'Exemple, the C.E.M.E.A. and the non-religious scouting movements. The object of the Federation was to coordinate the work of the different organisations, to

improve the organisation of colonies de vacances and aid in their running, to establish links with similar organisations abroad, to aid non-religious colonies by providing for a sale of special stamps and tokens to raise funds, of which the larger part would go directly to the different organisations to offset the running costs of colonies, and by providing loans without interest for the creation of new colonies or the equipping of colonies already in existence. Local Committees were formed rapidly in most Departments and, shortly before the Second World War, the J.P.A. (the Jeunesse au Plein Air, which was the shorter title of the Confederation) grouped about one thousand different organisations.

## Chapter II.

### The War Years (1939 to 1944).

The Second World War immediately put a stop to the work of all organisations closely linked with the State, such as the C.E.M.E.A., the J.P.A. and the U.F.C.V.A.L. As far as the C.N.C.V. was concerned there was a complete cessation of all activity until the Liberation. Nonetheless Stassinot claims that the work of colonies de vacances actually quintupled between 1940 and 1944. (1)

From the point of view of the U.F.C.V. this claim may hold firm although throughout the whole period of the Occupation it was only able to hold one official central meeting. Since the Forces of Occupation had forbidden all meetings of over three people, this meeting was held on the 13th March, 1942 between the President, Monsieur Couturier, the Vice-president, the Abbé Bard, and the General Secretary, Monsieur Varaigne.

Although the central organisation could play no part in the organisation of colonies this was not true of the regional offices. A new branch office was opened at Lyons, organized by a certain Father Courtois and Mesdemoiselles Flusinet and Richehomme, and many of the regional offices expanded their work rapidly. Colonies which were part of the general activity of Parishes continued to function and many joined together to form Departmental Committees. The

(1) Colonel M. STASSINOT. Un peu d'histoire à l'occasion d'un Centenaire. Article in B.M.I. of U.F.C.V. No.31

closing down of the Central Office by the Gestapo in 1943 did not stop the activity of the colonies belonging to the member-organisations of the U.F.C.V., nor did it stop the publication of a form of the "Saines Vacances" as a ~~quarterly~~ <sup>quarterly</sup> bulletin - the magazine only appeared once during the War in its old form in a special edition in 1942.

Bordeaux in particular was not behindhand in continuing the work of colonies de vacances, despite the altered circumstances. Not only did the Catholic organisation of the "rue de Chewrus" continue its work along with the other Catholic and Protestant Patronages of Bordeaux, but also several big industrial firms began important work of their own, instigated by the keenness of social workers in the City. The Milling Company, the Vegetable Oil Company, the City's Bus Services, a shipping company (the Union Sociale Maritime), and the Municipal Council of Bordeaux, all began to take part in the organisation of colonies, beside the S.N.C.F. (the Railways) and Marie-Brizard (a firm producing liqueurs) both of which had already run some colonies before the War.

In 1943, when it was discovered that the lives of a group of Israelite children were in danger, the C.P.C.V. ("Comité Protestant Des Colonies de Vacances") sprang into being in order to take the children out of their homes and disperse them in different colonies de vacances where the Army of Occupation would have great difficulty in finding and identifying them. Once the Committee had begun this

work it soon found itself in great demand and children of all creeds were accepted in its colonies without distinction.

Only the most devoted and the most courageous organisers were able to continue the work of organizing colonies. Even in the countryside food was scarce, although less so than in the towns and cities, and there was little possibility of obtaining petrol - many a director or organiser had to cover many tens of miles by pedal-cycle and often the children themselves had to undertake long marches in order to reach the site of their colony. It was small wonder that there was great rejoicing at Saint-André de Cubzac as the Tricolour was hoisted on the flag-pole of their colony, as the retreating troops disappeared in the distance and the forty young girls took possession of the colonies which they had left quietly in the night for fear of being molested by the troops which had camped nearby during the retreat.

By the activity and enthusiasm of local organisers and the team of workers who continually joined the U.F.C.V. throughout the War, the Youth schemes of the Vichy government were largely combatted. In Bordeaux alone 4,584 children were sent to colonies de vacances in 1943.

### Chapter III.

#### The Post-War Period 1945 to 1948.

Although during the Occupation colonies de vacances had officially been under the direction of the Ministry of National Education, the institution came within the province of the Ministry of Population for a period before coming once again within the province of the Ministry of National Education, this time under the Youth and Sports Section, *after the War.*

With the Liberation, there arose an extensive movement towards social reform and a fervent desire to help those in need. Parents were concerned to restore the health of their children after the War; rationing was to continue in France until 1948 (not 1952 as in England) and the scarcity of food was always less acute in the country. Besides this, the government awarded extra points for colonies de vacances - all these factors favoured the growth of the colonie following the War.

Two new Acts benefited colonies de vacances. The first gave Comités d'Entreprise (Works Committees - many of which had begun running colonies during the War) of Factories of over fifty workers official status. These Committees contributed on an average 20% of their funds towards the running of colonies (these funds were raised by the deduction of a small fixed sum from each worker's salary added to a personal contribution). The second Act

modified the Assurances Sociales, creating the modern system of Social Security with a branch, "Les Allocations Familiales", which began to aid colonies de vacances to the extent of 5% of its funds (Fonds d'action sanitaire et sociale). This money provided tokens to enable poorer children to be sent to colonies, and grants were also made towards equipment in colonies taking children whose parents contributed to the scheme. Apart from this, social and administrative services, such as certain Ministries, the Préfectures, Police, Customs, the P.T.T. (Post Office and Telephone Services), and the S.N.C.F. (the Railways), now had sums of money at their disposition provided by the national budget which they could, if they so wished, use to aid colonies de vacances.

The U.F.C.V. held its first full Committee Meeting on 18th April, 1945, when many of the new workers at a local level were introduced to the work of the Union at a national level. Other organisations did likewise - including the C.N.C.V. which now had only a small field of action and gradually declined until, in 1956, Dequidt handed over the small sum of money remaining to the organisation to the U.F.C.V. shortly before his death.

At the beginning of 1946, the State began the work of coordinating the various organisations through "Entr'aide Française" which sent out a Circular Letter bringing State Diplomas for Directors and Monitors of colonies de vacances into being, and at the same time authorizing four organisations to run training courses leading to the Diplomas, which were

the C.E.M.E.A., the U.F.C.V., the C.P.C.V. and the F.C.V.F. (the latter had been part of the Comité d'Entente "Natalité - Famille - Education" which had arranged a series of lectures for leaders of colonies de vacances in 1936 - see page 41). The training was to consist of a basic training period of about ten days, followed by a trial period of at least twenty-one days in a colony under observation, and a final written examination. The Bills of 1954 and 1958 made only slight modifications to the original conception of the training course.

Some 420,000 children went to colonies de vacances in 1936; in 1944 and 1945 similar numbers of children were found to have had this form of holiday. But in 1946, by which time the C.E.M.E.A. had already held 120 training "stages" and the U.F.C.V. 36 training "stages", colonies de vacances multiplied with extreme rapidity, so that the figures rose to 500,000 in 1946, 800,000 in 1947 and 900,000 in 1948.

In 1945 the C.P.C.V. and the F.C.V.F., although they held fewer training courses, had already begun organizing training "stages".

From the first meeting in 1944 of the Instructors of the C.E.M.E.A. the movement had expanded quickly. In the following year a Belgian Section was founded, and "stages" were begun for supervisors in boarding-schools. In 1946 in April, the C.E.M.E.A. began publishing "Vers l'Education

"Nouvelle" - a magazine of practical pedagogy dealing with problems of colonies de vacances and aimed at a wider public than merely those who had attended the training courses run by the organisation. In the same year the Editions du Scarabée were brought into being to provide literature for colonies de vacances to tackle both practical and pedagogical problems. During September Gisèle de Failly and one other C.E.M.E.A. instructor ran a stage for twelve days on "éducation nouvelle" following a request by the Inspector of Youth Movements and Popular Education in <sup>the Department of the</sup> Nord. At the end of October seventy-five of the C.E.M.E.A. instructors met together for a training course ~~together~~ of over a week; and at the end of November Gisèle de Failly ran a further stage on "éducation" nouvelle", this time at the Educational Centre of Saint-Cloud.

1947 was a year in which the food shortage was still acute. According to research carried out by Swiss doctors (1) there was an average difference in weight between French and Swiss children of eight to ten pounds in the age group ranging from six to fifteen years. Nonetheless colonies de vacances were not merely camps in which children were fattened up a little and returned to their parents at the end of a health cure. It was during 1947 that the Centre de Coopération Culturelle et Sociale came into being, for instance; its object was mainly to provide international colonies for older children but it gradually extended its

(1) J. CAUSERET. Les Enfants Sous-alimentés et la Colonie de Vacances, an article in V.E.N. of the C.E.M.E.A. No.3 June, 1946.

scope to provide colonies and camps for children of all ages.

During 1947 the Diplomas for monitors and directors of colonies were made officially recognized State Diplomas. This was also the year which saw the death of "Le Vieux Castor" - the Old Beaver - the great scout-leader and the real founder of the C.E.M.E.A. The work of the C.E.M.E.A. took another step forward during the year when the Ecole Nouvelle of Boulogne was founded directly by the organisation, in order to try out, under normal school conditions for themselves, the ensemble of different methods which had been culled from a great variety of educationalists and which had come to be known as the New Education, hence the title of the magazine of the C.E.M.E.A.

During the year, the Ministry of Education had set up a commission to study the application of the 1938 Act concerning colonies de vacances, with a view to making any alterations which might be necessary. The unfortunate result of this was that the U.F.C.V. was no longer able to benefit from the proceeds of the sale of tokens and stamps, which was now organized solely by the F.P.A. for the benefit of the C.E.M.E.A. and the U.F.O.V.A.L. which qualified as strictly non-religious organisations.

In 1948 the activities of all organisations multiplied in every sphere. The Oeuvres de Plein Air des Jeunes Laïques et Républicaines received their recognition of

"utilité publique"; the Oeuvres des Pupilles de l'Ecole Publique handled twice as many children as in 1945. The C.E.M.E.A. ran their first "stage" in Switzerland and created the "Théâtre de la Clairière" to provide plays for children at a price they could afford and which would be of real value - the "Théâtre de la Clairière" succeeded in doing for children what Jean Villar had already done for adults by creating a theatre of a high standard accessible to everyone.

In this year the J.P.A. were able to provide interest-free loans for the first time, and the C.E.M.E.A. carried out the first of a new series of Study Days devoted to the hearing of reports by special commissions - during the course of the series of four days spent in this manner the reports of four commissions were dealt with on the subject of buildings and their sites, the equipping of colonies, the internal lay-out of a colony and lastly camps for adolescents, to which two important editions of the magazine of the C.E.M.E.A. were devoted.

During the course of the year, the C.E.M.E.A. ran a total of 256 stages, compared to 153 run by the U.F.C.V., which had also begun its own magazine in March (the "Bulletin Mensuel d'Information").

## Chapter IV.

### 1948 to 1952: The End of Rationing and the New Legislation.

In 1949, for the first time, the number of children going to colonies de vacances ceased to grow and actually fell to 864,550. This decrease continued until 1951 when the figure was 802,903. In 1952 the figure rose once more, but only in 1953 was the figure higher than the ~~the~~ figure for 1948. There were fewer special courses ("cours de perfectionnement") run by the U.F.C.V., and the C.E.M.E.A. ceased their rapid progression in this kind of activity. During this period there were also fewer young people training to be either monitors or directors.

Three factors contributed towards this: firstly, the period of a low birth-rate at the beginning of the War began to influence the number of children of school-age; secondly the end of rationing made it less essential for parents to send their children to colonies; lastly the 1949 Orders in Council, which gave the Direction Générale à la Jeunesse et aux Sports (the Head body of the Youth and Sports organisation of the government) the right to inspect colonies from a medical and educational point of view, prevented many colonies from functioning.

The last factor is perhaps the overruling one since Bécart maintains that, even allowing for the fewer children

being born at the beginning of the War, an increase in the number of children attending colonies de vacances might have been expected (1). A ~~period~~ of three years was allowed for colonies to bring their buildings up to date, but the ~~cost~~ of doing so was too great a burden in many cases. It is significant <sup>that</sup> the Youth and Sports organisation reported that there were 1,400 buildings unsuitable for use for colonies in 1949, as against only 100 in 1952.

The Act of 14th April <sup>1949</sup> laid down basic rules for the organisation and running of colonies, and also put all children of school-age, out of the care of their parents, under the protection of the Préfet; ~~and~~ Comités Départementaux de Surveillance were set up consisting of the Préfet, the Inspector of the Academy, the Head of the Departmental Youth and Sports Office, the Departmental Directors of Health and of Population, the Departmental Health Inspector and fourteen other members. An organizing committee was to carry out the detailed work in between the sessions of the main committee.

The same Act laid down regulations concerning bathing and the declarations of accidents; later in the year came Orders in Council concerning the Social Security obligations of those employed in colonies as domestic staff or as monitors or leaders.

The C.E.M.E.A. had long worked in close cooperation with the J.P.A. and U.F.O.V.A.L. and in 1950, on the 10th and 11th November held Study Days in conjunction with these organisations

(1) cf. E. BECART in Encyclopédie pratique de l'éducation en France, page 968 ff.

and devoted important articles in its magazine to the findings, which concerned the progress of colonies and camps for adolescents. The problem of providing holidays for adolescents was now coming to the fore since the traditional colonie de vacances for children of school-age was well-established. The "Eclaireurs de France", the non-religious scouting movement, were also re-thinking their approach to the problem of adolescence, and, from this year onwards, took the bold step of running a number of mixed camps.

Liaison between the U.F.O.V.A.L. and the C.E.M.E.A. had been becoming closer and closer, and during the course of 1951 the U.F.O.V.A.L. took over 5,000 dossiers from the C.E.M.E.A. so that by 1951 their office, responsible for placing children in colonies, had dossiers for about 50,000 children, containing details concerning their background, their health, and education, providing a full link between the school doctor, the family and the colonie de vacances. Besides <sup>this, it</sup> ~~informed~~ the director of a colonie of the kind of behaviour the child had shown in previous colonies, permitting, in certain cases, proper care to be taken in dealing with a difficult child.

The C.E.M.E.A. extended their work by running a stage in Italy, by running a "stage" for workers in psychiatric hospitals, and also by running a "stage" for making marionettes - which in subsequent years was to become one of the most

popular handicrafts in colonies. But the most significant development, and one which showed the very close link between the C.E.M.E.A. and State education, was that all primary school-teachers in training at Ecoles Normales were obliged to following a "stage" for monitors of colonies de vacances.

It was also in 1950 that Concordia set up an organisation in France in order to train staff for Volunteer Youth Work.

In 1951, as the field of Franco-German cooperation began to widen, some 400 East German refugees were placed in colonies de vacances, and, in the following year, the number more than doubled. But the out-standing event of the year in connection with the progress of colonies de vacances was the ~~the~~ Congress of the U.F.C.V. - the First Congress had been as far back as 1910, and this second Congress was planned to fall on the fiftieth anniversary of the declaration of the Union Nationale des Colonies Des Vacances in 1911.

After the Second World War, the U.F.C.V. found itself, instead of being dominantly Catholic, having only about 40% of its members amongst the Catholics - not because there were fewer Catholic members, but, <sup>because</sup> during the War, the organisation had expanded greatly in an effort to help all children, regardless of religious dogma and educational principles. The U.F.C.V. had remained behind the strictly non-religious organisations as far as the progress of educational thought was concerned and the three day Congress in February, 1951,

was a sign that the U.F.C.V. was aware of this situation and was taking its responsibility in the educational field seriously. Some 1,200 people attended the Congress throughout the three days, of whom over 700 were members; the Congress was a statement of the right of every child to "une éducation selon sa nature" - - - "parce que l'Enfant est une Personne, une personne spirituelle, une personne libre" - an education taking into account the personality of each individual child as a free being in his or her own right - the colonie de vacances meant far more in educational terms than the mere continuation of the school-year. (1)

1952 saw close cooperation of the C.E.M.E.A., the U.F.O.V.A.L. and the J.P.A. once again, this time for research into the safety of children in colonies de vacances. During the early days there had been very few accidents and it was not until 1903 that the Chaussée du Maine, which by then was already receiving 1,500 children each year in its colonies, reported to its regret that, for the first time, a child had met with a fatal accident while taking part in one of its colonies: the child had been killed while passing behind a loaded hay-cart. A number of accidents in the years immediately following the Second World War had led the Direction Générale à la Jeunesse et aux Sports (the central body of the Youth and Sports organisation) to <sup>issue</sup> ~~bring~~ in several regulations to safeguard

(1) H. MANSION. Le Congrès: Synthèse Article in B.M.I. of U.F.C.V. No.31

children in colonies - the regulations regarding bathing were particularly strict and carefully planned. The three big non-religious organisations went into the matter of the safety of children in colonies and published their findings in book form (1). They concluded that good organisation and proper educational methods had solved many problems and that the total of thirteen deaths in colonies de vacances out of a total of 900,000 children was considerably less than the figure which would have been expected for the same number of children spending their holidays at home or with their parents. However one further Official Circular Letter was sent in 1952, during the month of March, laying down regulations concerning mountain rambles - this was as a result of a mountain accident earlier in the year.

In 1952 the organisation of the J.P.A. was entirely remoulded so that it was able to become a permanent link between the U.F.O.V.A.L. and the C.E.M.E.A. <sup>In consequence</sup> ~~so that~~ the three organisations more than ever began to function as one body, each dealing with one aspect of the work. During April another organisation sprang into being; the Fédération Nationale des Maisons Familiales de Vacances Populaires was created with the aim of providing holidays for the working classes which would be free from a "certain paternalism and a capitalistic conception of holidays and leisure",

(1) J. PLANCHON. La Sécurité des Enfants, Editions du Scarabée, Paris, 1958.

which were normally associated with ~~WORKING~~ holidays for people of the working classes. The groups federated within the organisation <sup>new</sup> run between them thirty-five institutions, providing holidays for families, for which the Federation trains special staff.

Although the number of children attending colonies de vacances in 1952 had still not recovered the level reached in 1948, the institution as such was developing, especially as regards its educational methods and the interest taken in adolescents.

## Chapter V.

### The Decade 1953 to 1963.

If demographical growth alone is taken into account, no rise would be expected in the number of children attending colonies de vacances until 1954 or 1955, but already in 1953 there was a significant increase over the figure for 1948.

By the beginning of the 1950s there was no longer any doubt of the value of colonies de vacances as an educational and recreational institution in its own right of value to all children, regardless of wealth or their family background. Although colonies still provided for children of extremely poor families, there was no question, for the parents of the majority of the children, of sending their offspring to "charitable organisations". The institution not only had State support, but monitors and directors possessed a solid foundation of practical knowledge which would have ~~been~~ the envy of Juliette Pary who, prior to the Second World War, did her best to run her colonies on sound educational lines with completely inexperienced monitors (1). So popular were colonies that the number of children who were unable to be accepted was estimated at 500,000, although this figure is probably much amplified by the difficulties in placing children which caused many parents to apply to several organisations at a time.

(1) J. PARY. Mes 126 gosses, Flammarion, Editeur, Paris, 1953.

Although the number of children attending colonies had diminished between 1948 and 1952, the actual period spent in colonies rose from an average of  $27\frac{1}{2}$  days to an average of  $31\frac{1}{4}$  days. Between 1952 and 1957 there was also a very slight progression (to  $31\frac{3}{5}$  days) due to efforts to make full use of premises, since many children were able to leave school at any early date in order to attend colonies de vacances. In individual cases the average length of time fell as much as even eight and a half days because of the pressure of demand and the insufficiency of buildings available.

Only in 1959 for the first time was there a regression ~~XXXXXXXX~~ in the total number of days ~~spent~~ by children in colonies de vacances, due to the scarcity of buildings and the lack of funds provided by the government. However a step had been made in 1957 to improve the situation when the first Three-Year-Plan came into being to provide funds for the construction of new buildings for colonies de vacances. The Plan was not widely publicized and individual organisations had difficulty in drawing up plans and carrying out the complicated administrative procedure in order to obtain the grants which were offered. The Second Three-Year-Plan, and the Five-Year-Plan following this, received much wider publication and the national organisations provided machinery and information to help the individual organisations to obtain the grants.

In 1958 and 1959 a fall might have been expected in the number of monitors in colonies de vacances due to the fever births in France during the early part of the Second World War, but once again colonies de vacances were expanding so rapidly that the number of monitors continued to rise steadily over both these years.

1958 and 1959 also saw renewed activity within the U.F.C.V., which began to keep an information bureau open in Paris throughout the summer months. C.L.E.D.O.R. (The Centre de Liaison, d'Édition, et de Diffusion des Oeuvres de Grand Air) and its associated publications ~~and their~~ ~~appearing;~~ and shortly afterwards the Bulletin Mensuel d'Information assumed ~~an~~ an improved form, and the magazine "Moniteurs" was first published to provide information and material for monitors in colonies, apart from the technical information with which the B.M.I. dealt with for the use of directors and organisers.

In the early fifties, many Algerian children were received in colonies in France, and in 1954 the C.E.M.E.A. formed its international Federation of which the Algerian branch still continued to function even during the difficult period of the Algerian crisis. In 1954 the Direction Générale à la Jeunesse et aux Sports began to organize international camps - Rencontres Internationales de Jeunes.

Although progress was still being made in many spheres new regulations came in during 1957 which meant that the members of the C.E.M.E.A. running the experimental school

in Boulogne were no longer entitled to do so, and the school had to be closed. However the school had served the purpose for which it had been created and the methods of the "éducation nouvelle" were sufficiently well tried by this time for there to be no urgent need to continue the work of the school. The importance and keenness of the C.E.M.E.A. is witnessed at this time by the number of instructors attending a special week's course in September 1957, when a total number of 600 instructors was recorded.

Other developments during the decade included "classes de neige" during the winter for young skiers, the creation of "ruches" in the country where young children could spend the day under proper supervision, and the inauguration of Cotravaux by the Jeunesse et Sports in 1957, which was sending well over 6,000 young people to work on special projects by 1962. The first national "stage" of the C.P.C.V. was held at Bièvres in Seine-et-Oise in December of 1957, <sup>at about the same period,</sup> and the Committee founded its Centre Expérimental ~~de~~ Education Populaire, destined to replace and improve the J.E.E.P. (a form of Protestant Patronage out of which the first colonies had sprung during the Second World War).

Recent years have seen the creation of the Centre des Jeunes at Avignon by the C.F.M.E.A. for young people attending the Drama Festival, and in 1962 ~~for~~ of their instructors were invited to go to Poland to help run a training course for Polish scouts - already in 1961 they had been called

upon to train leaders for the Eclaireurs de France.

The U.F.C.V. had been improving its services over a long period, and in 1962 the Union moved its Central Office and made an alteration in its name at the same time. The alteration in the name of the Union to the Union Française des Centres de Vacances et de Loisirs was intended to be an indication of the widening of the scope of the organisation.

Although it is difficult to discover in what direction the colonie de vacances is moving from a superficial glance at the institution, we shall discover later in this study, when dealing with a particular area and by examining the statistics relating to colonies de vacances, that this broadening of horizons is the salient feature of the institution at a time when, from the numerical point of view, little progress appears to be being made.

PART II.

THE COLONIE TODAY.

## S E C T I O N I.

### The Principles Behind Colonies de Vacances and their Evolution.

#### Chapter I.

#### The Aims of the Early Colonies de Vacances.

##### A. The Early Protestant Colonies.

There were certainly earlier movements in France than Lorriaux's Trois Semaines - as early as 1823 Rudolphe Toepffer and his wife had organized "voyages en zigzag" for boarding school pupils of all nationalities. These "excursions de vacances" provided holidays for about forty children from families which were wealthy enough to pay the necessary expenses. As early as 1847 a group of children, in what was termed a "colonie" of between the ages of eight and fifteen were provided with food and work in an old mill. The children were taken from amongst the poorest of the Canton and were given elementary schooling and a religious education with the aim that they should be brought up to be honest workers.

Lorriaux's work had greater affinities with the "colonie" rather than the "voyages", although he was in all probability ignorant of both of these movements at the beginning of the nineteenth century. His motives were entirely philanthropic

and he directed his attention towards poor and suffering children. He was influenced by Bion and by the work of Parsons in America, <sup>h</sup>ere he had been travelling for a period before returning to France to resume work in his parish. Bion had begun by sending children into families in mountain villages and this was also the system which Parsons had adopted, rather <sup>than</sup> the system which Bion preferred and used from 1880 onwards by which he grouped numbers of children under one roof. As Lorriaux's motives were solely charitable and since he was not an educationalist as Bion, the first system was the most natural one for him to follow. Bion had been wary from the very start of placing children in families, as he knew of such schemes in Germany and ~~Denmark~~ and frowned upon them as being no more than a mere "Milchkur" whereas his own colonies were governed by valid pedagogical principles. Thus he sent out only small groups of about ten children under the care of a teacher who grouped the children each day and took them for walks and excursions. The children had to undergo a medical examination before being accepted and only those children whose parents had not sufficient means to provide holidays for their children themselves were taken away. For Bion the purpose of the holiday was as much to provide an opportunity for town children to gain better health as to take them away from a background which was often morally unhealthy - often the family itself - and

allow them to spend a period in balanced and harmonious surroundings.

The name which Lorriaux took for his organisation - the Trois Semaines - comes from the period of three weeks which the first group of three girls spent at Nanteuil-les-Meaux in 1881; the girls came back with their cheeks "glowing with health" and the experiment was such a pronounced success that colonies de vacances had found a footing in France and were to spread rapidly. Lorriaux's object was achieved so long as the children came back full of health; anything from two to ten children were sent to a farmer's wife in the countryside and all was well so long as she agreed to take the children for walks. A few "devoted friends" kept an eye on the children and on the families they stayed in to ensure that the children were properly cared for and did not misbehave themselves.

That this system was not entirely satisfactory is clear from the fact that Lorriaux's organisation obtained a building at Montjavoult in 1891 which it named the "Clef des Champs". The "Clef des Champs" was able to take five groups of forty to fifty girls each summer, and by 1896 three similar buildings had been found so that there were two for boys and two for girls.

An experiment was tried in 1889, when some weak and anæmic children were sent for a sea-side holiday, but this scheme proved too expensive and had to be abandoned. In the following years some mothers were sent away to the

countryside with their children, and occasionally whole families were sent away - thus the keynote of the work was to help individuals in difficult circumstances, and the methods of doing so were secondary. Protestants, Catholics and even those of no particular religions were accepted without distinction.

As we have already seen, the Chaussée du Maine was a well-established charitable organisation long before it began to undertake colonies de vacances. The Chaussée du Maine also employed the system of placement familial and not until 1899 did it possess a small chalet, "La Maison Bleu" with twelve beds. The system of placement familial is a more supple one than one involving collective holidays and proved most suitable for providing good food "and pure air for some poorly children" - the ultimate object always remained the individual happiness of each child.

It was therefore principally health motives which were the driving force behind the early colonies, and this was true until at least the First World War. The 1904 meeting of the Academy of Medicine heard a report on colonies de vacances in which Grancher described them as "the first line of defense against tuberculosis". In the same report, Grancher stated that out of 438 children examined in the twelfth Arrondissement of Paris, 62 were found to be suspected cases of children suffering from tuberculosis - a similar study in Toulouse showed that

36% of the children examined were probably suffering from tuberculosis. Colonies de vacances were considered one of the best ways of preventing the spread of this scourge of the times and many theses for doctorates at various universities in France at this period were written on the subject of colonies de vacances. From the point of view of the medical profession the method of placement familial was most useful as it meant that children were kept from each other, rather than being herded together under conditions under which the disease was liable to spread easily.

#### B. The School Colonies.

Edmond Cottinet was a philanthropist although he had no particular connections with any religious body. He was particularly concerned with the lot of children attending public schooling, and during a holiday in Switzerland he came across the work of Bion and the "Ferienkolonien". Cottinet decided to create the same institution through the Caisse des Ecoles (the Schools' Fund) of the eleventh Arrondissement in Paris of which he was already an administrator. The colonies he created had nothing in common with the school "voyages" of the revolutionary Turgot School, which had begun a form of excursion for the brightest children as a reward for good work. Many Caisses took up this form of excursion, which were often expensive and crammed with a never-ending series of organized activities. Cottinet's

aims on the contrary were "purely hygienic".

Nonetheless from the outset these colonies took on quite a different aspect from the Protestant colonies. Cottinet followed Bion's later policy of holding collective colonies - the first two of which were in the Training College of Chaumont and in a nearby primary school at Luxeuil. Those who ran these colonies were young teachers, often married couples - there were abundant Lessons About Things and the children were sent out to Hunt for fossils or examine an old mill.

A uniform daily routine was soon established: each morning an hour had to <sup>be</sup> spent writing a diary of events, then there were organized games; during the afternoon there would be a walk conducted by the teachers.

Cottinet was quick to gain recognition for his work and persuaded the Municipal Council to take an interest in his undertaking. In order to gain support of the educational authorities Cottinet set about forming the Comité Parisien des Colonies de Vacances, and shortly afterwards the Director of Primary Education succeeded in persuading Bion to publish a booklet explaining his approach to colonies de vacances. In his booklet, Bion pointed out the essential difference between his work and what had gone before: colonies needed to -

"joignent, aux soins donnés au corps, la culture intellectuelle et morale des enfants: c'est en cela que consiste essentiellement leur originalité, et c'est

par là qu'elles se distinguent des institutions fondées antérieurement en vue d'améliorer la santé des enfants."

(1)

provide not only for the physical welfare of the children but also for their intellectual and moral welfare. It was in this approach that Bion's institution differed from the "Milchkur". Similarly for Cottinet the colonie was to provide for the ailing and sickly children of the primary school a "cure of fresh air, aided by natural exercise in the countryside, cleanness, good food and gaiety." The children often came from the same school and were in the hands of the teachers they saw throughout the school-year, and the daily diary was kept regularly to impress favourably the Municipal Council which was more liable to be willing to grant funds for the colonies if it was felt that they were of educational benefit to the children.

Although it was Cottinet's intention that the colonie of the primary schools should remain as much as possible faithful to Bion's conception it was difficult to do so where funds were provided by such conservative bodies as the Caisses des Ecoles and Municipal Councils which had already had experience of the "voyages scolaires". Notwithstanding he himself demanded that the colonie should take place in a "milieu éducativement riche" and required "special competence" from his directors, who were exclusively teachers, which was by no means the case with Bion. So

(1) M. BION. Les Colonies de Vacances, mémoire HISTORIQUE ET Statistique, Musée Pédagogique, March 1887 - Quoted by REY-HERME Les Colonies de vacances en France (1881-1906) Page 229.

rich was this milieu that in 1884, one of the organisers, Lecart, who had been chosen for his knowledge of the countryside, managed to organize seventeen visits in twenty-one days - a feat scarcely to be equaled even in the most ambitious of "educational" colonies at the present day.

Not only was there the danger that teachers would bring classroom techniques into the sphere of the colonies de vacances, but there was also a tendency for the teacher to select his or her own particular favourites however unbiased they wished to be; also the very fact that colonies were held on school premises, even where these were far away from the original school, made it harder to escape the atmosphere of the classroom. It was also common for the colonies attached to schools to lose all interest in children as soon as they reached school-leaving age, so that as children left school at the age of twelve at the end of the summer term their last opportunity of attending a colonie was in the summer, nearly a year before they were to leave school. Thus although many teachers aimed high there were often cases where the school colonie became very institutionalized. This was a danger that the Catholic colonies were not able to escape entirely either.

### B. The Catholic Colonies.

As a general rule the Catholic colonies sprang up out of Patronages already in existence - these were Thursday

Clubs providing games and religious instruction, which already possessed leaders experienced in handling children. For the Abbé Pitray, who converted a chalet into a sanatorium for "weak and ailing children", "in the middle of the maritime pine forests some distance from Arcachon", the Patronage and the colonie were one and the same thing - "c'était la même organisation, le même esprit, les mêmes idées". The colonie for Pitray was a Christian family where morning and evening devotions formed part of the family life; by taking the children from the Patronage away from Paris for a while he hoped to be able to build them both morally and physically in a family atmosphere. Parents were expected to contribute to the cost of the colonie, and children of differing ages were accepted.

The Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul in Paris however, considered the colonie of vital importance from a different angle: for the Society the colonie was a "planche de salut" - a spring-board to Salvation at a time when the government had a tendency to encroach upon religious rights and when primary schooling was very largely in the hands of the State. The unfortunate results of ten months in a State school for a Catholic child might well be eradicated, it was felt, by a period spent in a colonie de vacances.

Perhaps more than the "devoted friends" of the Trois Semaines and the directors chosen for their "special competence" by Cottinet, the seminarists of the Catholic colonies set to work with genuine fervour, since for them

not only the child's health ~~was at stake~~ but, even more, the child's eternal welfare was at stake.<sup>if</sup> The seminarists of the Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul set about studying educational methods, learnt games and songs and even mastered Swedish gymnastics so that they should be well prepared for the task of running the colonies of the Society.

Thus, although the early colonies were begun essentially with charitable and ph<sup>l</sup>anthropic motives in mind, there was even in the early years a clear indication of the bias which the Catholic and School colonies in particular had a tendency to assume in later years.

## Chapter II.

### The Process of "demedicalisation".

By the beginning of the First World War the colonies de vacances were constantly under discussion in the press and the movement was steadily expanding. Some Works' Committees were sending children to colonies, the Sociétés d'Originaires, the Ligue de l'Enseignement and the Socialist Party (the S.F.I.O.) were concerned in the movement and the organized structure of the movement was taking shape at national level.

As we have seen, the War brought the large majority of the organisations to a standstill, except during the last year of the War when there was a mass exodus of the children from the City during the bombardment put into operation by the Commission de la Sauvegarde de l'Enfance. This movement was so successful that there was some suggestion immediately after the War of making colonies de vacances part of the normal school curriculum - but it is to be noted that by this time there was no longer any question of one teacher having ten children in his care as in the colonies for which Cottinet had been responsible, there was one school-teacher in charge of at least thirty children who were boarded out in families (the system of placement familial).

Once the War was over however, a new concern began to arise in the minds of educationalists and philanthropists

- there was the feeling that is common in any nation after a period of War that the adult population had failed and that the children were in need of moral regeneration. As a result of this, many war-time organisations, being no longer concerned with the purpose for which they had originally been created, began to take an interest in colonies de vacances - this was the case with the Office des Pupilles de la Nation which took care of war-time orphans and now started creating colonies. It was out of the same solicitude for the welfare of the children of the nation that the Ministry of the Interior ran the camp of Camiers for a number of years following the War - here in three hundred barrack huts in the Pas-de-Calais, which had been left behind by the British soldiers at the end of the War, some 6,000 children from the East and North were given eight weeks holiday under the supervision 300 school-mistresses. Between 10,000 and 12,000 children were able to spend part of their holidays in the camps each year.

In the existing organisations, such as the Caisses des Ecoles, more and more children were being received even though the number of children receiving free holidays remained more or less constant. From the early twenties onwards, the idea of paid holidays was gaining ground until they were made a reality for everyone by the 1937 Act and as time went on the wealthy classes were finding themselves less wealthy whilst some of the very poor of the nation

were in less dire straits than at the turn of the century. So that more families found themselves able to pay at least part of the total cost of sending their children to colonies.

At the same time, the distinction between the strictly preventative colonies and those taking normal, healthy children became apparent, and it is this which accounts for the refusal of the Comité National Contre la Tuberculose to allow colonies de vacances to benefit from the proceeds of their collections when Deguidt was attempting to win the financial support of this committee for colonies de vacances in 1930.

International colonies, as those organized by the French War Charity Society in England, which were begun for health reasons, acquired new aims: it was found that the children benefitted from the linguistic and cultural point of view as well as from the physical point of view ( - - - "the physical results are excellent, although all the children have to put up with English food.") Also certain new organisations sprang into being for mixed social and political reasons (for example the Jeunesse Républicaine), whilst such an occasional organisation as the marxist Faucons Rouges came into existence with the primary objective of training youngsters into a particular way of life and thought.

Whereas one could discuss health problems purely and simply taking into account the lowest 100,000 of the nation's children,

when the number of children rose from this figure at the beginning of the 1920s to twice the number and then as much as four times the number by 1930, it is clear that other considerations were involved for at least three-quarters of the children then attending colonies de vacances.

If a weak and ailing child needs only to be fed and cared for, the same is not true of normal, healthy youngsters abounding with energy. The inspiration for a new approach to the handling of children in colonies came from two sources. The first source can be traced back at least as far as J.-J. Rousseau and the second can be traced back to the very first scout camp for a small group of boys on the island of Brownsea run by the hero of Mafeking with the experience he had gained in organizing young people and training them during the siege of the town during the Boer War.

### Chapter III.

#### The Active Methods.

##### A. Scouting.

The Boy Scout movement is too well known for a detailed exposition of it to be necessary. Its progression in England was a lightning one compared to France; from involving twenty-two boys in 1907 the movement involved 100,000 in 1910 - in three years the movement had gained the numerical strength which it had taken the colonies de vacances in France thirty years to gain, and it has only been since the Second World War that the colonies de vacances have gained a considerable lead over the scouting movement in England. The scouting movement in France began as early as 1910, but even today its extent is only about half that of the movement in England, which may have some connection with the mingling of "low-church Christianity, Kipling and school-boy honour" in its philosophy which has a particular fascination for the British mentality, in a country where the ideal conception of the true "gentleman" is still a valid symbol. Nonetheless the movement gained a solid footing in France, especially amongst the Catholics.

The goal of scouting is to build up the God-fearing citizen by an outdoor life and training, involving a whole

system of tests to encourage the learning of various crafts and skills, and present a challenge to the individual. The taking of responsibility and initiative is encouraged by the elaborate organisation of troupes into patrols, and this was often copied in colonies during the 1930s. Most of all, the scout movement develops a readiness to serve one's fellow, and it is little surprising that many educationalists began to wonder whether the high aims accepted by the scouting movement could equally be held by colonies de vacances.

For this reason "Saines Vacances" in the first year of its publication in 1934, carried out a survey on scouting in order to discover how far the methods used in scouting could be adapted for use in colonies de vacances. Already in 1927 the Vice-president of the U.F.C.V. was at the same time the Chaplain General of the Scouts de France, (the Catholic scouting movement) while the first scout troupes had joined the Union only two years previously.

When the Active Methods first began to be considered in connection with the colonie de vacances, it was such people as Guérin-Desjardins and André Lefèvre, who were already leading lights of the non-religious scouting movement, who organized the first Centre d'Entraînement, which led to the formation of the C.E.M.F.A.

## B. The New Education.

### 1. The Growth of the New Education.

The movement of the "éducation nouvelle" can be traced back to the publication of J.-J. Rousseau's "Emile ou del'Education". The principles involved in this book were so revolutionary at the time of its publication to constitute in the educational field what Claparède terms a "révolution copernicienne". Rousseau was the first to claim that childhood is a state possessing value ~~in~~ its own ~~right~~ and is not a mere apprenticeship to the adult state, during which the child is nothing more than a pale image of the adult he or she is to become. The New Education respects the child in his or her own right as an individual who must be free to grow and develop and who must have ~~the~~ the powers of choice and discovery which every fully-grown human being possesses.

Rousseau's principle was not to impose education upon the child, but for the child to be allowed to perceive that to learn a particular thing was useful, rather than having an apparently useless school curriculum thrust upon him. If the child could be left free to grow naturally, the artificiality and the hypocrisy of Society would be avoided and the child would ~~become~~ an intelligent and balanced human being interested in all that was going on around him, and aware of the needs of others in the world which he had in common with all men.

During the nineteenth century, the work of two men played an important part in the advancement of understanding of the child and of child-education. The first is Itard, who was presented with the challenge of training an untamed, half-idiot boy who had lived until the age of eleven ~~years~~ like a wild animal in the Department of Aveyron. Although Itard found that the boy could not be trained beyond a certain point, he developed a method of training the lad which was successful enough to allow ~~Itard~~ to introduce his strange protégé into Society. The second of the two men was Edouard Seguin, a school-teacher at Bicêtre, who began to find a use for the methods discovered by Itard with children under the age of seven. The approach towards the child and towards schooling needed to be a "psychological" one. Seguin recognized that the child has certain basic needs and impulses which require fulfillment, and the purpose of any education should be to provide this fulfillment. Seguin transformed his own school, giving the children light and air, and provided furniture suitable to their size, while proclaiming the ~~right~~ of every child to receive an education suited to his or her own aptitudes and individual nature.

At the turn of the century, an enterprising young Italian girl went to study at the Sorbonne under Dr. Bourneville in the Faculty of Medicine. Under him, Maria Montessori, whose name is now known the world over for

her influence upon teaching methods in infant schools and primary schools, became acquainted with the work of Itard, and particularly of Seguin, whose works she immediately procured from America.

Maria Montessori specialized in infantile psychiatry and had the honour of becoming the first woman to obtain a diploma in medicine at the Sorbonne. She was also the first woman doctor to be received at the University of Rome, and during the two years that she spent as a clinical assistant at the University of Rome she elaborated certain methods and collected educational material which permitted her, a few years later in 1907, to open her first "Case dei Bambini" in a poor working-class quarter of Rome. The book on scientific pedagogy, which Maria Montessori wrote as a result of her work with the children attending her schools, was translated into French in 1912 and had an immediate effect in educational circles. Before the end of the 1920's, teachers from all over Europe were coming to Rome to study her methods. Although at first Maria Montessori had developed methods to be used with handicapped children, she went on to apply these methods with normally active young school-children until at least, especially in Holland, her methods were even adapted for use with children of Grammar School age.

Although Maria Montessori was the real initiator of the New Education in Europe, the movement was not limited

to that Continent. The work of an American Professor of Chicago University, who had began an experimental school with his wife at the turn of the century, was also becoming known - Learning by Doing, and Project Methods under the guidance of teachers, who guided and encouraged rather than taught the children, became known in Europe. This was especially so ~~between~~ during the World Wars when the 1922 translation into French ("L'Ecole et l'Enfant") of "The Child and the Curriculum" (published in 1902) appeared.

It was however Ovide Decroly, a Belgian doctor, who had the most direct influence upon the New Education in France; he translated Dewey's "How We Think" (published in English in 1910) and was familiar with Maria Montessori's methods. In 1907, from his work in his own institute for abnormal children, stemmed the "Ecole de l'Hermitage" in which he put into practice methods which he had developed - which were much more supple and less systematic than those of Maria Montessori - with quite normal children.

The particular contribution to the work in general from France comes from the work of Roger Cousinet, who was, for some twenty- years, an Inspector of Primary Education. He attacked existing methods of teaching in primary schools, and little by little made his own method of "travail par équipe" or team-work accepted and applied (cf. 1 ). The work of Ferrière, Freinet and Claparède also broadened the

(1) R. COUSINET. La méthode de travail par groupe, Edition du Cerf, 1945.

scope of what came to be termed the New Education ( - "l' éducation nouvelle"). There is, besides this, one other important aspect of the movement as far as colonies de vacances are concerned.

Both Maurice Debesse (1) and only recently the U.F.C.V. in a series of articles in "Moniteurs" mention, among (2) movements forming part of the New Education, Baden-Powell and the principles he set forth in "Scouting for Boys", which still remains the guide-book of the movement. It was the amalgamation of the practices of scouting with the educational theories of the New Education which gave the vital driving force to the New Education in the field of the colonie de vacances. It was for this reason that the new training body, brought into being to provide qualified directors and monitors in colonies de vacances in 1937, was termed the organisation of the Centres d'Entraînement aux Méthodes ~~de l'Éducation~~ Actives: the Active Methods being the practical application of the theories of the New Education.

#### ii. The Nature of the Active Methods.

As we have seen, Rousseau paved the way for enlightened educationalists to study the progress of the child ~~from a new angle~~ from a new angle.

(1) M. DEBESSE. Fondements de la pédagogie contemporaine, Ch.XIII of Part II of the Encyclopédie pratique de l'éducation en France, I.P.N. & SEDE, Tours, 1960

(2) Moniteurs, magazine of the U.F.C.V., Nos.37 to 47, and in particular No.43: Baden-Powell et le scoutisme.

Later on the discoveries of psychology gave new insight into the matter - whether it was Binet, discovering the innate aptitude of the child, or Maria Montessori or Dewey, discovering the individual personality of the child, the whole direction of educational thought was being reversed and traditional methods examined under a new light. The result was first and foremost a change in attitude, and it is this change in attitude which is the essential element of the New Education, and which has opened up the way to a vast, untrodden field of experiment in methods of various kinds, which may be grouped under the general denomination of Active Methods ("méthodes actives").

The New Education discovers that the child is not a mere imperfect model of the adult. He is a being in his own right, who must develop naturally through a number of stages, following one upon the other. The child has certain profound needs, and the object of the Active Methods is to satisfy these needs. The child requires above all to learn how to do a thing for himself by his own efforts, and the New Education acknowledges that a certain milieu is necessary for this - an atmosphere of joy, confidence and security are as vital to the child as food and water. Given these things, the child will strive and thrive for himself, but alas very often neither home nor school, especially in big modern cities, can come near this goal.

Thus teachers have a new and special rôle; they are

to become a guide recognizing that the child is more of a fire to be ignited than an empty vase to fill, or even a wax tablet for the educator to write upon. The child is treated as an active, thinking being, for whom moral education and learning is one and the same <sup>thing</sup> since both are equally part of life.

In the New Education, the child's natural interest is allowed full-play and the former succession of sanctions, punishments and orders of merit is done away with, the child learning the value of effort for its own sake. The classroom becomes the workshop and home of a community of individuals cooperating together, and not striving one against the other. The school is open to the world, which it examines critically and takes part in: learning and living become one activity. There is no longer a gulf between intellectual and manual work, and the child is encouraged to create and to develop his own interests and character rather than allow himself to be channelled into the uniform pattern imposed upon him by his teachers and the school curriculum. Wherever possible the child is to discover for himself; his golden rule will be never to learn from a book those things that he can go and discover for himself in the world around him: it is especially in this tenet that New Education has ~~definite~~ affinities with scouting:

"- - - 'ne jamais puiser dans un livre ce que

l'élève peut trouver facilement dans le milieu qui l'entoure' - - - C'est d'abord l'observation du monde naturel, de toute vie physique, botanique et animale, tant vantée par Rousseau, que le scoutisme devait mettre en pratique."

(1)

It was therefore natural that André Lefèvre and other scouters should turn with such interest to the field of the colonie de vacances, for in a colonie more than anywhere else it is possible to create the atmosphere of calm, confidence and joyful cooperation which is so difficult to create in school with examinations always looming menacingly in the background or in the unhealthy moral atmosphere of the industrial town today.

In France, as in England and America, Active Methods have come to be very largely accepted in the primary school, and the Langevin-Wallon Plan for the Secondary education of France was an attempt by enlightened educationalists to introduce the New Education, or at least some of its principles, into the field of secondary education. By the freedom from constraint of all kinds and the countryside, mountain or sea-side background of the colonie de vacances mean that here, for at least a few weeks every year, the <sup>ideal</sup> conditions of the New Education can most amply be fulfilled.

(1) F. CHATELAIN. Les Principes de l'Education Nouvelle, E.N.F., Paris, page 22.

## Chapter IV.

### The Extent of the Application of Active Methods In Colonies de Vacances Today.

In 1945, 5,453 monitors out of 7,882 candidates passed the written examination for the Monitor's diploma, and by 1958 this number had become four times as great. At the same time the number of directors who passed the diploma after taking the written examinations was 72% of the number of directors ~~attending~~ the training "stage." By 1966, unless there is a further extension of the special permission for directors not possessing the diploma to run colonies where there are fewer than sixty children, all directors of colonies de vacances will be obliged to hold the Director's diploma. Thus all directors and one third of all monitors in colonies de vacances must be fully qualified, and recently it was also stipulated that one third of monitors taking part in adolescents' colonies and camps should possess the "livret d'aptitude" as a result of special training for work with adolescents.

This signifies that each colonie must possess a minimum of more than one third of fully qualified personnel to staff it. The monitors and directors have learnt some basic psychology, the correct approach towards children and some basic skills and techniques to help them with their work, which, although many of those who go through the training course may not realize it, are all part of the

New Education and Active Methods.

In 1947 the C.E.M.E.A. opened their Nouvelle Ecole at Boulogne in order to try for themselves, in practice in an actual school, the education methods they had been advocating in the colonie. The school grew from its small beginnings with two classes and gave many members of the C.E.M.E.A. an opportunity to go and see the Active Methods put into operation, until the staff of the school suddenly found themselves obliged to abandon their work in 1957, when a new regulation prevented them from continuing to teach outside the framework of State Education in the Department. While the school was functioning, Cousinet was a frequent visitor and <sup>he also</sup> gave much advice at the outset to the three school-teachers who began the experiment. Monsieur Gal, the Director of the Research Service of the National Pedagogical Institute in Paris also paid frequent visits to the school.

In the school, the dictatorial element of traditional teaching methods was done away with - the methods employed were based upon the real needs and interests of the children which they manifested for themselves; the teachers did not impose activities. The whole school was designed to help the child to act, learn and live out life for himself, only coming to the teacher when he wished - the child had to learn to overcome difficulties for himself:

"La maitresse se gardera d'intervenir chaque fois qu'un enfant sera absorbé par une occupation, chaque

fois qu'il expérimentera, chaque fois qu'elle le verra aux prises avec une difficulté qu'il veut vaincre seul."

(1)

Discipline might have been a problem but this was avoided by holding a reunion each week when the children would discuss any punishment which was to be given or any ~~trib~~tribution which was to be made. It did indeed take time for the teachers in the Nouvelle Ecole to train children to accept the new approach, but once each child had realized that he was worthy of respect he began to behave accordingly and ~~take~~ responsibility for his own acts. As in Freinet's schools in Belgium, the object was that each child should be fully himself - "avant tout et plus librement 'lui-même'". Freedom did not mean the absence of discipline - and experiment in Hamburg after the First World War had allowed primary school children in several primary schools complete freedom of action and the result had been chaos - but for the New Education freedom was something planned by both staff and children together.

This form of education did not bear immediate results in all cases; it was only over the course of years that a child could be fully relied upon to help his fellow without prompting, and would no longer be at a loss when confronted by a blank piece of paper. In the long run, the New Education develops the child's critical faculties and gives him a new ability to express himself, most of all stimulating real enthusiasm, openness of mind, and a desire to discover, in the

(1) B. HARVAUX et M. A. NOIX-CHATEAU. 16 Education Nouvelle à l'Ecole, Editions du Scarabée, Paris, 1958. Page 121.

child.

The problem remains to know how far such methods can be applied in colonies de vacances, where, instead of possessing a full team of trained educators, the director has to rely upon a group of young people, <sup>amongst</sup> ~~of~~ whom perhaps about half will have undergone a short stage of eight to ten days.

During the "stage" itself, young people from many differing backgrounds come together for a variety of reasons, <sup>at the same time</sup> but, realizing that the most they are going to obtain from a colonie de vacances afterwards is perhaps a little pocket money and a change of scenery. Before the stage is over the monitor-to-be will come to realize that the colonie is bound to entail a good deal of work and enthusiasm on his part if it is to be a success, and the result is that most of the young people leave the stage convinced that they have something to give and something to learn from the colonie, and are prepared to enter upon the adventure of ~~being~~ <sup>being</sup> ~~the responsibility~~ <sup>of</sup> a group of children.

During the stage, the young monitor is not so much told about New Education as made to experience it; in all probability he will never hear the words mentioned during the stage, but he will find that everyone is expected to pull his own weight and use his initiative. When activities are planned there is always a choice to be made, and whether

the monitor chooses a dramatized game, model-making or a handicraft, he will find himself encouraged to express himself and use his own personality to the full. His opinion is respected, and he is taught to respect the opinion of the children who are to be under his care. Throughout the training period the monitor is undergoing the kind of life and atmosphere which is the core of the New Education, so that when he finds himself in a colonie he will be able to try and recreate the same atmosphere for the children in the colonie. Not only does the monitor learn certain useful techniques, but he learns respect for the individual personality of the child.

Experience of a monitors' "stage" run by the U.F.C.V. and of special course (a stage de perfectionnement in canoeing) run by the C.E.M.E.A. has shown that New Education is a practical reality in such "stages", but what of the colonie itself?

It is less easy to apply the New Education in a colonie of 120 boys than in a training "stage". Let us examine a colonie run by a Ministry in 1959. 120 children, whose parents were civil servants in France or Algeria, spent one, two, or in one or two cases as many as three months, in a small hamlet in Upper Savoy, at a height of about two thousand feet, not far from the Lake of Geneva.

The children were well fed, and especially as regards many of the Algerian children, the meals were better than

those they received in their own homes. There were <sup>only</sup> two small dormitories in the chalet which was hired by the Ministry, and which had been designed for use as a colonie de vacances. The rest of the children had to sleep in dormitories with room for about thirty children. Each child did at least have a small ~~bed~~ table for his possessions, but there was little space for clothes. Only in the small dormitories did the children take an interest in their rooms, which they decorated with pictures and branches of trees, and found room for the treasures they brought back from walks on an old board placed insecurely on top of the radiator. The dining-room, although gaily painted, had a low ceiling and the level of noise easily became excessive, so that, from time to time, one monitor or another was obliged to impose a general silence; once the business of eating was over, the children and monitors filed out with a sense of relief into the open air.

Outside the chalet, the monitor was free to undertake whatever activity he could devise; some monitors made their way to the nearest field, settled down to a good book, and left the children to their own devices. The more ambitious monitors however went off into the woods, built cabins or dams across a stream, or went off with ~~their~~ groups to hunt for clay to make models, or <sup>undertake</sup> some similar activity. Each monitor was responsible for a particular group of children, and there was seldom any opportunity for a child to move from

one group to another. At the chalet there was no freedom of movement -either all the children had to go up to their dormitories or none were allowed into the building, and several times a day the children were lined up and slowly made their way to the wash-house where one hundred and twenty grubby pairs of hands had to be washed.

While many techniques of the New Education were used from time to time during the colonie, and especially during the evening "veillées" when the children played games, put on playlets or carried out somekind of special activity in groups of twenty or thirty, the chalet itself was not designed to house 120 individuals. There was one small games-room; there was no reading-room, <sup>and</sup> no common-room for either the children or the monitors, who had to meet in the corridors of the building to chat for a few moments before going to bed. There was little space for the children to sleep in, and on a wet day there was nowhere for anyone to go apart to read or write letters, and it was up to each monitor to try and provide what activities he could without disturbing other activities going on in the room at the same time.

The worst feature of the colonie was that a group of slightly older boys of between twelve and fourteen years found themselves side by side with children of between nine and twelve years old. These boys felt themselves hemmed in by the discipline, and bored with the activities,

which were suited more to the younger children than to themselves.

Here was a colonie which benefited from certain of the techniques introduced by the New Education, but where the actual building in which the colonie was held, and the differing ages of children sent to the same colonie, ~~which~~ made it impossible to achieve the kind of colonie which the New Education implies.

At the other end of the scale, we can turn to a colonie run by the Academy of Paris for the children of teachers or ~~such~~ families particularly interested in the educational benefit which could be derived from a colonie.. The colonie in question was held in England for boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and sixteen in a small market-town in Devonshire. Two school-mistresses ran the colonie, one of whom was English and the second French. There was one English monitrice, a French monitor, and an English monitor/teacher for the group of thirty young people, which included two English girls and three English boys.

The food was uninteresting but adequate by English standards - by good fortune the Directrices had had the forethought of bringing delicacies such as some pâté and Arles sausages to supplement meals on special occasions. But the building in which the colonie was held possessed a common-room, a games-room and a gymnasium, apart from the dormitories:

In the morning, after a period of free-time, came two hours devoted to English lessons by the monitor/teacher, the English Directrice and an English school-teacher. Twice a week during the afternoon there was a trip to the sea-side or inland, otherwise each monitor proposed an activity, sometimes at the suggestion of the children and often on the suggestion of one of the Directrices, and the young people were free to chose which activity they wished to undertake.

There were meetings from time to time for the children to discuss activities and the general running of the colonie. Many of the activities had a special purpose behind them, as for instance a competition in which groups of children went into the town to carry out a survey into the history of the town, its industries, and the activities of people whom the children met in the street. Not only did the children have to practise their English, but they had to set out the information they <sup>had</sup> obtained, and a prize was awarded to the best result obtained by any one group.

The essential difference between this colonie and the previous one, even allowing for the fact that the children in the second colonie were rather older, lay in the attitude to the individual. In the second colonie, the young people were considered to be responsible beings with minds and wills of their own, it was recognized that each individual had a different personality and required the power of choice and the opportunity to express himself or herself.

The very fact that the group was mixed shows an admission of the complementary nature of the sexes; the wider the range of personalities, the richer a group is bound to be, provided that the children are sufficiently responsible to be accepted in this kind of colonie.

Children were carefully selected for this colonie, for even with the Ecole Nouvelle it was found that for some children from difficult backgrounds, a long period of adaptation was necessary, and a colonie which is to be run on advanced lines has not the time to provide for children who are not sufficiently advanced to be able to cooperate in the methods used.

It is clear that even <sup>while</sup> using the methods of the New Education ~~that~~ the colonie has to be adapted to some extent to the kind of background to which the children it receives are used. A colonie in a foreign country, arranged by the A.R.O.C.E.A. was bound to be far more educationally biased than a colonie of the Ministère des Finances, to which a number of quite backward children of poor customs-officials in Algeria were sent. Nonetheless, in both the colonies we have mentioned, there was clearly a recognition of the value of the New Education.

There a monitor has to pay the equivalent of five or six pounds to train himself, (although some organisations are prepared to pay the cost of training monitors ~~for~~ their own colonies, themselves) and the remuneration during the colonie

is still small, the monitor usually arrives at the "stage" with the intention of devoting himself to the task of being a monitor without expecting to gain a great financial advantage. Yet, besides this, many monitors find the "stage" of much greater interest~~er~~ than they had imagined and enter the colonies fired with real enthusiasm - this<sup>is</sup> amply borne out by the fact that there are relatively few monitors who do not trouble~~to~~ to sit the written examination during the winter following their stage in a colony.

The extent to which the New Education is applied depends upon three factors: the over-all organisation of the colony, the skill of the director (and to a lesser extent of his monitors), and the nature of the building which is used for the colony. Above all the director is responsible for the colony and all that takes place during the course of a colony, and it is this reason that has led the Direction Générale à la Jeunesse et aux Sports to introduce a new training course for directors in two parts and require each director to undergo a refresher course every five years so, that the complaint that the director is out of touch with the methods learnt by the monitors during the course of their "stage" will be less frequently ~~heard~~.

## S E C T I O N    I I .

### An Example of Colonies de Vacances in Action in 1963: Centres de Vacances in the Gironde.

#### Chapter I.

#### Introduction.

The Gironde area played a part in the development of colonies de vacances from the very early days. Within the Gironde lies Bordeaux, which is the sixth largest city of France, and <sup>the Gironde itself</sup> it possesses beautiful countryside, forests and the sea-side, which attract many people from outside the region, so that almost as many colonies enter the region from outside as originate in the area.

The colonie of the Groupe Scolaire d'Arlac et Solférino organized by Davenne in Bordeaux in 1888 to send children to Arcachon on the coast, was amongst the first of the provincial colonies. It was also at Arcachon that the first Catholic colonie, organized by the Abbé Pitray in 1897, was held. And two years later the report upon the school colonie of the Arlac and Solférino Group mentioned that "everyone in Bordeaux" knew the movement of colonies de vacances. Certainly the movement was of sufficient importance for the Mayor of the City and the Inspector of Primary Education to go and see what had been achieved at Arcachon.

At the time of the Bordeaux Congress in 1906, the President of the Congress was himself the President of the

Fédération des Patronages of Bordeaux. It was also the grouped organisations of Bordeaux which were in the main responsible for preventing a close link between the religious and non-religious organisations, due no doubt to the rivalry between the Protestant and Catholic church in the city, which eventually brought about the formation of two separate national bodies.

In 1929, the City of Bordeaux was remarkable for sending as many as 238 children to its own colonie at Saint-André-de-Cubzac as well as aiding ten different organisations out of public funds. Another considerable achievement was the purchase by the Caisse d'Assurances de la Gironde in 1937 of a country-house and 257 acres of ground which provided facilities for 800 children. Then, even during the war, the city was a hive of industry in the field of colonies de vacances, for it is from the War period that the creation of many of the organisations of the city dates.

For this reason the Gironde is an area of particular interest for colonies de vacances and was a convenient region to choose to examine in order to gain some impression of the general trends in the movement at the present day. The simplest means of doing this was to contact the Departmental Inspector of the Jeunesse et Sports (l'Inspecteur Départemental à la Jeunesse et aux Sports) who is the man in the key position, holding authority over the colonies either originating in the Gironde or entering it from elsewhere.

From the minutes of the winter meeting of the Comité Départemental des Colonies de Vacances in December 1963, from the Inspector's own report and from an interview with the Inspector and others concerned in the organisations of colonies de vacances in the Gironde, it was possible to gain some insight into the work which took place in the Department during the period 1962 to 1963. This Departmental Committee unites representatives of the Jeunesse et Sports, governmental departments, the city councillors, members of the training organisations and members of the more important bodies organizing colonies de vacances.

Chapter II.

The Colonies de Vacances of the Gironde and  
Those Entering the Gironde from Outside.

Amongst the colonies in the Gironde in 1963 there were 204 colonies which originated in the area assembling an average of 83 children over an average period of 30 days; there were also 135 camps in which an average of 36 young people spent  $24\frac{1}{2}$  days. There were a further 178 colonies of, on the average, 105 children spending  $28\frac{1}{2}$  days, and 44 camps grouping 33 young people over an average duration of  $20\frac{1}{2}$  days which entered the Gironde region from other parts of France. There were not more than five colonies maternelles (colonies for children under the age of six) amongst all the colonies of the Gironde.

The number of colonies remained more or less constant between 1962 and 1963 but the number of camps for young people in the Gironde rose from 8 to 9 amongst those originating in the Department, and from 26 to 41 amongst those entering the Department from outside, which provided holidays for 1,049 more young people than in the previous year. In conjunction with this increase there were as many as 45 applications for the five tents (for twelve people) which the Jeunesse and Sports had at their disposal.

As regards the financing of these colonies, there were fewer applications for aid towards the daily cost of maintaining children in colonies resulting from the ever

increasing ~~the~~ amount of paperwork involved in obtaining insignificant sums of money, in most cases. On the other hand, the Caisse d'Allocations Familiales of the Gironde raised the amount of family income above which it would offer no grants by nearly one third, representing a significant increase in aid to families not in the very lowest income groups; the Caisse continued to provide 1,200 entirely free holidays in colonies de vacances in 1963.

There were important claims for grants towards equipping Centres Aérés (day-colonies), and the report to the Departmental Committee mentioned that, although ~~the~~ the 25% grant towards equipping the Centres Aérés was of value, it would have been of even greater value if it could have been extended towards running costs and the cost of maintaining the existing equipment. Most of the 31 day-colonies of the Gironde were organized in the city of Bordeaux and its suburbs, and 17 of these functioned during the Easter holidays as well as in the summer. Numbers of children attending day-colonies fell off during the month of August, for which the increase in the number of grants made for traditional colonies by the Caisse d'Allocations Familiales was responsible in part; also the movement towards making a fourth week of annual holiday general meant that, already during the year, many workers receiving longer holidays, were able to take their children away for holidays themselves.

Two movements in the region were mentioned particularly as having expanded between 1962 and 1963. The first

reference in the same report was to a movement arranging "placement familial" in England: the Bordeaux-Bristol Exchange Scheme, which came into being at the end of the War, expanded rapidly. This expansion continued during 1962 and 1963, and during the Easter holidays in 1964 the Exchange Scheme sent parties of French children to exchange with parties of English children, entailing as many as four flights in each direction at the beginning and at the end of the exchange in order to transport all those taking part in the scheme. The second organisation was the Service des Oeuvres Antituberculeuses, which sent more than two hundred children to the Pyrenees.

During 1963, the government awarded 2,239 holiday grants to children in the Gironde, of which about half went to children of rural areas, for whom no provision is made by the Caisse d'Allocations Familiales.

Throughout the area there was little change in the numerical force of the traditional colonie; some attempt was made to help children from rural areas, who represent only one child in seven attending colonies de vacances. The progress amongst centres de vacances (which became a more common term in general usage than "colonies" de vacances when interest in camps for adolescents began to gain considerable importance) in the Gironde in 1963, lay largely with the day-colonies and the movements providing holidays for adolescents.

### Chapter III.

#### The General Condition of the Colonies.

Throughout 1963 in the Gironde, all checks on the water-supply of colonies showed that the water was free from contamination; there were no serious outbreaks of illness, and buildings housing colonies appeared to be improved each year. The organisations evinced their willingness to carry out improvements in order to provide for the ever increasing numbers of children, and many buildings had been put into good order through the aid of the Caisse d'Allocations Familiales, despite the regrettable insufficiency of State aid:

"Les locaux s'améliorent chaque année. Il est regrettable que l'Etat ne puisse pas aider suffisamment les colonies; celles-ci ne demandent qu'à entretenir, améliorer et surtout agrandir leurs locaux, car les effectifs augmentent sans cesse. Presque toutes nos colonies ont néanmoins des locaux convenables grâce à l'aide très efficace apportée par la Caisse d'Allocations Familiales."

(1)

Only two camps were found not to be suitably equipped - one having unsatisfactory sanitary arrangements, the other being heavily overcrowded - "to offset this, ~~the~~ many colonies merit special mention for the good state of their buildings and the way in which the colonie is run, which in some cases is remarkable".

(1) M. BEAUGENCY (Departmental Inspector).  
Compte-Rendu sur le Fonctionnement des Oeuvres de Vacances,  
 Department of the Gironde, 1963.

A few colonies received more children than they actually declared, and this was a matter to set aright in the following year.

In 1963 there were no cases of fire in the colonies of the Gironde - as a consequence of a forest fire which destroyed a large colonie some years previously, fire precautions have been strictly applied. There, was on the other hand, one case of <sup>2</sup>drowning; this occurred in Spain in a colonie which originated in the Gironde, in a spot which had not been officially passed as fit for bathing and also at a time when there was ~~no~~one present who possessed a life-saving certificate (that is to say under circumstances entirely contrary to all the regulations). There were five other accidents noted, but in each case the responsibility of the staff of the colonie was not in question.

On the educational side, four colonies were mentioned in the annual report as being both insufficiently well planned and poorly organized; in three other colonies there had been strained relations between the director and some of the monitors, and <sup>in</sup>two more colonies there had been complaints regarding the moral relations between monitors and monitrices. Some directors found difficulty in keeping abreast with the progressive ideas of their monitors who arrived at the colonie fresh from the "stage".

The report suggested that certain elements were

necessary to ensure a satisfactory colonie. The director had to be of the first order, he had to be able to work out, organize and balance activities, the colonie itself needed to be in a carefully-chosen spot and the monitors ~~also~~ also required to be chosen with extreme care to ensure that they had benefited to the full from their training. Mixed leaders were to be avoided, unless (as a commentator noted in a marginal reference on the report) the director possessed special abilities. In 1963, only one director in every twelve had not attended a training course, and two thirds of all the directors of colonies de vacances in the Gironde were fully qualified. As regards monitors, one in every four had not attended a training course, yet less than half the monitors had obtained the monitor's diploma. On the other hand, amongst the staff of young people's camps, not more than one director and one monitor were fully qualified to carry out this work out of 16 directors and 56 monitors, although this was to be expected since the "livret d'aptitude", issued as a result of training for work with adolescents, had only been in existence for a short period of time.

Many basic "stages", special courses, evening classes, study days, and other activities were organized by the C.F.M.E.A. and the U.F.C.V. in the Gironde; but although the C.P.C.V. organized a few colonies in the area, neither the C.P.C.V. nor the F.N.C.V. organized any training courses

in the area. As one might expect from an organisation receiving as much official support as the C.E.M.E.A., the premises of the organisation are better equipped than those of the U.F.C.V. in Bordeaux, but there is no doubting the keenness of the staff of both organisations, their faith in the methods propagated and the altruistic interest they take in their work.

There is <sup>also</sup> no doubt that the Gironde, after its many years' experience in the organisation of colonies de vacances, is both well equipped and well supplied with enthusiastic workers to ensure the continuation of the institution in the region for many years to come.

## Chapter IV.

### Some Conclusions.

There is no doubt concerning the competence of the inspectors and staff of the Jeunesse et Sports in the Bordeaux region, they clearly carry out their tasks most efficiently, for, although limited by funds and hampered by the need for an additional inspector, each colonie in the region was examined at least during one of its sessions, ensuring that from every point of view the colonies within their jurisdiction were on a par with the standards laid down.

The C.E.M.E.A. and the U.F.C.V. carry out extensive training work in the Gironde and, since the merging of the U.F.O.V.A.L., the J.P.A., and the C.E.M.E.A., the problem of placing children, monitors and directors as well as domestic staff in colonies de vacances, and the financing of colonies, has been much simplified. The <sup>bureau de</sup> placement ~~office~~ of the U.F.C.V. functions efficiently, and the proceeds of the public collection, which the U.F.C.V. is now allowed to make, help the financial situation of the Union. Both organisations tend to deal with differing kinds of colonie and there is every indication that each organisation will continue to thrive and extend its work in the area.

The official machinery is slowly becoming rationalized,

and cooperation between the training bodies and the Departmental authorities runs more smoothly within the Comité Départemental as the years go by. Nonetheless, neither direct State aid nor Departmental funds can be deemed sufficient, markedly in the case of the latter, which actually become slightly less in 1963 than in 1962, whereas the Caisse d'Allocations Familiales made an important contribution to the financing of colonies.

Grants have however been improved in two spheres: the camps for adolescents and the day-colonie. The number of camps increased by 35, and 751 more adolescents received holidays in camps originating in the Gironde. Two Associations were given 30% grants towards fittings and buildings, and 16 projects for equipping day-colonies were put forward to benefit from the funds provided at a national level for this purpose. All day-colonies had the right to benefit from grants towards equipment, but grants towards running costs were generally found to be insufficient. The day-colonie has advanced from being something of very minor importance to <sup>being</sup> a major concern within recent years.

If there was one aspect causing disquiet in the report for the Gironde in 1963, it was ~~an~~ the educational side. The report mentioned disturbing disagreement between certain directors and monitors, some colonies where activities were badly conceived, and even cases of doubtful moral relations between monitors and monitrices: on this last

score, during the question-time following the reading of the report to the Departmental Committee, the representative of the C.E.M.E.A. expressed his opinion that the mere fact of having leaders of both sexes should not be held to be a cause of immorality - problems also occurred in single sex colonies.

There followed general discussion of the report, and it was announced, during the course of this, that there would, in all probability, by a further Departmental Inspector added to the staff of the Jeunesse et Sports for the coming year. It was felt that the colonies de vacances of the region were functioning correctly as a whole. Yet it is to be noted that the report mentioned the very real problem of directors who found difficulty in keeping ~~pace with~~ the educational progress. That this problem was universal, is borne out by recent regulations obliging directors to undergo a second training ~~training~~ course after their initial course before receiving the diploma, and also making it obligatory for directors to attend a refresher-course every five years.

The necessity for this refresher-course was instanced by a colonie belonging to a Social Welfare organisation in the City of Bordeaux, which provides a colonie for a number of boys, largely apprentices, from Bordeaux and Paris. The organiser of the colonie began the work in 1947 when ~~the~~ food shortage was still acute and with his military experience

soon initiated a colonie which provided good food and well earned rest for a certain class of boy. In 1963, as in the early days of the colonie, all was well in the eyes of the organiser so long as the Tricolour was raised with all due ceremony to the top of the flag pole at the beginning of the day and so long as there was a group of boys playing football or basket-ball on the field in front of the colonie.

The inactivity and boredom of the boys during the first half of the colonie, during which the organiser himself ran the colonie, was in stark contrast to the keenness and enthusiasm finally generated during the second period of the colonie when a qualified director, who was also a gymnastics instructor, took over the organisation. ~~of the colonie~~

So, although colonies are efficiently organized in general in the Gironde, there is still room for ~~improving~~ increasing the number of trained monitors and directors, and for encouraging more monitors to specialize in work with young people. And apart from this there remains one further less satisfactory feature in connection with the colonies of the region. In 1963 there were 35 colonies with over 120 children, 22 with 100 to 120 children, and one colonie with 300 children attending it. It is a well known fact that large colonies tend to be unsatisfactory from the point of view of the children as much as of the organisers, and it was precisely in the largest of the colonies of the Gironde that the organisation and activities were

not considered to be of a satisfactory standard.

P A R T III.

STAGNATION OR PROGRESS?

## S E C T I O N I.

### The Evidence of the Statistics.

#### Chapter I.

#### Statistics Concerning Colonies de Vacances.

##### A. Colonies de Vacances: Their Expansion.

From the very beginning of the colonies de vacances until 1949, excepting the two periods of World War, there has always been a steady rise in the number of colonies in existence in France. The years showing the most marked increase were the years immediately following the Second World War until 1949, when figures rose from 300,000 to 846,550 children attending colonies de vacances; but the figure then fell to a low-point of 802,903 in 1951 and it was not until 1952 that a slight rise ~~of~~ the figure for 1949 was apparent.

As we have seen, the end of rationing and a new emphasis upon the educational aspect of colonies de vacances, marked the beginning of a time of reorganisation; nonetheless, if due account is taken of the fall-off in the birth-rate at the beginning of the War, it can be shown that the colonies were still increasing relatively. In 1959, according to the J.P.A., colonies de vacances were again in danger ~~due~~ to

insufficient financial aid ~~for colonies~~ by the State; in this year, although there was a very slight increase in the number of children attending colonies, there was a small fall in the total number of days spent in them. Although the figures rose only slowly from then until 1962, the number of children attending colonies de vacances rose to as many as 1,600,000 in 1963, compared to 1,350,000 in the previous year.

#### B. The Different Categories.

The numbers of adolescents attending colonies de vacances has risen continually since the War, except for a temporary set-back in 1957. Individual records from all over France show an increase, most especially in camps for young people and also for day-colonies (Centres Aérés). In Bordeaux, where the number of children ~~attending~~ colonies de vacances in general rose only slightly, the number of young people attending colonies and camps in 1962 and 1963 rose by one fifth. In the Bordeaux region there were also more children given holidays by the placement familial system than in the previous year, and the number of children ~~attending~~ day-colonies rose significantly (7,178 to 9,289). There was little alteration in special colonies for particular categories of children, but the numbers of exchanges arranged by the Bordeaux-Bristol scheme increased. Especially since 1960 there has been a steady growth in the sphere of

"colonies maternelles" (colonies for children under the age of six) and of "ruches familiales" (the equivalent of day-colonies, organized on a small scale in rural areas); "maisons familiales de vacances" (where whole families are enabled to receive holidays together and where the children and often the parents can take part in educational activities organized by trained staff) have also become more popular.

### C. Training Courses.

The rapid progress and multiplication of training stages slackened only during 1950, when both the C.E.M.E.A. and the U.F.C.V. held fewer basic stages. In all four training organisations, great strides forward were made from 1945 onwards, and during 1958 the total number of people attending courses of all kinds was 35,275 for the C.E.M.E.A. 23,526 for the U.F.C.V., 2,503 for the C.P.C.V. and 1,274 for the F.C.V.F. The C.E.M.E.A. ran 405 stages for monitors, directors and house-managers of colonies de vacances, the U.F.C.V. 256, the F.C.V.F. 39 and the C.P.C.V. 12 (1). During 1964 both the C.E.M.E.A. and the U.F.C.V. organized more than 400 basic stages, and it is clear that the effort to improve the education services of the U.F.C.V. has borne fruit so that the Union falls only a little short of the C.E.M.E.A. in the number of basic courses which it runs.

Although it is difficult to obtain full figures

(1) E. BECART. Congés, vacances, voyages, Ch.XXXVI of Part III of the Encyclopédie pratique, page 973.

concerning the number of special stages, evening classes, study days and other activities undertaken by the training organisations, there has been constant growth in all spheres since the end of the War.

The number of candidates for the diplomas for monitors and directors has increased with the number of training courses, except for a fall in the number of directors in 1950~~x~~ when a body of trained directors had been formed and the initial period following the introduction of the diplomas was over. - Greater numbers of directors' diplomas were awarded in the first years than later, since no director possessed a qualification before their introduction, and a director, once he or she has obtained the diploma continues to run colonies de vacances for many more years than the monitor who helps <sup>to</sup> run colonies for as long as two or three years <sup>on end</sup> and then finds that he has no longer the time available. By 1958, 72% of all directors were in possession of the diploma, and, failing ~~and~~ further governmental intervention, all directors will be required to possess the diploma by 1966.

#### D. The Evolution.

In a recent survey, the U.F.C.V. examined the progress of the colonies and camps belonging to the member-organisations (1)

(1) L'Evolution des Effectifs des Centres de Vacances: une enquête sur les organismes affiliés à l'U.F.C.V. in the Revue de l'U.F.C.V., Jan., 1965, No.19.

of the Union. This showed that, although there had been a steady rise in the number of children of school-age attending colonies de vacances between 1953 and 1960, there had been a tendency for this progression to grow less since 1960 and, in the case of the twelve municipalities and the group of interparish organisations concerned in the report, the 1963 figure showed a slight fall compared with the figures for the previous year, although the over-all figure had grown.

More young people between the ages of fourteen and eighteen were being sent to centres de vacances by many diocesan and individual national, regional and local organisations. Two organisations in particular ~~made~~ a considerable leap forward: the Mutualité Agricole ~~showed~~ a *four* increase (although there are relatively few organisations providing for children or young people from rural areas) and, amongst small parish organisations, the number of adolescents catered for rose from 7,887 to 20,275, which amounted to a rise of 160%.

The report mentions a preference of young people for colonies and camps permitting them to go away with friends from their own part of a town, and this was why such a significant increase was ~~evident~~ amongst organisations which, in 60% of the instances, received in the Patronages the same young people ~~who~~ were sent to centres de vacances. Small centres of short duration (most often for adolescents) also

sprang from receiving 34,148 children and young people in 1962 to receiving an extra 6,115 in 1963 (amongst centres lasting from 10 to 21 days).

The report concludes by suggesting that it was not a question of stagnation in the field of colonies de vacances as had been officialy intimated during 1962, but rather a process of transformation taken place internally, especially in respect to adolescents.

## Chapter II.

### Financial Assistance.

#### A. The Cost of the Colonie to the Family.

The cost of colonies de vacances rises continually. For one organisation in 1962, the cost of a day spent in a colonie for one child rose, from 7.25 francs, in 1960, to 8.49 francs in 1961, to as much as 9.32 francs. (1) Grants, it is ~~assumed~~, do not keep pace with this increase.

In 1959, the J.P.A. had claimed (2) that the lack of financial support for colonies de vacances by the government was responsible for the slight fall in the total number of days spent in colonies during 1959, and a similar article <sup>concerning</sup> ~~in~~ 1962, (1) also blamed the failure of colonies de vacances to continue expanding upon similar causes. In an organisation handling 3,500 children, it was ~~found~~ found that, whereas the proportion of State Aid had been as much as 50% in 1947, the figure only amounted to 6.9% in 1962, and nearly half of the children attending the colonies in the organisation received no financial support at all, although their parents' means were modest. Only 500 of the children were able to be sent to the colonies without this being a serious financial burden upon their parents, since they received

(1) Y a-t-il stagnation des colonies de vacances in Belles Vacances, No.23, Printemps 1963.

(2) Colonies de Vacances en 1959: comparaisons 1959-1959, in Belles Vacances, No.12, Hiver 1960.

aid from the Caisse d'Allocations Familiales and also a State holiday grant. 37% of the children (1,238/3,500) received financial aid from the works-committees to which one of their parents belonged.

In 1959, the system of attributing sums of money had been altered by the awarding of holiday grants to families, and, during the first year, these grants had been accompanied by an equivalent reduction in the sums of money normally granted directly to the organisations providing colonies; however this situation did improve in 1960. In 1960 85,000 holiday ~~allocations~~ were provided for 1,200,000 children attending colonies, representing one child in every fourteen. Nonetheless, even in 1962, 49% of children attending the colonies in the organisation cited above received no aid whatsoever, despite the modest income of their parents - a situation, which, to the mind of the author of the article, constituted a grave problem.

In 1963, there <sup>took place</sup> ~~was~~ a significant rise in the number of children attending colonies de vacances, and this may indeed be due to better financial circumstances prevailing. In Bordeaux, for example, we saw that, although grants by the municipal council fell very slightly over the previous year, the Caisse d'Allocations Familiales ~~effect~~ a significant increase in the amount of financial assistance given, by awarding grants to families with an income-quotient of up to 200 francs instead of 140 francs only... The Departmental

Committee expressed its satisfaction with the aid provided by the Caisse d'Allocations Familiales, while regretting the comparative insufficiency of State aid.

An outstanding move forward came in 1962 when the U.F.C.V., in the Official Circular Letter of 2nd April, 1962 was permitted to carry out public fund-raising by an annual campaign, which in 1963 amounted to 471,999 francs: a sum slightly greater than that brought in by the campaign in 1947 (46,000,000 old francs) which benefited all organisations. These extra funds enabled the U.F.C.V. to provide 1,634 grants of 100 francs, as well as entirely free stages for 542 trainees, besides leaving 189,039 francs for furnishing and equipping colonies. Although this extra income only amounted to a small fraction of the total proceeds of the campaign of the J.P.A., this new concession was at least one step in improving the financial situation.

#### B. Grants Towards the Cost of New Buildings.

In 1957 the first Triennial Plan was put into operation, but very largely escaped the notice of the organizers of colonies de vacances; the second Triennial Plan had more effect, but it was not until the first Five-Year-Plan came into ~~operation~~ ~~into~~ in 1961 that real benefit was felt. Within the framework of the Plan organisations are obliged to lay down carefully ~~studied~~ plans for the work which they wish to undertake, according to certain specifications

~~determined~~ by the Departmental authorities which are to provide the funds. Grants vary from 15% to provide facilities for camps, to up to 75% towards the buildings-costs of colonies attached to State Schools, the normal grant to most colonies being in the region of 50%.

In No.12 of "Bellees Vacances", in the article already mentioned (see page 121), the J.P.A. insisted upon the right of every child~~x~~ to be able to go away on holiday, and called for the creation of two million more beds, to be provided by the State by 1970. Immediately, during the years 1960, 1961 and 1962, the J.P.A. wished to see 500 new colonies built; 120,000 beds needed to be provided each year (enabling 240,000 more children to be sent to colonies de vacances each year.)

The first Five-Year-Plan aimed at providing a total of 56,250 beds over the whole period (to attain a final total of 550,000 beds in fifty years' time - not eight or nine years as the J.P.A. wished), but even this figure was diminished in 1962 to 51,000 because of what was described as overestimation. In Bordeaux and the surrounding area, 47 organisations put forward projects for the examination of the Departmental authorities; of these, six were immediately rejected as the total cost of the projects amounted to less than 30,000 francs. In the end 19 plans were accepted in order of merit, taking into account those refused in 1958. For the Gironde, 1,030,000 francs were <sup>made</sup> available for financing these projects.

The Five-Year-Plan also aimed at providing one day-colonie in every town of 5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants, but not more than six in a city of 150,000 to 300,000 inhabitants. At the same time regulations fix the total number of children to be permitted to attend a day-colonie at 300, thus a city of the size of Bordeaux could expect the State to provide day-colonie facilities for a mere 1,800 children: <sup>while</sup> already Bordeaux and its suburbs handle over 9,000 children in day-colonies.

Quite apart from the building programme grants are made towards the cost of equipping and maintaining colonies de vacances. In Bordeaux and the Gironde, beds and mattresses were particularly welcomed, and, in all, 91 centres were aided, besides which a further fifteen associations benefitted from the Jeunesse et Centre de Vacances-fund and from a small general fund. Funds were very limited for aiding camps, and there were 45 applications for the five tents (to sleep twelve young people each) which were available.

The Five-Year-Plan has begun to show results, and, although the sums attributed to the scheme by the national budget are still too small, the method of allocating grants is well organized and ensures a proper usage of the funds. It is also creditable that considerably more power has been given to the Préfet on the spot (who can now authorize projects up to 200,000 francs instead of 30,000 francs without consulting the Minister). At the same time

~~there is~~ <sup>is felt</sup> general satisfaction with the effort made by the  
 Caisses d'Allocations Familiales to increase their support  
 of colonies de vacances. The annual campaign of the J.P.A.  
 and now of the U.F.C.V. bring in very appreciable sums of  
 money, but there remains nevertheless one sphere in which dis-  
 satisfaction is universally expressed, that is, in the  
 domain of State-aid towards the day-to-day running costs of  
 colonies de vacances (now so ~~acute~~ that some organisations  
 find the amount of paperwork involved ~~is~~ too great for  
 the small sums of money awarded and therefore cease to  
 apply for these grants).

It is often pointed out at the present time that State-  
 aid towards day-to-day running costs amounts to less than  
 7% whereas in 1947 the amount was 50%. Whilst it is unjust  
 to compare this figure with that of 1947, since State-aid  
 has become far more diversified, and since many more children  
 belong to families possessing adequate means to pay for  
 the expenses of their children, it is certain that many  
 more children would be enabled to be sent to colonies de  
 vacances if State aid was increased in this direction.

## S E C T I O N II.

### The Organisation of Colonies de Vacances.

#### Chapter I.

#### The Bodies Organizing Colonies de Vacances.

##### A. The Department and the Commune.

The Préfet and the Conseil Général of any Department in France, apart from their administrative duties, are permitted to take certain initiatives, in as far as these are of recognized public usefulness, and colonies de vacances fall within this category. Such initiative is financed by taxes on special products of the region, by interest gained upon loans, or by special grants provided centrally. The Commune, however, is more important because it often possesses substantial resources, and the local mayors possess wide powers. The municipal council has deliberative power, but the final execution of a project lies in the hands of the mayor. It can create or aid colonies de vacances financially ~~in case~~ as these are not commercial or industrial enterprises. Certain municipalities have been criticized from time to time for giving financial aid to religious Patronages and day-colonies, since it is claimed that it is difficult for the municipality to verify the proper use of such expenditure. They are,

all the same, acting fully within their rights.

It is also possible for interdepartmental and inter-communal organisations to be created where this facilitates the task or eases the financial and administrative burden upon individual organisations.

#### B. The Caisses des Ecoles.

The Caisses des Ecoles ~~were~~ <sup>were founded</sup> under the personal initiative of the mayor of the third Arrondissement in Paris in 1849. The funds collected went first of all to provide clothes and shoes for poor children and to recompense the best pupils. The example was followed, and the Caisses ~~received~~ their first legislation in 1867. From the earliest days of the colonies de vacances, the Caisses were involved as we have seen, and, ~~to this day~~ <sup>to this day</sup>, they are responsible for sending many needy children to colonies de vacances from State primary schools. Even today despite the early growth of the Caisses, these only exist in about half the Communes of France. Their creation can stem from an ordinary meeting of the municipal council, and they ~~possess~~ <sup>possess</sup> ~~have~~ a strong and responsible legal status, once constituted.

#### C. Social Services of the Central Civil Service.

The Social Services of the Central Civil Service remain without legal definition and depend solely upon the initiative of some individuals: they ~~are~~ <sup>consist in</sup> sometimes <sup>vast</sup>.

organisations handling very many children from all over France (for example the Ministère des Finances). Some of the organisations of nationalized industries, such as the Electricité de France, the S.N.C.F. and the Groupement des Houillères, are prosperous concerns with a high standard; in other spheres, funds are small and the conditions prevailing in such colonies ~~are~~ often poor.

#### D. Social Services in Industry.

In some Companies, the social services tend to be extremely paternalistic and quite contrary to the true spirit of the colonie de vacances. There are other organisations run jointly by several industrial groups, but it requires much tact and ~~much~~ <sup>careful</sup> handling to run such a joint venture efficiently.

However those social services which are dependent upon the properly recognized and efficiently controlled Works-Committees, given legal status by the 1945 and 1946 Acts, ~~belong to~~ quite another order. These Committees raise and manage funds for social services for the benefit of workers and their families, whether or not the Company concerned contributes a small or large amount to the funds. Most Works-Committees are very much aware of the value of colonies de vacances and do much to promote them.

#### E. The Caisses d'Allocations Familiales.

Beyond ~~the~~ giving grants to colonies receiving children

whose families contribute to the Caisses, the fund provides grants ~~for~~ those families whose income is below a certain level. The Caisses also run a few experimental colonies themselves.

#### F. Independent Organisations.

The great majority of children attending colonies de vacances are accommodated by associations which come within the compass of the 1901 Act. Such associations form 37% of the organisations of the Department of the Seine and 90% of the organisations in the provinces. Many of these are recognized as being of "public utility", thereby being permitted to receive gifts and legacies, which must be administered in accordance with the law of the land. They also receive advantageous rates in respect to certain grants; on the other hand these associations must submit themselves to the authority of the Ministry of the Interior, which has the right to verify that the composition, running, and administration, of them conforms strictly to their written statutes.

The associations which are merely "declared" have no restraints imposed <sup>upon them</sup> as long as they do not trouble public order and in so far as they are not run for financial gain.

Amongst independent organisations there ~~is~~ a wide variety of local, regional and national bodies, controlled by a great diversity of people - some show a slight political

bias, some were created out of purely philanthropic motives, and many out of religious motives. Well over half the number of children falling within the responsibility of the U.F.C.V. belong to parish, interparish or diocesan church organisations, most of which are Catholic since Protestants constitute only a small minority in France, besides which the Protestant organisation (the C.P.C.V.) takes charge of most children from Protestant families.

## Chapter II.

### The Coordination of the Whole Movement.

#### A. The General Coordination.

From the point of view of the State, the general coordination of colonies de vacances is ~~effected~~ ~~about~~ through the medium of the Commissioner for Youth and Sport (Le Haut-Commissaire à la Jeunesse et aux Sports), at present Monsieur Maurice Herzog, his High Commission, the Regional and Departmental Offices of the Jeunesse et Sports, the departmental inspectors and secretarial staff of which ensure the inspection, efficient running, and proper coordination of all colonies within their province.

The Colonies de vacances movement is, however, bound together in a more vital manner by the great national bodies, that is to say the J.P.A., ~~the~~ U.F.O.V.A.L. and the U.F.C.V., as far as the organisation and running of colonies is concerned, and by the C.E.M.E.A., U.F.C.V. and to a lesser extent the C.P.C.V. and the F.N.C.V. with respect to training staff of all kinds. The ~~diffusion~~ ~~of~~ the true spirit and real understanding of the "méthodes nouvelles" and the "éducation active", which are the life-blood of the colonies de vacances, depends upon these four bodies, whose instructors include amongst their numbers some of the best educationalists of the present day.

## B. The "Non-religious" Colonie.

### 1. The U.F.O.V.A.L.

The Union Française des Oeuvres de Vacances Laïques, which ~~was born~~ in 1937, is a technical section of the Ligue Française de l'Enseignement (The Confédération Générale des Oeuvres Laïques). By 1958, 72 Departments were represented within the national commission of the U.F.O.V.A.L.

The U.F.O.V.A.L. groups about 4,000 colonies and camps which are attended by over 450,000 children yearly, and runs some colonies, especially camps and family-holiday-houses, itself. It carries out research into improving colonies under the guidance of its technical committee, and its technical services supply all necessary information pertaining to legislation, insurance, purchasing or hiring of buildings, the fitting out, running and administering of colonies and deals with all matters relating to the provision of staff, health, hygiene, safety, and transport, with respect to colonies.

An internal bulletin (Bulletin Intérieur de Liaison) and occasional circular letters for urgent cases serve to keep the departmental delegates informed of the activities of the Union. "Vacances UFOVAL", which is the national publication of the Union, runs into over 100,000 copies each year, and, since 1958, it has been particularly directed

at parents/sending their children to colonies, giving them advice and information about colonies, and regarding their own rôle, before and during, the colonies attended by their offspring. Besides these, the U.F.O.V.A.L. publishes a guide for directors and organisers, and administrative documents to aid in the running and accountancy of colonies.

Since 1952, dating from an Official Circular Letter of the Ministry of Agriculture, the member-organisations of the U.F.O.V.A.L. are permitted by law to use National Park and Forest land.

#### ii. The J.P.A.

The Jeunesse au Plein Air, so entitled since 1949 (which began as the Fédération Nationale des Oeuvres Laïques de Vacances d'Enfants et d'Adolescents), has, since 1952, become the instrument uniting the lay organisations of colonies de vacances, so that for most purposes the C.E.M.E.A., the J.P.A. and the U.F.O.V.A.L. may be considered to represent different aspects of the same organisation. The J.P.A. federates organisations which are not entitled to belong to the U.F.O.V.A.L., and its most important contribution to the work is the preparation of the national "campagne du timbre", of which the proceeds amounted to two and a half million francs in 1958. The J.P.A. operates offices for placing staff and children, offers loans at very low interest-rates for building or improvement-schemes

(34 organisations were aided in 1962 and 8 new colonies built through this scheme), has a technical commission to study the financial aspects of colonies, and also runs a holiday-house for families in a 250 acre domain at Viazac. The organ of the J.P.A. is the magazine "La Jeunesse au Plein Air".

iii. The C.E.M.E.A.

The Centres d'Entraînement aux Méthodes d'Education Active constitute the training body of the non-religious colonies, which runs more courses than any other single organisation. Its magazine, "Vers l'Education Nouvelle", contains practical and theoretical articles concerning the New Education in relation to colonies de vacances and is, perhaps, the most powerful element, setting aside the stages themselves, in the diffusion of proper educational methods in colonies de vacances. A regional "bureau de placement" groups the members of the U.F.O.V.A.L., the J.P.A. and the C.E.M.E.A. in all the important regions of France; the C.E.M.E.A. actually runs these offices, and the J.P.A. is responsible for the financing of them.

iv. The Pupilles de l'Ecole Publique, F.F.C. and the  
E.D.F.

The organisation of the Pupilles de l'Ecole Publique, through its open-air schools, its sanatorium at Odeillo, and through its colonies de vacances, provides facilities

for children attending State primary schools, particularly orphans and sick or maladjusted children. The Francs and Franches Camarades organisation trains leaders for day-colonies, non-religious Patronages, and colonies de vacances; the Eclaireurs de France constitute the non-religious branch of scouting in France.

These three organisations, hand in hand with the U.F.O.V.A.L., the J.P.A., and the C.E.M.E.A., work towards a common goal, inspired by the tenets of the New Education, and cooperate in the publication of "Belles Vacances" (a magazine which replaces certain issues of "Vacances UFOVAL" and ~~the~~ "Jeunesse au Plein Air" throughout the year), which furthers their aims, and comments month by month upon the progress of the non-religious movement of colonies de vacances. "Belles Vacances" champions the struggle to provide a real and full holiday, completing the work of the school year, for every child, since this is the right of each separate child as an individual.

### C. The U.F.C.V.

By 1964 the U.F.C.V., which had been in existence for 58 years, had been recognized of "public utility" for thirty years. In its early days, the U.F.C.V. was strongly under Catholic influences, and, for a period between the Wars, it became almost entirely supported by Catholic organisations. However, although the vast majority of

the organisations belonging to the U.F.C.V. are Catholic even today, at least 40% of the children passing through the hands of the Union belong to other organisations.

The services of the U.F.C.V. are much the same as those of the U.F.O.V.A.L., the J.P.A. and the C.E.M.E.A. together, for the Union federates some 4,500 associations, for which it provides "bureaux de placement" and trains staff of all kinds. The U.F.C.V., as we have seen, is now able to carry out a national fund-raising campaign similar to the campaign for which the J.P.A. is responsible, although at present the amount of money collected by the U.F.C.V. remains far below the amount collected by the J.P.A.

Exactly as the C.E.M.E.A. publishes a whole range of books and brochures in its Scarabée Editions, so Clédor, the U.F.C.V. publishing-house, is also expanding to provide similar material for the members of the Union. The "Revue de l'U.F.C.V." combines something of the nature of the "Vers l'Education Nouvelle", "Belles Vacances", "Jeunesse au Plein Air" and "Vacances UFOVAL" in one magazine. It has of recent years included many articles concerning pedagogy and handicrafts, whereas, during especially the first few months of the reappearance of the magazine after the War, the magazine was almost entirely a technical bulletin. "Moniteurs" stands as a complementary magazine aimed at young leaders in colonies, providing them with aid and information concerning the New Education and its techniques

- for instance the magazine published a series of articles over a period of several months explaining the history of the movement of the New Education and describing the work of its principal protagonists, alongside more strictly practical articles.

The work of the U.F.C.V. in training monitors, directors, and general staff, for colonies de vacances, is almost as important as that of the C.E.M.E.A., and it has ~~improved~~ <sup>still</sup> ~~been~~ and is continuing to improve and enlarge its work in this field. New Regional Unions have been created in the Academies of Strasburg and Orleans, and some departmental committees of the U.F.C.V. have felt the need to create their own colonies, such as that of Upper Savoy, Isère, Lille, Paris and others. Since their foundation in 1960, the Centres de Loisirs U.F.C.V. in Paris have built up their capacity to enable them to handle 4,000 children, and this serves a dual purpose. Firstly, in response to demands from different organisations, more children can be accepted in colonies, and secondly, the U.F.C.V. is able to put into practice ~~the~~ educational methods and techniques in order to try and resolve the many practical problems which still exist by experiment within their own colonies, much in the same way as the C.E.M.E.A. were enabled to do in the Ecole Nouvelle at Boulogne.

For many years the C.E.M.E.A. have turned their attention <sup>towards</sup> to fields other than those immediately connected with

colonies because different organisations perceived that Active Methods could be applied to their own needs (the C.E.M.E.A. runs training courses for staff of psychiatric hospitals, amongst other special activities). And the U.F.C.V., for the first time, has given a new lead by being the organisation to start the first school for training "animateurs de loisirs" - youth-leaders in a permanent capacity of which the government wishes to see in being at least 50,000 by the year 2,000. The first batch of young people ended the first training period of three months at the Olivet School at Château d'Isambert in December, 1964: the whole course of practical and theoretical training ~~requires~~ a period of nine months to <sup>be</sup> completed.

Thus, in all spheres of the colonie de vacances, the U.F.C.V. is making progress, aided by the fact, that, in these modern times, there ~~is~~ less prejudice against an organisation which ~~declared~~ its belief in the existence of a spiritual side to the personality.

#### D. The F.C.V.F. and the C.P.C.V.

The Fédération des Colonies de Vacances Familiales, which <sup>a membership</sup> as ~~part~~ of the Comité d'Entente - "Natalité-Famille Education" played a part in the first training <sup>course</sup>, now trains some 3,000 monitors and directors each year and groups the Fédération des Familles de France, Familles Nombreuses et Jeunes Foyers, Union des Caisses d'Allocations Familiales,

and the French Red-Cross. The Federation also runs certain special courses for leaders of youth groups and "maisons d'enfants" (a form of Crèche).

It has no periodical publication and handles 80,000 children through the various organisations which it federates.

The C.P.C.V., which began during the War, trains fewer leaders than the F.C.V.F. and presents a definite religious trend - most monitors and directors trained by the C.P.C.V. go to colonies run by the Comités member-organisations, where the spiritual welfare of the child receives important attention although no child is refused a place in these colonies due to his creed. The Comité's magazine "Rencontre", once a mere four duplicated sheets, is now a well laid-out and informative document, giving much the same practical help as "Moniteurs" or "Vers l'Education Nouvelle".

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Thus colonies de vacances constitute today a well-organized, highly coordinated, and efficient institution. Although financial difficulties are holding back a more rapid progression of the movement from the numerical point of view, there is no doubt of the vigorous work carried on by the individual organisations and of the steady process of evolution which is taking place.

CONCLUSION.

## C O N C L U S I O N .

### A. The Need for Colonies de Vacances.

Colonies de vacances have been described as "the most important Social Service of the Nation" and, were it only because of the considerable sums of money invested in them, they cannot be disregarded.

In a nation which has the lowest unemployment rate in the world and possesses an advanced social welfare system, where the working week has gradually fallen lower and lower, and where a full month's paid annual holiday is becoming a reality, it is scarcely surprising that great interest should be taken in holidays for children.

The population in France has risen steadily since the measures taken shortly before the Second World War when there was great anxiety over the fall in the birth-rate. In 1954, there were 5,500,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 25 in the country; in 1970 there will be 7,700,000: youth problems will therefore tend to increase rather than decrease. Amongst the young population, 47.7% of the nation's children went away for a holiday in 1961 - 31.5% with their parents and 8.7% in colonies de vacances. Half the country's children thus do not have real holidays and in some areas the situation is more acute; for instance, in Nancy, only a quarter of the city's children

went outside its boundaries in 1961.

Many parents cannot afford to give their children a holiday - more especially in poor areas of cities where the need is greatest; an example is the more crowded parts of Paris. Y.M.J. Chambart de Lauve (1) shows that the rates of delinquency, and of deaths through tuberculosis, are highest in such parts. More and more people are being housed in H.L.M. ("Habitations à Loyer Modéré" - Flats at Moderate Rents) where already the amount of space allowed officially is acknowledged to be dangerously low for real moral welfare, and where the lack of space is critical as soon as a new baby arrives, since the flats are allocated according to the size of the family at the moment of entering the flat.

As the pace of life accelerates, the rural areas become more depleted. Since the younger generation goes to seek work in the large towns, the problem of young people grows more acute, family-ties lessen, and the young people often find themselves utterly isolated.

These adolescents need a change of scenery, rest, open-air and a balanced diet. Those who are physically handicapped, perhaps more than others, would have no holidays but for such associations as the Association des Paralysés de France, which caters for children with different illnesses, disabilities, handicaps, or who

(1) See Psycho-pathologie sociale de l'enfant inadapté, P.U.F., 1959.

show anti-social behaviour.

But today it is not sufficient merely to provide rest and good food - in many cases this will not be a cause for real concern because the lot of young people in France today is by no means hard. Yet there is a need, which is not at all fulfilled by the school-system as it stands today, for young people to discover their own possibilities, widen their views, learn to live in harmony with others, and discover the value of doing a task for its own sake. The colonie de vacances modelled upon the New Education can offer just such an opportunity to do this.

Finally a new conception has entered the field of national planning - it is acknowledged that each individual has a right to leisure: freedom to seek a change of scenery and widen the scope of his interests. For this reason, the present government has set itself a vast programme of building in order to provide facilities for young people, ranging from sports-grounds and swimming-pools to colonies de vacances and day-colonies, so that no young person may be deprived of a full opportunity to develop through ~~work~~ leisure as well as through work.

#### B. The Problems of Colonies de Vacances.

Since the need for holiday facilities is thus ever growing, it seems strange that twice in recent years "Belles Vacances" has commented upon the apparent stagnation

in colonies de vacances. But it must be remembered that this applied essentially to the question of the government's contribution towards the day-to-day running costs of colonies de vacances. And, although the lack of such support is still acknowledged to be a factor limiting the progress of colonies, governmental grants, especially towards building and improving colonies de vacances, are being awarded in a more logical manner and with greater efficacy than heretofore.

There exist other problems - - - despite the very efficient work of the "bureaux de placement" and information services, it is both a difficult and an exacting task to run a colonies de vacances, to organize it to the satisfaction of the authorities, to carry out the extremely complicated administrative procedure and still make it a vitally living concern for the children. All this has to be achieved with a minimum of funds for paying the personnel and purchasing educative material.

Trained staff are difficult to find - teachers and students are available during school holidays, but even they are exhausted by the strain of a hard year's work. Congés Cadres Jeunesse, by which workers may claim leave from their job, have enabled numbers of young people in industry to train as monitors, and there is a plan to establish a body of permanent youth leaders throughout France - both these moves constitute only a small step

towards relieving the existing difficulty.

The tendency to crowd too many children into a colonie is a permanent one, and the child risks being swallowed up in the anonymity of the group. ~~As~~ The colonie runs the danger of falling educationally below standard because there are not sufficient inspectors to examine every colonie de vacances, especially in popular areas such as the Gironde of Upper Savoy.

### C. The Progress Achieved by Colonies de Vacances.

Some progress is being achieved in almost every direction. The financial burden is slowly being eased, here and there new inspectors are added to the staff of the Departmental Offices of the Jeunesse et Sports, and gradually government aid is taking on a more logical aspect.

The recent Plan d'Equipement has recognized the need for 1,000 day-colonies (although perhaps two and a half times this number are really required), one bed in colonies de vacances for every 25 inhabitants (which would provide a total of 1,600,000 beds, of which half would be permanent) - and, for the first time, the need is realized for the provision of one bed per 50 inhabitants for adolescents. It is expected that a bill will be drafted shortly to begin the work of training the 50,000 permanent youth leaders who will be required by the year 2,000. The need has been taken into account even though, with the credit available in 1964, it would take fifty years to attain the target set.

The number of children attending colonies de vacances increased in 1963 but ceased to grow once again in 1964. However more children are attending day-colonies and more and more young people are going to camps. And there are two terms which offer some enlightenment of this new direction which colonies de vacances are taking: "Loisir" and "embourgeoisement".

For Bion, as for the early pioneers in colonies de vacances in ~~the~~ France, the concern was to provide holidays for those in ~~physical~~ need of them - although from the very first the educational aspect was not neglected.

Throughout the inter-war period, youth leaders and educationalists the world over were discovering the possibility of a new kind of education which would develop the whole personality. We have seen that the colonies, above all, provides the setting in nature and the free atmosphere in which this may be achieved.

Now the colonie is taking on a new aspect. In the modern world adolescents, having more liberty at their disposal, stand in need of a sphere of activity in which to develop their creative abilities in the right environment: this is the real meaning of "Loisir". Young people are isolated, idle, and a prey to all kinds of harmful influences in the present world, and it is hard to try and develop one's own personality in harmony with one's fellows: this task is becoming urgent. France wants no leather-jacketed

hooligans on the beaches of Le Touquet or Cannes, and the French government is prepared to do all it can to give the young people of the nation an opportunity to occupy their spare time positively.

The traditional colonie for young children continues: whistles and loudspeaker-systems (the bane of many a Lycée) are seldom heard, there are fewer trips to the cinema, fewer assemblies (no longer the dozen or fifteen a day of before the War) - there are no longer competition-charts, patrol-calls and good or bad points. Order is more often respected for its own sake and colonies are smaller: the Juliette Parys of today have every opportunity and encouragement to run colonies de vacances following the New Education, and the whole institution has much improved. More colonies for handicapped children are run, there are more family centres, and many more specialized youth camps. But most of all, although more children go to colonies de vacances from poor backgrounds, the colonie is no longer a camp for ragged children. It is an institution of real positive value for ~~all~~ children of all ages and backgrounds, existing in its own right: all this is implied by the term "embourgeoisement".

The ~~old~~ prejudice of the middle classes against the institution has vanished, and some of the winter colonies are destined only to the wealthy. The insufficiency of the school for developing the whole personality is

universally recognized, and in many cases the colonie has to be the only substitute in a world where the mother frequently goes out to work and the children are sent into the streets.

The original purpose of the colonie de vacances has not been lost, but, rather, has become more comprehensive.

For the U.F.C.V., "the family and school no longer are enough", as "Belles Vacances" mentions:

"La colonie de vacances a pris rang dans notre pays, d'institution éducative de toute première importance, complétant avec sa pédagogie propre l'action de l'école."

(1)

the colonie de vacances has become an educational institution of primordial importance in France, completing with its own pedagogy the work of schools.

Educationally, socially and numerically, the colonies de vacances have assumed proportions unthought of before the creation of the training courses. Now there is every sign that, instead of attaining a certain state of equilibrium, the colonies de vacances, or rather the centres de vacances, as they are more inclusively termed today, are undergoing an internal revolution. Attention is more and more focused upon the teenager instead of being focused almost solely upon the young child as ~~they~~ it was originally. The centre de vacances is France's best answer to the teenage problem which, in other European countries, grows daily more urgent.

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(1) Qu'apporte la colonie de vacances? Article in Belles Vacances No. 23, Printemps 1963.

GLOSSARY.

G L O S S A R Y.

Bureau de placement: an office which finds places for staff and children in colonies de vacances.

Camp de vacances: a holiday camp for adolescents.

Centre de placement: a village or small town in the country, the mountains, or at the sea-side, to which numbers of children are sent to be provided with lodgings. A leader is responsible for such children and will often organize special activities for them.

Centre de vacances: this is an inclusive term comprehending colonies maternelles, colonies de vacances, camps de vacances, and other specialized colonies.

Colonie de vacances: a children's holiday camp, normally in a permanent building, for children between the ages of 6 and 14. They are defined officially by article No. I of the Order in Council of the 14th April, 1949 (1).

Colonie maternelle: a colonie de vacances for children under the age of six.

Cours de perfectionnement: special training classes or sessions.

Directeur: the director or group-leader, who is responsible for all that takes place in a colonie de vacances (the American equivalent is a "warden").

Econome: a manager responsible for the material and catering sides of a colonie de vacances (the American equivalent is a "domestic bursar").

Fiche médicale: a document informing the staff of colonies de vacances of all details pertaining to the health of a child.

(1) Article 1er. de l'arrêté du 14 avril 1949:  
 "Les colonies de vacances sont l'oeuvre d'institutions organisant, hors du domicile familial, en régime d'internat et sous la direction d'un personnel qualifié, le séjour temporaire d'enfants sains dans les établissements réunissant diverses conditions d'hygiène et d'éducation précisées par ailleurs".

Maison Familiale de vacances: a holiday home providing accommodation for parents and children.

Moniteur: a monitor or leader in a colonie de vacances, formally frequently termed a "surveillant" (the American equivalent is a "counsellor").

Organisateur: an organizer of one or more colonies de vacances, who may sometimes also act as director in one of the colonies he supervises.

Patronage: either a religious or non-religious organisation, functioning most frequently on Thursdays and Sundays as a club for young people.

Placement familial: the system by which children are sent to centres de placement (see above).

Stage de formation: a basic training course for a) monitors  
b) directors.

Stage de perfectionnement: a special activity course for qualified monitors.

Vacances collectives: the complementary system to placement familial (see above), by which children are lodged collectively.

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