

# PARENTS HELD MAIN BLAME IN TEEN CRIME

Report on Juvenile Delinquency

By Berkeley Group

By **WILLIAM BOQUIST**

Parents should be prosecuted if their children don't respect authorities, a group of Berkeley citizens 'concluded last week after a twenty-month-long study of juvenile delinquency.

This was one of several recommendations of the youth committee of the Berkeley City Commons Club, in a report which pointed to parents and the home environment as the greatest single cause of juvenile delinquency.

The twenty-four page report was prepared under the chairmanship of Dr. Suren H. Babington, chief of staff and chief of surgery at Berkeley's Herrick Hospital.

## **BROKEN HOMES.**

Of the unfavorable factors in the home leading to the problem juvenile, the committee listed broken homes, poor home economic, health or social conditions and parental indifference or neglect as the worst.

Others were lack of training or guidance, poor examples by parents, lack of discipline, drinking parents, parental indulgence, and the child's lack of security and sense of being needed.

Factors outside the home, concluded the committee, included too much leisure time, gang spirit, a sense of inferiority or resentment and too much crime on radio, television, in movies and comic books.

## **POLICE LAUDED.**

The committee surveyed juvenile delinquency in Berkeley and found that Berkeley's Police Department was doing its job well.

While only 581 of Berkeley's 15,085 school children—or 3.85 per cent—came to police attention last year, the committee recommended formation of a citizen's committee to "make studies and arouse the citizens to action."

Among its other recommendations:

For parents—Place greater responsibility on them for the care and direction of their children.

No opportunity should be missed to remind them of their responsibilities; they should seek aid early before their child becomes entangled with the law; parents should be prosecuted if their children fail to heed warnings; preparenthood and parent training programs, and psychiatric guidance clinics should be provided.

## **SPECIFIC TRAINING.**

Fingerprinting at birth and again when the child is old enough to know its value was suggested. "It might deter some," the committee found.

For other elements of the community in the prevention of juvenile delinquency the committee recommended that teachers be given specific training in the latest methods of youth guidance, more parks and playgrounds should be provided and better youth programs should be offered through service organizations and churches.

Committee members, in addition to Babington, included George Burkhard, principal of the Whittier-University Elementary School; Victor Lindblad, Boy Scout executive; Attorney John C. Loper; Robert R. Porter, manager of Berkeley's First Savings & Loan Association; Ben E. Rickli, YMCA executive, and the Rev. Gail Cleland.