Southern Area Office Helps Solve Problems

HSUS Southern Area Representative Burton M. Parks traveled extensively through Florida and Georgia earlier this year meeting with the boards of directors of local humane societies and other leading humanitarians.

Parks, whose office is in Pinehurst, N. C., evaluated local animal control programs and other society activities and made recommendations for improvement. In every community he visited he brought together representatives of the local society and the city or county animal control officer, often for the first time. A focal point of discussion in these meetings was the expert help HSUS offers in solving animal control problems through its manual Responsible Animal Regulation (available at 50¢ each from HSUS headquarters).

"Most societies operating shelters in Florida and Georgia confine their activities to the maintenance of the shelters and are discouraged that the community as a whole does not respond to their fund raising efforts," he reported. "My message to them was that fund raising, community-wide education programs, and publicity are inter-related and that none can be successful without the other two." He stressed the philosophy of HSUS founder Fred Myers that the humane movement is for the betterment of people as well as animals, because people who learn to respect animals are more likely to respect their fellow man.

In a separate trip, Parks provided technical assistance to municipal officials and humane society leaders in Pensacola, Fla., this spring for improving the city's animal shelter operation.

Parks flew to Pensacola at the request of Mrs. Linda New, who had been elected president of the Pensacola Humane Society a week before. She asked Parks to recommend changes in the society's operation of the city animal shelter that he felt were necessary to justify renewal of the society's contract by the city.

HSUS Tells Pittsburgh Its Zoo is Stagnating

HSUS zoo expert Sue Pressman blasted the Pittsburgh Zoo as a "limping along zoo" during an inspection in May.

Mrs. Pressman charged that living conditions for the animals had not improved since her initial investigation 4 years before. "My general impression is that this place is stagnating," she declared.

She warned that HSUS would consider taking legal action against the zoo unless city administrators take immediate steps to improve the antiquated conditions. She was unimpressed by plans for a $23.5 million building program disclosed by Parks and Recreation Dept. Director Louise Brown and Zoo Director Howard Hayes.

"The proposal would only create a bigger, nicer version of what is there already," she said. "It follows the discredited Noah's Ark syndrome and will be out of date before it is built."

Mrs. Pressman urged the city to utilize the services of a professional zoo architectural consultant to draft a master plan for the zoo.

Public concern about the zoo mounted after the Pittsburgh Zoological Society announced it was turning over its control of the zoo to the city because of "senseless, irrational interference" by city administrator.

"I'm concerned about the zoo society's plan to leave," said Mrs. Pressman. "The city cannot run the zoo all by itself. There has to be some input from the private community. If the city tries to go it alone in operating the entire zoo complex, it will go down in history as a step backwards in modern zoo management."

She said both sides—the city and the zoo society—are at fault regarding disagreement over zoo policy. "If the zoological society does not change its mind, HSUS will watch the zoo very carefully and take immediate action if the quality of animal care drops," she said.

Word of Mrs. Pressman's plans to visit the zoo prompted a crash cleanup program. One veteran zoo employe expressed amazement at the amount of activity and compared it to "an inspector general's visit in the Army." "I haven't seen this many workmen here in 5 years," he said.