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THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

9 APR 1945

WASHINGTON

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
The White House

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Reference is made to your letter of 7 March 1945 forwarding a letter alleging unsatisfactory conditions in the operation of the nursery at the U. S. Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas and stating that the writer was unable to return to work because provision could not be made to care for her two small children during working hours.

In order that a correct evaluation could be made of this complaint, the Commanding Officer at the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas, was asked to investigate this matter. Following, in substance, is the report received which explains the operation of the nursery school at that activity:

The nursery school on the Naval Air Station is operated officially from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. However, the janitress is required to be at work at 7:00 a.m. and she is usually there by 6:30 a.m. so that no child needs to remain outside the building until the school officially opens. The Supervisor, who arrives at 8:00 a.m., has never accompanied any waiting child into the building in her two years employment at the school.

The staff includes one supervisor, one assistant supervisor and one registered nurse. The enrollment is limited to thirty-five children because facilities will not permit greater participation. There is usually a waiting list and children are placed on the list as they apply. There is no preference list; each applicant must and does wait his turn.

The nurse on duty is there specifically to safeguard the health of all the children. Anytime any of the children should be sent home because of the danger of contagion, the parents are called and asked to take the children out until such time as they are well and able to participate in the school's activities without endangering the health of others.

The school officially closes at 4:30 p.m. One of the instructors accompanies the children who ride the station busses to the bus stop and personally helps them on the bus. One member of the staff remains with the children at the school until they have all been called for by their parents, regardless of the time. A member of the staff often misses her ride home and has to go by bus because parents call for their children after 4:30 p.m. In some instances, the staff member has had to wait fully two hours before closing the school.

The Officials of the Corpus Christi Independent School District worked very hard for permission to include Peary Place as an addition to the school district since it was outside the established boundary lines. Permission was finally granted and the nursery was established according to regulations set

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up by the Lanham Act for nursery schools. Accordingly, the Peary Place Nursery School was opened in March, 1944. Unfortunately, it was closed in October, 1944 by request of the Federal Works Agency because the operating cost was considered too great for the number of students enrolled.

A survey was made in September, 1944, to determine the need for an extended Day School for children beyond Nursery School age, but there were not enough children to establish the school at that time. It is understood that funds are available to reopen the center whenever the need is apparent.

According to the report, this is the first complaint of its kind to be received by the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station.

Any inconvenience to this worker resulting from circumstances beyond the control of the Naval Air Station is to be regretted; however, from the foregoing, it would appear that every effort is being made to provide satisfactory necessary facilities for the care of the children of employees at that activity.

Sincerely yours,
