

MEDICINE

Mental Hygiene Centers Would Save Thousands of Dollars

Community Clinics Prevent Mental and Nervous Breakdown; Physicians Discuss Requisites of Medical Education

THOUSANDS of dollars can be saved to the state by developing its mental hospitals into mental hygiene centers for their communities, Dr. James Allen Jackson, superintendent of the Danville State Hospital, Danville, Pa., told the mental hygiene session of the congress on medical education and hospitals held at Chicago last week under the auspices of the American Medical Association.

Community clinics and educational efforts in connection with the hospital will help many persons adjust to their environment and prevent the development of many cases of mental and nervous breakdowns and diseases.

At the Pennsylvania hospital ten such clinics, established in the last ten years, have received 10,000 visitors, of which about half were new cases. Of these about two-thirds were children under sixteen. These children were so handled that less than one-fifth of them had to be committed to correctional institutions. The mental hospital in the rural area is better adapted to this type of work than the urban hospital, Dr. Jackson said.

Mental hygiene is a community job, agreed Dr. George S. Stevenson of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. He pointed out that prevention of mental disorders differs from prevention of physical disease. Not only medicine, but criminology, pedagogy, social service and religion are concerned in the prevention of the mental ailments.

Medical education takes too much time, declared Dr. William J. Mayo, of the Mayo Clinic at Rochester, Minn., in an address at the same congress.

The long period of from two to four years in university or college before beginning the medical course dulls the young student's mind and makes the young physician almost 30 years old before he begins to practice, Dr. Mayo said.

A possible remedy for the situation lies in the four-quarter system which would save two or more years.

"Why should these young people at the strongest period of life continue in the educational system of the grammar school?" he asked.

Dr. Mayo questioned the wisdom of the prevalent system of examinations.

"Unconsciously the instructor uses the degree as a club to compel the student to remember by a cramming process rather than an understanding of the subjects taught," he said.

Dr. Mayo advised earlier contact with patients; more sympathetic understanding of the emotional suffering of patients; and a period of general practice

before entering a special field of medicine.

Scientific research is valuable even if it does not produce great results, he said, because it stimulates the student's imagination and his interest in his special subject.

Medical students must be equipped with brains and a knowledge of mathematics and English, Dr. Wilburt C. Davison, dean of Duke University School of Medicine, Durham, N. C., declared.

Besides these essentials he advised greater premedical training in physics and chemistry. The matter of brains can best be judged by personal interview, he said. Academic records alone, no matter how excellent, are no longer the sole basis for admission to medical school. Dr. Davidson doubts the necessity for four years of college work before entering medical school. Culture is more likely to be acquired during the early years in the home than from four years at college, he believes.

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MINING

Cost of Coal Is Reduced By Safety Measures in Mines

THE VAST majority of the accidents occurring in coal mines could be prevented without adding a penny to operating expenses, W. H. Forbes, assistant engineer at the U. S. Bureau of Mines Safety Station in Vincennes, Ind., is convinced from recent investigations.

Actually money is saved, through decreased compensation and the reduction of labor turnover in mines where as much importance is attached to a worker's disobedience to safety rules or orders as to his reporting late for work or leaving the job before quitting time.

Instances in which accidents have been materially reduced solely due to an emphasis on safety rules and individual responsibility are cited by Mr. Forbes in proof of his contention:

"A face boss in charge of a pillar section producing about 900 tons of coal daily, had 23 men injured, entailing a loss of 2,500 days during a 10-month period.

"This foreman was induced to attend, and became much interested in, a course of instruction in accident preven-

tion conducted for the officials of this mine. He then operated the same pillar section, under exactly the same conditions, for the next 12-month period with only four lost-time accidents, entailing the loss of only 49 days. Subsequently, he has operated the same pillar section for 19 months without a lost-time accident.

"Other foremen at the same mine have records nearly equal to the one mentioned above."

In this mine, lost-time accidents were reduced from 120 in the fiscal year, 1928-29, to 40 lost-time accidents during the fiscal year, 1929-30, a reduction of 66 per cent. due to safety measures which did not cost a penny. Indeed, the safety program netted the company profits by reducing the compensation costs per ton of coal from \$0.045 to \$0.0069. Workers also profited by the reduced accident hazard, only 8.4 per cent. suffering injuries during the first half of 1930 as compared with 10.8 per cent. injured during the first half of 1928.

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