

PSYCHIATRY

Survey Reveals Some Mental Hospitals Are "Disgrace"

National Committee for Mental Hygiene Want Public To Rouse From Apathy; 1 in 20 Will Be Patient

"SOME mental hospitals are a disgrace!"

This serious charge is made by the National Committee for Mental Hygiene in its annual report, just published.

A recent nation-wide survey conducted by the Committee reveals, the report states, a "dismal failure of state authorities in many parts of the country to provide adequately for the mentally ill.

"The depression has put in its deadly work, and standards of care in many institutions have fallen far below the requirements of modern psychiatric practice—in some places to such a point as to suggest a reversion to the conditions of the old asylum era."

The public must be roused from its apathy regarding the seriousness of this problem, the Committee declares. One person out of every 20, they estimate, will himself become a patient in a mental hospital some time during his lifetime. And about one out of every 10 will suffer more or less from mental illness whether he is given treatment in a hospital or not.

Institutions in all parts of the nation are excessively crowded, the survey revealed. This is considered due partly to the fact that the average length of life has been extended 13 years in the last forty years. Mental disease affects more individuals proportionately among old people than in the younger age groups.

Poverty may be partly responsible for the deplorable conditions existing in some institutions, according to officials cooperating in the survey. Yet in the same states money may be found to provide very creditable roads.

The depression put new burdens on mental hospitals, because during that time families who ordinarily would care for slightly ill mental patients at home were forced by circumstances to send them to a hospital. And when patients recovered to the extent that they might be sent home from the institution, they often had to stay because those at home could not take care of them.

Now, the boom is hitting the mental

hospitals in another way. New opportunities for employment in national defense are attracting employees from the hospitals. The draft is taking some more. In a few months, hospitals will be feeling the loss of members of their medical staff who are going into the Army or Navy.

At the same time, the state mental hospitals must expect to face a new task—that of rehabilitating young men whose mental or emotional instabilities and in-

adequacies are revealed during the military process.

Besides these conditions, some state institutions are hampered by a lack of vision on the part of public officials. The public and some public officials are not sufficiently aware that the mentally ill need more than mere physical protection—a good roof over their heads.

In probably twelve or thirteen states, the superintendent of a state hospital is a political appointee. He may be chosen, not because of his knowledge of mental illness, but because his cousin carried three districts in the south of the state. And he is subject to instant dismissal whenever the political regime changes. This condition makes the whole staff of the hospital, even when they are thoroughly competent professionally, feel insecure. The best men are apt to leave such a hospital and go into other work or to another state.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Program For Keeping Draftee Bridegroom Happily Married

A FOUR-POINT program for keeping draftee bridegrooms and their brides happily married was recommended by Dr. Lowell S. Selling, director of the psychopathic clinic of the Recorder's Court of Detroit, at the Second Annual Michigan Conference on Marriage and Family Relations. Dr. Selling's advice is:

1. No couple should get married merely because the man is to be drafted. The prospective bride should be sure she wants to marry and is not rushing "into an emotional situation due to glamor or because time seems to be fleeting."

2. The wife who is left at home by the soldier should not be dependent on her job alone. There should be some machinery in the government to take care of her, particularly if her husband is in the National Guard or a non-drafted soldier.

3. Furloughs should be as frequent as possible so that the couple will not "get too far apart."

4. Trained professional advisers should be available for potential Service bridegrooms and brides.

The nation may have a new marital problem on its hands, Dr. Selling suggests, when the married draftee whose wife is self-supporting returns from serv-

ice. After a year of freedom the husband may be reluctant to settle down. If during his year in the Army he has been picturing his wife as ideally beautiful and wonderful, coming back to stark reality may be such a shock as to break up the marriage.

Selective Service conscription is not likely to increase the number of marriages as much as a draft during actual war would, Dr. Selling points out, because there is not now, as in war, the element of impending death to stimulate the desire for children and race preservation. Marriages to evade the draft are not frequent enough to be a problem, according to Dr. Selling's observations.

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CHEMISTRY

Shells of Cashew Nuts Provide Phenol for Varnish

SHELLS of cashew nuts are used to provide the natural phenol from which is made a new insulating varnish. It is particularly useful for large glass or asbestos-insulated coils since it dries from the inside. (*Irvington Varnish & Insulator Co.*)

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