



CANADA

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## MENTAL HEALTH IN CANADA

"The very fact that, in recent years, the term 'mental health' has largely replaced 'mental illness' in popular usage indicates a strong emphasis on the positive which has developed in our approach to this problem," Mr. J. Waldo Monteith, Minister of National Health and Welfare, told the Business and Professional Women's Club in Stratford, Ontario, on March 26. Observing that Mental Health Week was approaching and that "we are now well into what has been set aside as World Mental Health Year", Mr. Monteith said: "This is the first time that the matter has been given such international recognition and indicates the importance which mental health has assumed among peoples throughout the globe. In fact, I believe I am correct in saying that the sponsorship for this observance involves voluntary and professional organizations in no less than 43 different countries." The body of this address follows:

"...The idea behind World Mental Health Year is quite simple. It is designed to focus attention on this universal health problem and to stimulate and increase the mutual exchange of ideas and assistance on an international basis. Much, of course, has already been done in this regard. Indeed, in two of the most hopeful aspects of Canada's mental health activities, assistance from abroad has been of key importance. I have in mind, for example, the 'open-door' concept in mental hospitals. This was pioneered in such countries as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, and has

had a very great impact on our thinking and planning here in Canada. The other aspect is chemotherapy -- the use of tranquilizers and similar drugs. This again was initiated in Europe, and after clinical trials and further development by Canadian and other scientists, has almost revolutionized the treatment of many types of mental disorder.

"Nor has co-operation in this field been one-sided. My department, for instance, has produced a good deal of educational material on mental health which has been used in many English - and French-speaking countries as an integral part of their own programmes. Some of it has been translated and reprinted in other languages, such as Spanish, Portuguese, Finnish, and even Afrikaans. In addition, various films on mental health produced by the National Film Board in co-operation with our Mental Health Division have had wide circulation outside the country. Canadians have also contributed substantially to mental health research and to the development of progressive methods of prevention and treatment.

"It is this kind of mutual assistance and collaboration which World Mental Health Year hopes to further encourage and broaden so that all peoples may have a part in building and using the fund of knowledge necessary to meet this universal human need.

"But what about our own position with respect to mental health? Where do we stand at the present time? Before going further, we should perhaps settle on what is meant by