

The Mental Health Grant has enabled some provinces to establish such a division and has provided funds for the improvement and enlargement of others.

A notable example is the province of New Brunswick, where a mental health division has been established with a qualified director of mental health, consultants and supervisors in psychology, social work and mental health nursing. Since 1948, this province has expanded its hospital program, opened four mental health clinics, fostered developments in general hospitals, participated in many community activities and, along with the other Atlantic provinces, has been an active partner in the development of the Dalhousie training program to which I have already referred.

2. Psychiatric Services in General Hospitals

Provincial governments have traditionally provided medical care for patients in mental hospitals at no direct cost to the patient and have made only minimal charges, if any, for hospital services. For this reason, care in mental institutions has properly been excluded from the present federal hospital insurance proposal since it is already an accepted responsibility of the provinces. The objective of the Federal Government is to relieve the patient of the sometimes crushing cost of hospital care, but not to relieve provincial governments of financial obligations already accepted by them in keeping with the traditional constitutional pattern.

Unlike mental institutions, general hospitals charge the cost of mental treatment services to the patient or paying agency and the provision of medical care, except for indigent patients, is a responsibility of the patient or guardian. The Mental Health Grant has been used to support special services for which no charge is levied against the patient. Under the terms of the federal hospital insurance proposal, hospital care could be provided to psychiatric patients in general hospitals.

3. The Continuing Shortage of Trained Personnel

Preliminary results from a recent nation-wide survey confirm the generally-held opinion that a serious shortage of specialized personnel exists. A constant supply of newly-qualified individuals is needed. Further, where personnel are immersed in mental health work for a period of years, they become aware of the need for training to a higher level or in advanced techniques. Sound planning recognizes this need by arranging for staff members to participate in training activities. The Mental Health Grant provides several ways to meet this situation: through bursaries, short courses, institutes where specialists are brought in to give intensive instruction; and in-service training in which the individual has the advantage of long association with instructors.

The education and recruitment of very considerable numbers of all types of professional personnel continues to be a matter of considerable urgency. This is perhaps one of the areas in which an organization such as this can be of real assistance. A group like the Mental Health Committee of the Rotary Club can do much to improve the general attitude towards employment in the mental health field. Its members can help to spread the realization that there is a real job to be done -- that this work presents a challenge and an opportunity to help our fellow-citizens.