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MOUNT PLEASANT, IOWA

July 31, 1944

A. SOUCEK, M.D.  
SUPERINTENDENT AND  
UNIT DIRECTOR  
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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Mr. Albert Gaeddert, General Director of Camps  
Mennonite Central Committee  
Akron, Pennsylvania

AUG 2 1944

Dear Rev. Gaeddert:

This letter is concerning a local situation created by a recent article published in the Des Moines Register (July 31, 1944).

On July 6 (While I was at home on Vacation) Dr. Kirby Page held a conference at the local Iowa Wesleyan College. On the afternoon of the 6th, Dr. Page with a group of prominent Methodist ministers came to the Hospital to visit the C.P.S. Unit. They met in an informal way with 10 of the group including 2 wives. The chief result of the meeting seemed to be that the ministers asked the C.P.S. group a lot of questions about the work and the conditions here. There were a number of individuals in the group of C.P.S. present, who are very free in talking and ~~are~~ <sup>were</sup> very ready to denounce the hospital; including hospital doctors, regular employees, care of patients, and other vital subjects. They did such an effective job of painting a black picture of the hospital that the ministers were immediately up-in-arms and wanted to do something about the conditions. They immediately wanted to fill the papers with articles exposing these conditions. They were warned that -- they must not do it! It was explained that it would be very bad for us and would not solve the problem. For the time being the group seemed to be satisfied, but to-day the inclosed article appeared in the Des Moines Register (which almost everyone reads here.)

It has created a very tense situation with the regular employees, with whom we have enjoyed very good relations thus far. The hospital administration is also very much in the air about it. The Superintendent has contacted the Board of Controls and is awaiting their decision for further action. It is expected that the minister who wrote the article will be summoned to court to substantiate his article. Since almost all of the information he has was given to him by several of our assignees it will naturally involve them-and us.

A number of the statements are not true and would not be upheld by our group and could not be proved if they were believed. A number of them are true, but they would not have much weight. If a court investigation actually develops, I feel that we will have to do some very tactful and wise planning to make clear our real attitudes.

Half or more of the group seem to more or less agree with the article but of course do not approve the fact that it was published. I for myself have always tried to uphold the institution and work with it in its under-staffed

and handicapped condition. I have quite a bit of respect for the Sup't. and do not feel to uphold the letter as it is not based on unbiased facts.

I will put a few comments on the copy of the magazine article to explain the facts as I see them now. (I numbered the article paragraphs.)

1. No instructions were given to us, due to the understaffed condition, a few weeks ago some instruction was offered, but the last meeting was attended by only 6. There was a psychiatrist here when we came.
2. The story quoted here seems to be true, but there are very likely other angles not mentioned. The Sup't. himself has had over 10 years of experience with feeble minded, epileptic, and insane patients.
3. The wages paid at the hospital at the present time are not low. The regular employees don't meet our ideals, but they are as high as any other cross-section of society.
4. Such conditions here mentioned have existed, perhaps, but do not exist now. (this statement was made by a member of the group of ministers and not by our group.)
5. This incident seems to be true - but in any case of such action discovered by the Administration - the employee was fired.
6. The buildings are not adequate! in fact very much the opposite, which shows a definite lack of thorough investigation

While I do not feel that conditions here are ideal, I am not sure that I would care to challenge the conditions and condemn them.

Dick Reuter of NSERO is scheduled to be here on Wednesday on his way up to Independence, Iowa with the leader of the Church which is to sponsor that hospital. Ralph Beechy is to be here on Thursday as a part of his regular visit. Perhaps these men can help us with the situation.

We will be anxious to know further developments as well as to receive any suggestions or comments that you may have.

Trusting that God will lead us to act according to His will:

Very truly yours,

*Carl Leinbach*

Earl Leinbach