

A LINE.....

from FORTY-NINE.....

THE ATTENDANT, a monthly all-CPS mental hospital and training school unit publication, had its first printing in June. The Attendant was conceived by CPS men to help meet a deep concern of men in service units that we might maintain a sense of unity, of fellowship, and of sharing experiences that seem vital to affect our work. We wanted to enrich our own training and perspective by learning from others.

But.....the Attendant is only one part of a broad and long-range program. Certainly no one with a sense of social obligation could come into situations such as we have found and not ask the questions: Why does this exist? Why are these people here? How could their coming have been prevented, or, barring prevention being always possible, how could they have been better received and cared for? What can we do now to make life more liveable for those so handicapped or so socially misfortunate as to be confined here? How can we alter conditions which are intolerable? How can we stem the tide of social suicide through a growing epidemic of mental illness? How can we most effectively plan that we may contribute permanently to mental health and to the care of mentally ill.

Such questions immediately suggest the scope of our concerns! They reach into every realm of social relationship and challenge every one of us. Final answers depend upon a tremendous amount of research, of technical knowledge, of experience, and upon a readiness to drive far beyond what has yet been organized anywhere, let alone in CPS! But.....we know the answers are there! We know that we have trained men, observant, creative, and determined. What more could we ask? From here our contribution depends solely upon ourselves. How deeply are we concerned? How much do we want to probe at the roots of a problem in society which actually is dependent in part upon, yet much more critical than, the problems of war itself? When our very faith in man is questioned, can we dare pass by without an answer? We've dared to say, no! We will not pass by.....therefore.....

THE MENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM OF CPS has been launched. Part I, the Attendant, covers the exchange of project-centered material useful in our education, in solving problems, and in improving our abilities to serve on the ward, now. Part II, the preparation of a Summary Statement of conditions bids fair to be something entirely new in the way of an analysis of our institutions. It is going to be human-centered and will approach the physical makeup of institutions, and the personnel, from the standpoint of affect upon the patients and staff alike. It will include a briefing of all laws of states dealing with the institutions. Out of it will come recommendations to interested groups and proposals to legislatures. Creative writing will be used to get our message over to those not familiar with the mental hygiene field. A third part of the program pertains to work within individual units to provide better immediate care, education, and recreation for patients under our supervision. All of this work is being carried out by CPS men (or members of allied Women's Service units) on their own time after daily duty hours ranging from 8 to 12. Many there are who would say, "it can't be done." But.....advances come when the impossible is accomplished and therefore.....

Our reply is that it will be done. We've already gone "over the top", not waiting for completion of research, or for final organization, but sobered by the need, the urgency and our own incapacities yet are we confident in our ability to cumulatively render a service of faith and of love.

Hal Barton

BY THE WAY, don't withhold your criticisms and suggestions of the ATTENDANT or of the Summary Outline!