

Waver
123

Visitation Report
CPS Unit #123
Wisconsin Colony for Feeble Minded
Union Grove, Wis.

I visited this institution on Tuesday and Wednesday, January 1 and 2, 1946.

Meeting. On the first evening we held a meeting which included a devotional period and presentation of the latest CPS news. Approximately fifteen men and their wives attended.

Interview with Dr. Atherton. Dr. Atherton said that the labor situation was as bad as it ever has been and that he is anxious to keep as much of the CPS labor as possible. He is very much in favor of getting the remaining Winnebago men, if this unit closes out in February.

Probably the biggest factor in not being able to get labor for this institution is its isolation--not to mention the fact that wages there do not equal those offered by nearby factories.

The superintendent expressed satisfaction in the help received from the CPS unit. Occasionally Dr. Atherton "blows up" and berates the men, with the unit leader taking the brunt of the attack.

Concerns. Albert Klassen expressed his unhappiness in what he felt was the poor progress of the unit towards better treatment of the patients. Although he felt that perhaps the patients were treated somewhat better since the CPS unit first came, he also felt that most everybody had compromised and adopted "strong arm" methods employed originally by non-CPS attendants. He said that on several occasions they had made a concerted effort to change the conditions, but that the unit never stuck together and that, therefore, eventually all would necessarily revert to the old methods. He felt that if the unit would really stick together that they could definitely change the methods. He felt it rather late to try this, but I expressed the feeling that it is never too late as long as they can get together on their approach. Although I just got to see Art Weaver, successor to John Ewert, for several minutes before he left on his vacation, I know he is very conscious of the situation and will do his best to meet this problem. Perhaps a detailed letter to the unit from this office expressing our concern on such an issue would help to stimulate and formulate some action in rectifying some of the past errors of patient treatment.

Also, I hope that Art and others will undertake a final evaluation of this institution and their experience in it. I believe I mentioned this in our meeting.

Wilbert Reimer had an interesting experience to tell of how he had to go on trial to testify concerning the brutal treatment of a patient which resulted in the eventual dismissal of an attendant. I wish that Reimer could be prevailed upon to write this experience up.

Conclusions. This unit has met a real labor need at Union Grove, especially with the added help of the wives. Some shifts are manned entirely by C.O.'s. It will truly work a genuine hardship on the institution when this unit finally leaves.

For various reasons there is very little educational activity being carried on. However, the religious program seems to be going very nicely with a mid-week prayer meeting and also a Sunday meeting which consists of studying the Sunday School lesson.

Art Weaver has gotten the use of the hospital gymnasium and the men are using this quite regularly. It should certainly be highly recommended that as many as possible participate in the recreational program, especially the active sports, merely from a pure health standpoint, not to mention its therapeutic values.

Leathercraft is one of the main after-hour activities of the unit. A nice little room in the G.O. cottage is being used for this purpose.

The entire unit lives together in one building, including the married men and wives. This building also includes a ping pong room, lounging and reading room in addition to the leathercraft room. It is certainly a very convenient arrangement, and I think should be conducive to unity.

As I mentioned there evidently is still a real challenge at Union Grove to try to improve standards for patient care. Arthur Weaver very definitely has the confidence of the men of the unit and I think should be in a position to render a fine and efficient bit of leadership at Union Grove.

Respectfully submitted,

Bertran D. Smucker
Hospital Division