

# After Camp, No Facilities For Disturbed Children

By MARGARET McLEAN

Although its directors and counsellors came home completely exhausted, the two-week camp sponsored by the York County Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association for emotionally disturbed children was termed a success by the camp co-director Fred Boden.

Although 42 children were invited, only 16 attended the camp from June 19 to July 30. The children invited were chosen by the staff of the psychiatric outpatients clinic at York County Hospital, Newmarket.

Mr. Boden felt, however, that the 16 were quite enough for the eight teen-age counsellors to handle. These senior high school students had had about 10 to 12 hours careful briefing before they went and throughout the stay at camp, took part in discussions every night for one or two hours — sometimes until midnight, finding out how to handle problems that had arisen during the day.

"We had problems," Mr. Boden admitted readily, but felt that the camp had been invaluable in gaining a better understanding of the children. It was also an invaluable experience for the young counsellors and he hopes that some of them will be encouraged to work with disturbed children themselves in the future — "That is, if we haven't scared them off completely," he added.

Mr. Boden stressed that the camp had very limited

goals and that no real treatment program had been undertaken. However as the staff got to know the children better ways of handling them developed and suggestions were given to the counsellors as to how to carry these out. There was no set program, although swimming, boating and craft instruction was available to any who wished it. Mr. Boden felt that in spite of this, just as much had been accomplished in swimming skills, for instance, as if a set program of instruction had been laid down.

### NO PRESSURE ON CHILDREN

Similarly, there was no pressure on the youngsters over mealtimes. Most came to the dining hall when meals were announced and stragglers followed along of their own accord. No pressure was put on the children to eat certain amounts of foods either. Some chose to eat only bread and butter for some meals — one youngster dined on three paper napkins and a paper cup once — but there was no illness of any kind and all the children put on weight.

That there was no illness was even more unusual in the light of one experiment which was carried on. On the assumption that all these children had been deprived in one way or another, it was decided to give them all they wanted of something nice — chocolate bars. At the 3 o'clock afternoon break each day, a table was loaded

with a variety of up to 100 chocolate bars and the only stipulation was that the children had to stay at the table to eat them.

The results, as described by Mr. Boden, were both humorous and sad. Some of the children, evidently in an attempt to make up all at once for some of the "sweetness" that had been lacking in their lives consumed up to 10 chocolate bars at a sitting, using both hands and consuming half a 10c bar in one bite.

Of course this tapered off during the camp, although sometimes when a youngster was having a bad day, his consumption would shoot up again. Evidently the children finally had their fill anyway, because when the chocolate bars were not put out on the second last day of camp, the only ones who questioned it were two of the counsellors!

### PERMISSIVE ATMOSPHERE

Such permissiveness was extended in other ways, to the little boy who ate paper when he was upset, and even to one youngster who persisted in running away. "I knew he was a particularly bright youngster, that the lake was ringed with cottages and that he could really look after himself," said Mr. Boden, "so the next time he disappeared no-one went after him."

Mr. Boden did take the precaution of calling the local OPP contingent and advising them of the situation but other than that,

nothing was done. Within two hours they had a call from a cottager advising that the boy was there and had asked that the camp directors be called to come and get him. "He chose us over the mosquitoes," was Mr. Boden's comment.

Although the cottager was a bit put out at the camp's casual treatment of the affair, it was evidently the right treatment for the boy as he only disappeared once more, briefly, throughout the camp period.

### PARENTS HELPED

As well as helping the children and teaching the counsellors and staff a great deal, Mr. Boden feels that the camp quite possibly provided a learning situation for many parents. Firstly, he commented on the fact that parents of only 16 out of the 42 children invited let their children go to camp. This could point to a possible difficulty some parents may have in letting their children go and making them independent.

Parents had been asked to pay \$60 for the camp, or to discuss finances with the camp authorities. Although various children were subsidized up to 100%, it is possible some parents found the \$60 too much but did not wish to ask help.)

Mr. Boden also noted that at the close of camp one parent had confided that although the family has been blaming some of the upset home atmosphere on the disturbed child, the same sort of things had gone on with him away, and so he wasn't at fault.

This bears out a statement made recently by Dr. Alfred A. Masser, professor of psychiatry at Emory University, Georgia to the effect that treating a family instead of an individual often uncovers the fact that a patient is a "scapegoat" for another member of the family who is more seriously upset emotionally than the one who had first been sent for help.

Mr. Boden and the camp's co-director Miss Jane Brooks will now submit assessment reports on the children who attended camp to the agen-

cies which referred them to the hospital and will hold follow-up appointments with parents.

### NEED TREATMENT CENTRE

Several of the children are felt to need residential treatment. Mr. Boden stated, but unfortunately there is no place to send them, other than to the Orillia hospital which is really for retarded children, which these are not; or to a training school. Although training schools provide no therapy for disturbed children, there is a type of disturbed child who benefits from the regimented life there. Most parents cannot afford the \$20 per day cost of Warrendale, which is crowded anyway and the Thistlewood Hospital is also full.

With over 37,000 school-age children in York County and estimates that anywhere from 5 to 20% of them need psychiatric help, Mr. Boden emphasizes that a residential treatment centre in the area is urgently needed. In 1964, school inspectors had considered that there were 400 children in the county in emergency need of treatment.

The psychiatric wing at the Newmarket hospital is not equipped to care for children. Accordingly, once a child has been diagnosed as the out-patient clinic there is little more that can be done for him. Dr. Paul Perry director of the psychiatric outpatients department, under whose guidance the camp was organized, stated recently that between three and four hundred new patients are seen at his department each year, two thirds of whom are children.

Both Dr. Perry and Mr. Boden applaud the new psychological services being provided by five local school boards in the southern portion of the county. Mr. Boden is also deeply appreciative of the support of the York County Branch of the CMHA which agreed to underwrite the expenses of the camp up to \$3,000. He sincerely hopes that it will be a continuing project.

## Your Legion Reports

Branch 375, Royal Canadian Legion

By Eric Chapman - 884-0045

While the small box in the club room at Legion Court continues to receive donations towards the Bing Lew Swimming Pool Fund, our fund representative reports that he has been doing some moonlighting on his emptying travels.

If reporting news can be considered moonlighting then our industrious collector seems to have acquired some of the attributes of a local Jimmy Breslin.

In his box emptying capacity he notes that it is interesting to survey the celebrated surroundings on collection days. He reports that on his most recent visit to the Court, Comrade Al Fogal was engaged in receiving birthday congratulations from Cheerleader Wally Smerziak and a company of middle-aged Canadians.

Al, who forms part of a well known barbershop quartet of singers, admitted modestly to being all of 29.

In another part of the establishment, in a room named after him who built it, Comrade William Tucker told another company the story of why his arm was currently resting in a sling. Bill admitted that he had no veterans insurance, and he said, "Who needs it?"

However it was impossible for his friends and acquaintances not to detect the note in his voice that implied that there were many who did.

Our collector also reported upon comments overheard among several members: "It's a small world," one said.

"If it's such a small world," his companion replied, "why does it take so much of our money to run it? There was a time when a fool and his money were soon parted. Now it happens to everybody."

Another member also sat nearby holding forth upon moral issues: "Ethics," he declared. "It's vital to everyday living. For example, today an old friend paid me back a loan with a new twenty dollar bill. Just as he was leaving I discovered he'd given me two bills stuck together. Immediately a question of ethics arose."

"Yes, what did you do?" His attentive audience inquired. "Nothing yet, I'm still debating whether to tell the wife."

Our collector, come moonlighting reporter, indicated that the small box in the club room was faring well in the way of donations, and could do with more. But as he said, he didn't become a collector in order to write an editorial.

Last week reports included details concerning the Legion's grand president and the dominion president. This week we include those of National 1st Vice-President Robert Kohaly. Bob Kohaly was born July

1921, at Fredericton, N.B. and moved to Western Canada in 1927, he now resides at Estevan, Sask.

He is a graduate lawyer and was educated in Fredericton, Toronto, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Carnduff and Regina Public Schools. He graduated in arts and law from the University of Saskatchewan (thanks to DVA).

He enlisted in the South Saskatchewan Regiment in March 1940 and was wounded in the Dieppe raid of August, 1942. As a result he was discharged (as a corporal) in December 1944.

His Legion service includes: President of Estevan Branch 1952; district commander 1956-59. First vice-president Saskatchewan Command 1959-61. Provincial president 1961-63. Elected Dominion 3rd vice-president at Halifax Convention 1962; 2nd vice-president at Winnipeg 1964 and 1st vice-president at Montreal 1966.

Comrade Kohaly is also chairman of the national membership committee and of the command's financial advisory committee.

The Triennial Conference of the British Commonwealth Ex-Services League was opened in London, England, last week by Prince Philip. Eighty delegates and observers from 33 countries, including four Canadians, attended the week-long conference.

An Australian motion asked that Canada be responsible for the Caribbean and South America, and as a result the Royal Canadian Legion may be asked to take increased responsibility for helping the welfare programs of veterans' organizations in Commonwealth Caribbean countries.

Canadian Legion President R. E. MacBeath said that Canadians would want it understood that the motion should not limit their activities outside the Western Hemisphere. He said the Legion has been building a close relationship with Nigeria through visits and a scholarship program, and wants to continue the link.

One of the two Canadian motions discussed suggested that instead of expanding its own headquarters in London, the League should cope with increasing welfare work by sharing it among the member organizations.

In his opening remarks Prince Philip spoke out against those predicting the decline and fall of the British Commonwealth. "Whatever happens in the future, I see no reason to forget or to underestimate what the Commonwealth has done for the world in the past," he said. "Those writing obituaries about the Commonwealth will be pushing up daisies long before the Commonwealth ceases to exist."

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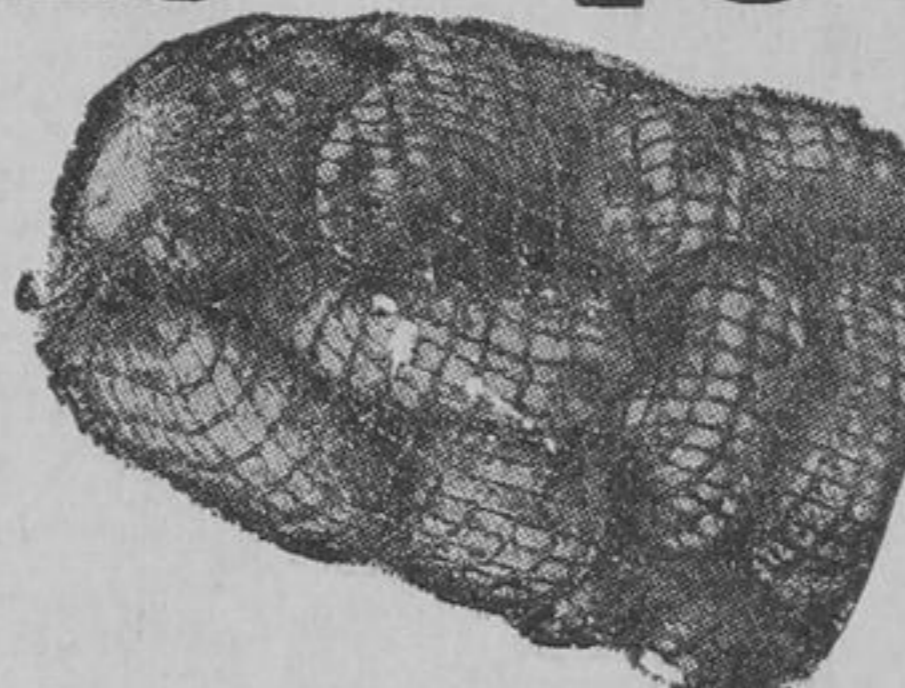
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