

As your President, I am pleased to report concerning Governor Rolvaag's recent four two-day bus tours to our State institutions for the mentally retarded and mentally ill, and to certain of our mental health clinics and day care centers.

As you know, Minnesota ARC was privileged to co-sponsor these tours with Governor Rolvaag and the Minnesota Mental Health Association.

Although I fully appreciate that the publicity relating to some of the critical problems in our institutions not only caused further anxiety for some parents whose children were already institutionalized, but also deterred some parents from institutionalizing their children when such a plan would be best for certain of these children and their families, I am equally certain that an education, informed and aroused citizenry is absolutely essential if we are to solve and give top priority consideration to the critical problems relating to the lack of community services and gross understaffing, gross overcrowding, herd care, and continued use of some antiquated residential and other facilities in our state institutions for the mentally retarded.

Irrespective of your and my political affiliations, I assure you that we can all be most appreciative of Governor Rolvaag's leadership and sincere interest exhibited on these tours. Governor and Mrs. Rolvaag were most impressed with the day care centers visited at Duluth, Atwater, St. Cloud and Rochester, and the Sheltered Workshop at Fergus Falls. They were also impressed, as were we all, with many of the dedicated and able employees of and some of the new projects being conducted in our institutions for the mentally retarded and mentally ill. They were equally shocked by some of the conditions previously enumerated. We certainly trust that our Governor's interest and concern for the mentally retarded will be sustaining, ever growing, and translated into executive action throughout his entire administration. I certainly hope that he will very soon be able to direct the Commissioner of Public Welfare to not only eliminate the 5% cutback in the salary budgets of our institutions for the mentally retarded, but to reinstate for the second year of this biennium those savings already made.

With respect to the tours, I can state without reservation that your association was completely justified in its request that the Legislature appropriate funds for the establishment of day care centers throughout our state. By and large, the 22 day care centers now being supported with state aid are doing an excellent job and are bursting at the seams. Thus, the Legislature which appropriated \$36,000 in 1961 and \$155,000 in 1963 will be requested in 1965 to substantially increase the appropriations in an effort to enlarge existing centers and formulate new centers.

In this connection, may I urge each existing center and each association contemplating the formation of a new center, to submit a tentative plan and budget to our office as soon as possible.

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Arc Speaker - Hockett

Before the Governor's tours, I had visited our institutions for the mentally retarded many times during the past 11 years, but I had never before visited any of our institutions for the mentally ill. Although time did not permit more than a rather superficial examination, the tours did bring into sharp focus and verify your association's previous opinions and statistical studies relating to many critical problems therein. For example, Faribault is by far the most grossly overcrowded of all of our institutions for the mentally retarded and mentally ill. Likewise, with the exception of Brainerd and Owatonna, which have no overcrowding, our institutions for the retarded, located at Faribault and Cambridge, are grossly overcrowded in comparison with the institutions for the mentally ill. I do not mean to imply that our institutions for the mentally ill have no overcrowding, for many of them do. I likewise do not mean to imply that the residential facilities at both types of institutions are adequate, or are designed to respect privacy or assist in the treatment and care of the patient, for many of the residential facilities at most of the institutions are not so designed.

Although there may have been overcrowding at the following institutions for the mentally ill, which I did not observe, I observed none at Rochester, Glen Lake, and Lino Lakes. I observed some at Wilmar and Fergus Falls and Moose Lake, but much more at Hastings, Anoka and St. Peter. Thus, there is considerable variance in the degree of overcrowding in each institution.

Likewise, Faribault and Brainerd are the most grossly understaffed of all of both types of institutions. From my observation of both types of institutions, there does not appear to be any justification for such a discrepancy in staff-patient ratios except in certain specific employee categories. For example, the institutions for the retarded have many more patients who are severely multiply handicapped, in need of total hospital care treatment, than have the institutions for the mentally ill. Once again, I do not mean to imply that the institutions for the mentally ill do not need more staff, for they obviously do, but there is a wide discrepancy, not only between the staff-patient ratios in both types of institutions, but also a wide variance in the total as well as in specific employee categories of staff-patient ratios in each institution. St. Peter, for example, is the most understaffed, and Rochester the best staffed of our institutions for the mentally ill. Fortunately, steps are being taken to correct the problem at St. Peter by transferring geriatric patients to nursing homes, and Hennepin County patients to Anoka.

Although words cannot describe the dedication and ability of so very many of our state institution employees, and although space does not permit a comprehensive report of all of my observations, I do wish to mention I saw mentally retarded patients in our institutions for the mentally ill, and mentally ill patients in our institutions for the retarded, and also observed at the Glen Lake Nursing Home geriatric patients who were both mentally ill and retarded, living comfortably and compatibly together. At the Glen Lake Nursing Home, I asked four nurses, separately, how the eleven retarded patients from Faribault were getting along with the mentally ill. Their replies were the same, "We love to have the retarded patient. He helps make more happy the withdrawn and regressed mentally ill or senile patient."

Your association is continually re-evaluating existing services for the retarded in both the community and the institutions, as well as striving to secure more and new services therein. Our communities need, among other things, many more special classes for the trainable and educable, day care centers, sheltered workshops, vocational training opportunities, and recreational facilities. If we are to ever provide reasonable care and services for the institutionalized retarded and eliminate the ever growing waiting list, our Legislature must substantially increase appropriations for more staff, for the building of many more dormitories, and other facilities at our existing institutions, and for the building of new, smaller regional specialized facilities. At the same time, the Department of Public Welfare should ~~continue to explore the feasibility and possibility of and plan for the~~ utilization of existing institutions for the mentally ill, as institutions for some of the mentally retarded who have serious problems of mental illness, and the utilization of existing and new nursing home facilities for those geriatric, mentally retarded, and mentally ill patients who can live compatibly therein, and the utilization of mental health clinics and other mental health services for those retarded who can profit therefrom.

Although we can be most appreciative of the ever increasing number of professional and lay people in our community, state and nation who are aware of the problems and interested in finding solutions therefor, we must still continue to encourage many more of our citizens to see with their own eyes our institutions and community services if we are to attain our goal of providing reasonable services for every retarded child and adult. The Governor's tours and many more regional bus tours throughout our state, as well as increased utilization of the newspapers, radio and television media, are necessary to open the eyes of our citizens to these critical problems.
