

Mental Health Is Pressing Problem

(Continued from Page 2) statements about mental illness are not true. (2) They think, yes, a few children are in trouble, but no one from good families, only from the slums, not people like us. (3) The things they do are just pranks or jokes; we did the same things when we were young. (4) Even if there were such a problem, schools, scouts, church welfare, police will take care of it. When the schools get more money, they can do it.

The answer is clear. There is such a problem. Americans are fooling themselves by a myth to deny it. The U. S. sub-committee on juvenile delinquency reports that in 10 years juvenile crime has risen 45 per cent. Teen-age crime is stalking the country. Children are being convicted of murder, arson, rape, torture kicking people to death for the fun of watching suffering and for the excitement of it. There are 12-year-old prostitutes. By statistics of the American Psychiatric Association seven per cent of the people committed to mental hospitals 10 years ago were under 18 years of age. Now 25 per cent are under 18.

Statistics from the file of a

practicing psychologist in Moore County show that good families, monied families, educated families suffer from mental illness. Specifically, 10 patients come from families having more than \$5,000 yearly income and 14 from families in the under \$5,000 income group. There were 10 charity cases; 16 parents were college graduates; five had some college education; 11 graduated from high school; and two had some high school education.

Conditions Different

Comparing life now and 20 or 30 years ago, conditions are entirely different. Children now live under the almost constant stimulation, often false, of radio, T. V. comics, cars, radically different social life, different medical approach to illness, and the insecurity resulting from war and world insecurity, as well as personal fear of future insecurity. Now all boys have to think about the draft and going into the armed forces, possibility of combat and death. Even plans for education often revolve around that. The pressure of facing these realities naturally causes upset and insecurity. Many boys are mixed up emotionally by these things.

The conditions in many homes today contribute to this feeling of insecurity: both parents working, no one at home, lack of supervision, too much time spent with radio or T. V., increasing divorce, moving from town to town the intense cut-throat competition in many phases of life. All this is confusing and upsetting. The widespread use of cars by adolescents is another factor in this changing world and social life. Children drive cars day and night, often going long distances at night seeking excitement and pleasure. Most of these drives are unsupervised and offer many temptations to excess in numerous ways. The child's mind and emotions cannot stand such overstimulation. The fantasy and excitement of constant movies, T. V. and comics make it difficult for the child and teen-ager to face life as it really is.

'The Great Myth'

The great myth that education the church, scouts and similar organizations will take care of these children, is entirely false. The truth is that they do not and cannot. They are set up to work with healthy children, not sick ones. Tax figures from the North Carolina budget for 1954 show that of every \$1 tax, 60 per cent goes for education, 40 per cent for health, police, fire, hospitals, roads. Where can more for education come from? There isn't any more. In 1954, in North Carolina alone, 45,000 children left school before finishing, 24,000 without finishing the eighth grade.

The Catholic Digest survey on religion's effect on young people showed that 80 per cent of the children are not connected with any church activities, that the large majority of children do not go to church and that they have no fear of God and no respect nor reverence for the church.

In 1953, the 3rd Army, Atlanta, Ga., rejected 250 boys of 18 years for physical reasons, 350 for mental illness.

The U. S. Child Welfare League survey shows 1,000,000 mentally ill children in U. S. A. today, and only 15,000 under treatment. One out of every three children has emotional problems. In Southern Pines area, children under treatment include 18 neurotics, eight psychotics, seven homosexuals and five psychopathic personalities. That does not include the many not under treatment. Why does that exist? Because parents do not know what previous symptoms were or what they meant,

\$160,000 Drive Of Heart Assn. Starts In State

Announcing a statewide goal of \$160,000, the North Carolina Heart Association, under the chairmanship of William Muirhead of Durham, on Tuesday launched its sixth annual month-long Heart Fund campaign, the public appeal through which the Heart program is made possible.

The drive is a part of the nationwide campaign of the American Heart Association, whose leading objective is broad expansion of its national research program, Muirhead said. Chairman of the overall appeal is General Mark W. Clark, former U. S. Commander-in-Chief in the Far East and now president of The Citadel at Charleston, S. C. About 90 communities through

and because of the underlying fear and disbelief. "Our child can't have anything wrong." There is so much shame about it, and there should not be. There is refusal to face facts.

Something Can Be Done

Yes, there are things that can be done about it. Urge the passage of the proposed new bill requiring the commitment of psychopathic children. The North Carolina legislature is now considering such a bill. Accept the fact that parents, so often blamed for the mental illness of their children, are usually not to blame any more than for any other disease. These children can be helped. A New York institution, 15 years ago, took 1,000 mentally ill children as a study group. At the end of one year, 500 children were recovered and 250 partially recovered, 250 no better.

We can do that if we are willing to face the fact that the problem exists, if we are willing to learn the facts, if we are willing to try to do something about it. There is always opposition, criticism, often persecution given those who try to help the mentally ill. Are we big enough to take that? Are we concerned enough to work to help these children? Will we try to do it here, in Southern Pines?

North Carolina have formed committees and will conduct active local campaigns, Muirhead stated. In most of these communities Heart Fund month will reach its peak on Heart Sunday, February 20, when thousands of volunteers have agreed to visit their immediate neighborhoods in behalf of the Heart Fund. Anyone not reached by the volunteers or by letter may send a contribution to "Heart" care of his local post office, he added.

Muirhead emphasized that because of the excellent facilities for heart research in this state North Carolina has been receiving from \$35,000 to \$50,000 of American Heart Association funds each year in research grants and fellowships. In addition to its own research program, the state association's work includes lay and professional education and community service, he added.

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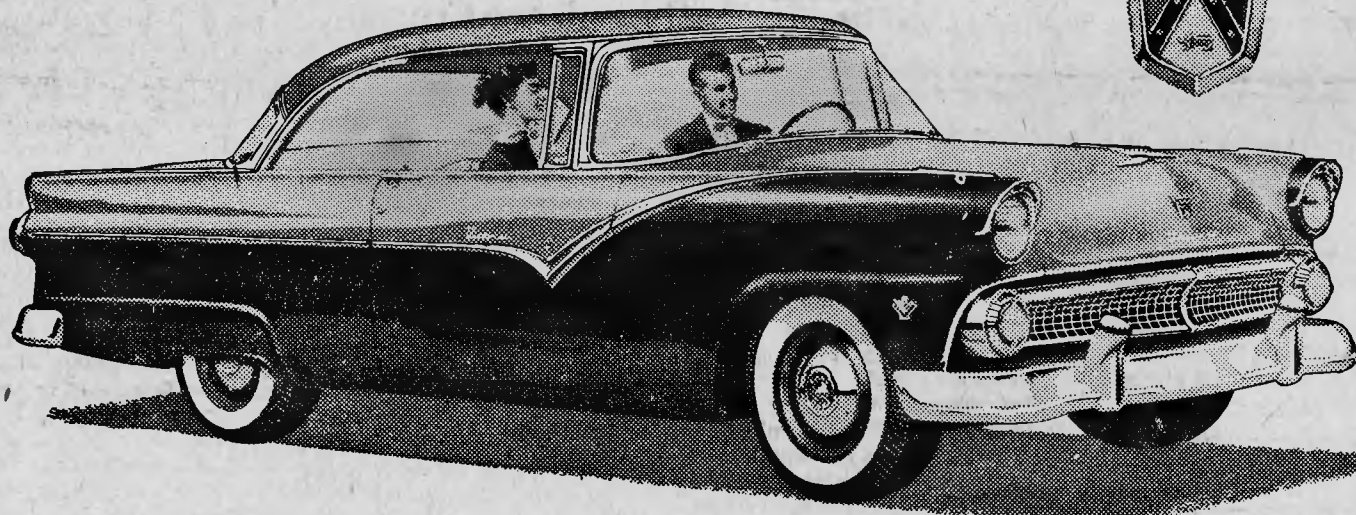
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