

OCT 31 1939

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Total Com on Mental Hygiene

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

FROM: AG

DATE: June 20, 1939

TO:

COMMENTS:

EB		

Excerpts from this if not
all of it - might well go
into NCHMH file - AG agrees
S&M

SUBJECT: Symposium on Mental Hygiene - Appraisal of

In estimating the value of this grant, I might mention first the outcome of the various expectations that were held in regard to it, and later refer to some of the unexpected results.

The hope that the American Association for the Advancement of Science members representing other fields than psychiatry and neurology would attend the Symposium in any appreciable numbers was not realized. The other meetings held before, during, and after the Symposium attracted the Association members according to their existing interests, and the Symposium was in a large measure confined to psychiatrists, neurologists and others already affiliated with such interests.

It was also hoped that the Symposium would secure a record of psychiatric thoughts and plans and serve in some measure as a basis for orientation for future teaching, research and administration. The program did succeed in providing a comprehensible and adequate statement in this field of teaching practices, research problems and administrative undertakings. It is somewhat difficult to forecast the extent to which reference will be made in the future to this statement, but it is probable that it will be ^{for some years} the best statement of its kind as yet produced.

It appeared at the time the grant was made that the United States Public Health Service would enter in larger measure into programs of administration and research in the mental hygiene field. There is no evidence as yet that the Symposium has interested the Public Health Service in a tangible way, but it seems likely that the Symposium will be of genuine value in any future planning of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. The statements issued as a part of the Symposium are at once comprehensive and authoritative and are likely to have considerable value both as reference material and historical record.

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The principal unexpected result was that the Symposium under

Doctor Treadway's guidance, in its organization and the subjects discussed, was so much more sensible and comprehensive than anything that the National Committee for Mental Hygiene had submitted to the Foundation in the past eight years that it was perfectly evident that the difficulty with the National Committee lay quite as much in the incompetence of its personnel as in any difficulty of the field as such. This was all the more obvious since with Treadway's plan some of the secondary personnel in the National Committee for Mental Hygiene did most of the spade work for the Symposium.

The method followed in preparing the papers before the actual meeting thus enabling the formal comment made at the meeting to be deliberate and considered was a bit of procedure which the AAAS is likely to retain in symposia held in the future. Its value was made clear by this Symposium for mental hygiene. The final document called the Proceedings of the Conference is in press at the present time, and Moulton, the Secretary of the AAAS, expressed his satisfaction with the value and clarity of the papers produced.

Alau Gregg.