

Obituary

Dr. C. CHARLES BURLINGAME

Psychiatrist in Chief of the Institute of Living, Hartford, Connecticut

The sudden passing of Dr. Burlingame on July 22nd, whilst attending the Annual Meeting of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association in Leicester, was a tragedy for all of us who are concerned with psychiatry and mental health.

Dr. Burlingame, despite his 65 years, flew regularly to this country to attend the meetings of the R.M.P.A. and to many other countries in Europe, Asia, and South America, to help wherever he could with psychiatric activities.

Charles Burlingame always poked fun at himself and declared that he was President of the Hypomanics' Club, and it certainly is true that he had an immense restless driving force and energy which took him into an almost unheard of number of activities of all kinds in addition to running his own hospital at Hartford.

He began his work as a psychiatrist in a State Hospital in 1908 and worked in State Hospitals until 1915. He then became the first psychiatrist to do a whole-time job in industry, and later was in the U.S. Army until the end of the 1914-18 war, where he demonstrated his tremendous organizing capacity. On his return to the United States he was Executive Officer of the Board which was responsible for collecting funds and for building the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Centre in New York, a gigantic project which few people could have tackled so well. From then up to 1931 he was in private practice in New York City, and in 1931 took over the Hartford Retreat, one of the oldest mental hospitals of the United States, which was

later renamed the Institute of Living. Under his guidance it grew from 167 beds to 436, and many outstanding advances were made, particularly through the concept of resocialization of patients.

Dr. Burlingame's interests in psychiatry, neurology and in general medicine were very wide, and he moved from one office of responsibility to another all through his career. He had contacts with psychiatric societies in a number of countries, but we felt that his contact with the R.M.P.A. in this country was especially close. He had just been made an Honorary Member of the Association, and incidentally he had for a year or two given an annual prize for the best original work done by a member of the R.M.P.A. in the field of psychiatry.

He was an admirable "ambassador" for the United States. His friendly, kindly manner won him friends wherever he went, and a very real modesty underlay his impressive figure and his extremely active life. He was always greatly impressed with the need for research and for sound progress in the field of mental disorders and of mental health, and he is certainly one of those who can be said to have worn himself out in the service of his ideals. Everyone who knew him, and indeed many who only knew him through the publications that issued from Hartford, notably the *Digest of Neurology and Psychiatry*, will feel a sense of personal loss. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his wife, Mrs. Ruth Burlingame, in her bereavement.

J.R.R.

News and Notes

W.H.O. and Mental Health

A report on the First Session of the World Health Organization's Expert Committee on Mental Health was published in September.

The Chairman of the Committee is Dr. William C. Menninger (U.S.A.), and its other five members come from China, Czechoslovakia, the United Kingdom, Brazil and India.

In dealing with priorities in mental health work, special attention is called to the wide divergence in level and scope of the development of treatment facilities in the various countries. Thus:

"The United States, with approximately 160,000,000 people, has over 5,000 psychiatrists and about 700,000 psychiatric beds. India with a population of 350,000,000 has at the most 80 psychiatrists and 20,000 beds, including accommodation of all types, and China with a population of 450,000,000 has probably not more than 10 psychiatrists and less than 2,000 psychiatric beds."

The most important single long-term principle for work in the world mental health field is therefore considered to be

"the encouragement of the incorporation into public health work, of the responsibility for promoting the mental health of the community as well as its physical health".

The Report goes on to cover a wide area, including such subjects as medical and nursing education, research, alcoholism, maternity and child welfare, venereal disease, delinquency, homeless children. On each of these, recommendations are made.

With the World Federation for Mental Health, the Committee recommends close co-operation, particularly in its use as a channel for obtaining information needed on specific subjects.

The Report in English may be obtained through H.M. Stationery Office or direct from W.H.O., Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, price 2s. 3d.