

## MISCELLANEOUS

Spain and the Holy See, which are associated with the Council of Europe's educational and cultural activities, will also participate in this project.

The new centre will be in Strasbourg, probably on a site provided by the town somewhere near the Council of Europe's headquarters. It will be designed to accommodate 40 persons, with a capacity of 560 annually. The building should be completed in May 1969, coinciding with the Council's twentieth anniversary.

There has been a pilot project in the Council's premises since 1963. Its intensive European affairs and language courses will be taken over and extended at the new permanent centre. The full syllabus will include courses and seminars on European co-operation and integration, teaching methods and organization techniques.

The Centre will have a qualified staff under a Board of Administration comprising government representatives, leading members of private youth organizations, a representative of the European Community's Press and Information Service, and perhaps one or two of the parliamentary members of the Council of Europe's Consultative Assembly.

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## REHABILITATION OF THE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY DISABLED

*The Association des ergothérapeutes submitted to the 21st Congress of the Fédération des Associations et Organismes de Postcure et de rééducation fonctionnelle et professionnelle des diminués physiques in Brussels, a paper on ergotherapy as a means of rehabilitation. We believe our readers will find this of interest.*

Among the various rehabilitation procedures available to the disabled, there is a new one which fits in with re-adaptation techniques: ergotherapy.

This method of active re-education when prescribed as a means to achieve physical, psychological and social rehabilitation of physically or mentally disabled, acts in a programme of treatment as a link between medical care and the return to normal activity and a normal occupation. Ergotherapy is carried out under the supervision of a doctor who controls its application and results. It is defined as treatment by physical work.

It involves the practice of movements used in creative craftsmanship, normal daily life, and the patient's former occupation. Ergotherapy, both for adults and children, may be applied as treatment in a wide range of disabilities such as motory and sensory disorders, neurosis, congenital diseases, rheumatism, cardiopathy, pneumopathy, psychological disturbances, geriatrics, etc. It is a branch of medicine which is applied in specially equipped workshops in rehabilitation centres, in general and psychiatric hospitals, in sanatoria and sometimes in the patient's own home.

Ergotherapy is useful in psychotherapy. It enlists the patient's own energy and active co-operation, without which the work could not be done, and it enables social contacts to be resumed through the workshop.

In rehabilitation of the physically disabled, and in conjunction with other re-adaptation techniques, ergotherapy is a means of improving the motory functions, a corrective of movements; it increases muscular strength, the mobility of joints, and movement co-ordination. Whilst working and concentrating on a task, the physically disabled patient exercises his paralysed limb.

Some disabled have to be taught or retrained to do even the most simple gesture of everyday life, such as to get up from bed, wash, dress and feed themselves. Others learn to use artificial arms through playing games and proceeding to more and more complicated activities. Others learn to make themselves independent. Children are taught games and given schooling; women are trained to resume their household duties; men are prepared for occupations; and the elderly learn to make good use of their leisure.

A third aspect of ergotherapy is retraining to exert effort.

Apart from the co-ordination, skill and dexterity which ergotherapy imparts, it makes the disabled patient aware of his possibilities, reveals new ability and trains him to develop these with a

view to future employment. Ergotherapeutic activities may be graded according to strength, delicate manipulation and accuracy, depending on the materials, models and equipment used. The idea of productivity, up to this point discounted in re-educative ergotherapy, may now be introduced to enable the disabled person approaching the end of treatment progressively to accustom himself to an atmosphere where effort is required as will be the case in his future employment. The assessment made in ergotherapy of movement ability, behaviour and stamina is of great use for occupational orientation.

Ergotherapy was first developed as a profession in the English-speaking countries, where it acquired legal status after the First World War. A world federation of ergotherapists has a membership which includes professional associations in 17 countries. The following extract from *Réadaptation* (1966, No. 133) shows that in the field of psychotherapy there is at present considerable concern for this immense problem of disabled persons. \*

“ The segregation of the mentally sick from normal society, as was mentioned in the earlier pages of this issue, applies not only to inmates of psychiatric clinics ; it occurs on a wider scale within society itself. It has been estimated that 1.8 % of the adult population between the ages of 20 and 60 display symptoms of serious disorders (mental impairment in certain cases of physical injury, schizophrenia, deterioration of skull injuries, psychopathic distress, etc.) which are incompatible with the demands of self-reliance.” The transformations occurring in modern living conditions are today slowly reducing the psycho-social field of afflicted persons on the dual level of primary social environment (family life) and secondary social environment (the economic sector). Consequently, new psychiatric structures are becoming more and more urgent. A system of “ flexible, mobile, readily accessible and articulate arrangements associated with psychiatric hospitals ” should enable the mentally sick to be taken entirely in hand to guide them in successive stages towards integration into normal society.