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CLASSIFICATION

Director General, Medical Services

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Northern Region

FROM

DATE May 31 1967

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SUBJECT Sujet

Mental Health Research Among Indians

This Region is concerned with action-research projects amongst Indians, Eskimos and others in the Yukon and Northwest Territories as part of our developing mental health programme.

The baseline for the programme has been the organization of Psychiatric Consultant visits, including visits of Child Guidance Teams, at regular intervals throughout the year.

As well as serving strictly consultant and local instructional requirements, these visits furnish the statistical data upon which an assessment is being made of the nature and magnitude of mental health problems in the North. Gradually we are building up an "epidemiology" of mental disorders in the Region with special reference to the peculiarities of Northern living (isolation phenomena, sensory deprivation, etc.)

A specific research project has been inaugurated into the validity of the Bristol Social Adjustment Guides for children, a project which, if found applicable, could provide mass screening of children for possible evidence of emotional maladjustment. This would enable early detection of commencing emotional disorder.

Investigations are being made into the problems of alcoholism in the North in conjunction with the work of the Consultant in Alcoholism of the Department of Indian Affairs & Northern Development. A further project envisaged is the modification of treatment methods for native ethnic groups hospitalized in mental centres in the South and research into the effects of prolonged hospitalization, especially in the case of children.

Related research is being carried out as part of the Mackenzie Delta Project into the psychological effects of socio-economic changes and there are some projects envisaged in the behavioural field by the Institute of Northern Studies of the University of Saskatchewan.

The Canadian Psychiatric Association has set up a Standing Committee for Transcultural Psychiatry of which Dr. Jensen is a corresponding member. The first meeting of this Committee was held at McGill University on May 1st and it is understood that Dr. Wintrob was present.

Director General, Medical Services

Page 2

It is possible that Dr. Jensen may be able to contact Dr. Wintrob at the meeting of the C.P.A. next month and discuss these various projects and their present findings in more detail.

Regional Director

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