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DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

MEMORANDUM FOR FILE :

OUR FILE NO. (604-5-5).

REF. YOUR FILE NO. DATED

FROM Assistant Director - Health Insurance Studies

DATE: Ottawa, October 23, 1953.

SUBJECT: RE - MONT-PROVIDENCE, INSTITUT MEDICO-PEDAGOGIQUE, MONTREAL, P. Q. :

Pursuant to the Minister's request, Doctor Goyette and I visited the Mont-Providence Institution, otherwise known as the Medico-Pedagogique, at 7200 Boulevard Gouin East, Riviere des Prairies, outside Montreal, October 19th.

Interviews were held with Mere Jeanne-Therese, the General Treasurer of the Sisters of Providence Hospitals in Canada, resident at 2311 Ste. Catherine Street, East, Montreal, and with Mother Jeanne Lebec, Superior of Mont-Providence and Doctor Barbeau, a Ph.D. in Psychology, who occupies an office at the Institution.

The Sisters of Providence form a large Order of five thousand sisters, operating prominent hospitals in Chicago and Washington, as well as St. John de Dieu Mental Institution, Cartierville T. B. Sanatorium and general hospitals in several Canadian cities. The Sisters are very appreciative of assistance received under the National Health Grants to their various Canadian undertakings. Mere Jeanne-Therese requested that this appreciation be conveyed to the Minister.

The present Mont-Providence, Riviere des Prairies, is a most imposing undertaking, having cost approximately eight million dollars and should be considered as outstanding in its sphere of activity in Canada and may, in time, compare very favourably with similar undertakings in the United States.

In the Province of Quebec, it appears that the education of children is considered to be mainly a parish responsibility. There is no Provincial Minister of Education, although there is a Superintendent of Education, who is responsible for inspection.

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Dossier 500 page à Ottawa

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Where children attending a parish school are considered to be backward and a school or special class for backward children is not provided, and where a welfare agency or court must commit a child to a school for instruction, the children are accepted by Mont-Providence. Consequently, the children in residence are a diversified lot with varying degrees of physical and mental ill health, but having one common denominator insisted upon by the Institution. The level of intelligence must be high enough that the child is educable. It is stated that the intelligence quotient must be at least 50.

Of a present total capacity of eight hundred, there are now five hundred and twenty-five children in residence, coming for the most part from surrounding and remote parishes but very few from Montreal, where, presumably, other arrangements are made. Since many of the children come from broken homes, unfit parents, impoverished classes, etc., only five children are said to be financed entirely by relatives or guardians. Several are partially supported but almost all the children are the object of a \$2.00 per diem payment through the Provincial Public Charities Act. It was stated that the cost is actually \$4.46, but the Sisters would be content with the \$2.00 per diem, plus their own resources, plus some assistance from other agencies such as the Health Grants. It was intimated by the Sisters that the Institution was presently losing money at the rate of \$300,000. annually and had also undertaken through their Order to support a \$5,000,000. debt on account of capital construction. Lay staff had suggested that the Institution was getting behind at the rate of \$500,000. annually.

It should be added that one-half of the present children are illegitimate and one-quarter have been received through court and welfare directives where the parents have been unable or unfit to provide proper care.

One cannot escape the conviction that the present operation of the Institution has a heavy welfare and educational slant. The Mother Superior indicated in her conversation an admiration for the work of Boys' Town, Pueblo and Denver, in the United States. It is understood that the Provincial Minister of Health has recently asked the Sisters

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it is unlikely that the mental health aspect will be enlarged by acceptance, under the Mental Health Division of the Provincial Department of Health, of responsibility for the custodial care of children of lesser intelligence.

A list has been made of positions and types of equipment which are considered to be particularly of a health nature as opposed to education and welfare, and suitable for recommendation for assistance under the Mental Health Grant when the continuing submission is received for 1954-55.



Gordon E. Wride, M.D., D.P.H.,  
Assistant Director,  
Health Insurance Studies

Etude fait par le ministere de Sante Canada  
Par Paul <sup>James</sup> Martin le pere celui il est au finance  
Paul Martin avait envoyer la corespondance avec  
le Cardinal Léger.

GEW/NEW.