

Many neurotics said hospitalized

By PAT JOHNSON

Province Medical Reporter
Many neurotics are need-
lessly put in hospital, says Dr.
Ferdinand Knobloch, a profes-
sor of psychiatry at the Uni-
versity of B.C.

Not only are vast sums of
money wasted, says Dr. Knob-
loch, but putting neurotic pa-
tients in hospital can some-
times worsen their condition.

"The neurotic patient finds
himself among other patients
who are much more seriously
ill than he is," says the psy-

chiatrist. "In such an atmo-
sphere it is easy for the pa-
tient to become passive and
dependent."

As an alternative method,
Dr. Knobloch is experi-
menting with a program in
which neurotic patients were
moved to a forest camp in

which they were required to
clean their own rooms, wash
their own dishes and carry
out many of the chores asso-
ciated with camp life.

They had to work three
hours a day out of doors,

either chopping wood or clear-
ing low brush from reforested
areas.

Dr. Knobloch says there
must be three conditions for
treatment of neurotics in such
centres to succeed.

"First, the situation pa-
tients are placed into must be
similar to real life. Part of
this is provided by outdoor
work as a group task.

"The treatment must take
place in an isolated area so
the patient can't easily escape
from the influence of the

group, from the sense of com-
munity formed by the group.

"And patients must not stay
too long, usually not longer
than six weeks, otherwise
they may become detached, to
some extent, from relation-
ships they have formed in so-
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"Under these conditions and
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Under Dr. Knobloch's proj-
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middle ages, were treated at
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Vancouver.

The neurotic patients were
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Some who had been receiv-

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Under Dr. Knobloch's program, about 60 patients ranging in age from the late teens to middle ages, were treated at the university's research forest at Haney, 40 miles east of Vancouver.

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ing conventional treatment for more than a decade and had been unable to work for years found that after their three-month stay at the forest treatment camp, they could hold down a job once again.

Dr. Knobloch said treatment in a rural setting isolates patients from the environment they normally have difficulty adjusting to. At the same time, it crystallizes many of their emotional problems.

Haney experiment, he said, indicate treatment took less time, was less expensive, more effective and took less staff than conventional methods.

Dr. Knobloch, a native of Czechoslovakia, has an international reputation as a psychotherapist. The Haney project was modelled after a similar treatment centre he organized in his home country.

Dr. Knobloch says he finds it ironical one of the prime objections from North American psychiatrists was that patients in Western society couldn't be persuaded to do

manual labor in an isolated community.

Preferred treatment for neurotics in Czechoslovakia, he notes, when he set up his first program there, was to send patients for a vacation to nationalized health spas where all expenses were paid by the state.

Cost of maintaining patients at the research forest was \$19,000. The camp's only full-time staff were two nurses and a camp assistant. Two psychiatrists from UBC's department of psychiatry visited the camp once a week.