

## Rehabilitation--A Constant Factor

By ELIZABETH DOTSON

During the week of June 2, Vocational Rehabilitation agencies in each of the 48 states, the District of Columbia, Hawaii and Puerto Rico celebrated their 25th anniversary. "With the close of this first 25 years," stated Mr. C. L. Feike, Acting Director of Vocational Rehabilitation in Oregon, "this public service passes from an experimental stage into an era in which we can now say definitely what we can offer." Mr. Feike made this statement in his talk at the July meeting of the Library Building Chapter of the OSEA. Quoting a national publication, he continued, "The Nation loses a war within its own borders each year with a staggering toll of 800,000 persons seriously injured—100,000 of them so severely disabled as to require special services to render them employable."

The Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation agency through its offices in Salem, Portland and Eugene, in cooperation with a part-time medical consultant and with other departments and agencies, is helping to conserve our greatest asset—working usefulness. Like other public services, vocational rehabilitation is not only a humanitarian measure; it is also good business to help the disabled to help themselves. Mr. Feike estimated the individual case cost in Oregon for last year at \$264, a non-recurring expenditure which compares favorably with the \$300 to \$500 required *each year* to support a dependent person at public expense. Once trained and employed, the rehabilitated person is an independent wage earner.

At present the Oregon department has persons in 71 fields of training. Once-disabled men and women are now shoe and watch repairmen, barbers, auto mechanics, doctors, lawyers, secretaries, florists, rug weavers, artists and employees in a multitude of other positions.

Mr. Feike exhibited several posters displaying pictures of persons now doing new jobs. One young man was shown speaking into a microphone—he had learned radio announcing. A World War II veteran worked at his drawing board—he has just received a contract to illustrate a new book. A young woman with a broken back was doing secretarial work. Two tuberculosis patients, who learned their new work while still in the sanatorium, were shown in a laboratory as technicians. Two elderly gentlemen who had not been defeated by handicaps were pictured using their new skills; one, after a brush-up course in bookkeeping, is employed as timekeeper, the other does book binding in his own shop. Two young men were busy grinding optical lenses.

The Rok Crystal Company in Portland, which serves the entire northwest with lenses for all types of instruments, is staffed 100 percent by disabled persons who have been rehabilitated by the state agency. Thoroughly satisfied with these employees, the manager wishes to have more when such persons need employment.

The department aims to make early location of persons in need of assistance. To do this they have wisely made use of established agencies which supplement rather than duplicate vocational rehabilitation activities. All 40 degree cases, those awarded \$1,000 in benefits, are referred automatically from the State Industrial Accident Commission. The Oregon Tuberculosis Association gives notice of cases and helps financially through its assistance fund. Selective Service sends in the names of disabled veterans, who, once returned to civilian life, have the choice of seeking aid from a veterans' agency or from

(Continued on Page 16)