

Vth International Congress on Rehabilitation in Psychiatry*

ROD BALE, Cavendish House, 18 Victoria Road South,
Southsea, Portsmouth PO5 2BZ

Dr Seigfried Rost of Sweden was presented with a certificate commemorating the planting of 35 trees in honour of each year of his working life in the field of psychiatric rehabilitation at the opening ceremony of the Congress. Dr Rost had been host to the four previous Congresses at his home town or Orebro in Sweden. Dr Chigier, of the Israel Rehabilitation Society and Chairman of the organising committee spoke of the great contribution Dr Rost, who retires this year, has made in the field of psychiatric rehabilitation and the forging of international friendship and the sharing of knowledge and activity in this field.

The present Congress continued this tradition with representatives from 28 countries attending. Any view of such a congress will tend to be a personal one and local issues were of great interest. The description of the treatment of a Holocaust survivor who remained unable to talk of his experiences even to his family for 40 years and fell victim to a depressive illness upon retirement was enlightening and moving. A life cycle reconstruction was used as a therapeutic intervention involving a social anthropologist on the clinical team who could help the patient place his experiences in the context of a family history and avoid too direct a challenge to the patient's defences. The use of creative arts in the rehabilitation of immigrants from the USSR who were formerly artists and whose psychiatric symptoms had relation to the difficulties of

transculturation was described in an interesting session on immigration.

Professional site visits were made to the Summit Institute for the Psycho-Social Rehabilitation of Emotionally Disturbed Adolescents and Young Adults and to the Dr Arie Jaros Jerusalem Mental Health Centre. The latter visit was hosted by Dr Bar-El, who is known for his papers on the "Jerusalem Syndrome" which afflicts visitors to the Holy City. Both he and his clinical team presented the work of the centre which takes patients for rehabilitation from throughout Israel. The centre is sited within a former Arab village and the range of accommodation available facilitates the movement of patients in a gradual manner towards either housing in the community or a semi-independent life in the equivalent of group homes on the campus of the centre.

In his summing up, Dr Chigier felt the conference had been more humanistic in its emphasis than previous ones, more countries had been represented, and more disciplines had been described as involved in the rehabilitative process. The overall view was still of patchy areas of good practice. There was a need for more concentration on the family as a factor in rehabilitation, the encouragement of self help by carers and service users and the maximum mobilisation of rehabilitation resources. This final point was ultimately a political issue, but practically alliances were required at a local level between the rehabilitation services, the consumers of the service and the local community to make care effective.

*Held in Jerusalem, Israel from 1-6 November 1992.

The second annual **London Medical Book Fair** will be held from 11-13 May 1993 at the Royal College of Physicians, Regents Park, London NW1. Admission free.