

The Register

EDITORIAL PAGE

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Now—Siberia, U.S.A.

Merely saying that "it can't happen here," simply isn't good enough for we have been given one demonstration after another that it CAN happen here — whether the here is Orange County, California, or the entire nation.

Specifically, we are talking about all of the various mental health bills that are, for some mysterious reason, being pushed down the throats of the American people from every angle.

More specifically, we are talking about House Resolution 3676 which is not something that can't happen but something that has happened. And what happened was that H.R. 3676 has won, by voice vote, the approval of the House of Representatives and is now being studied by the Senate.

Since time is growing short on this vicious measure, which is a good pattern for most of the rest of the mental health bills including the 44 different bills that have been introduced in the California legislature, we want to review it a little in the hope that readers will be moved to write or wire Senators Thomas Kuchel and William Knowland and let them know their viewpoint on the matter.

The story was briefly told in an Associated Press dispatch of Jan. 18 which said:

"The House today approved by voice vote a \$12,500,000 mental health program for Alaska.

"It passed and sent to the Senate a bill authorizing the federal government to give the Territory \$6,500,000 for construction of a mental hospital and other facilities, and \$6,000,000 over a 10-year period to provide an integrated mental

health program."

That's all the news dispatch said. But there is more, much more that ought to be said about this Alaska bill.

Under the terms of the bill, a fair question to ask would be this:

"Is it the purpose of H. R. 6376 to establish a concentration camp for political prisoners under the guise of care and treatment of mental cases?"

The answer, based on a study of the bill, indicates that it is entirely within the realm of possibility that we may be establishing in Alaska our own version of the Siberia slave camps run by the Russian government.

And don't get the idea that, simply because this was designed for Alaska that you, right here in Orange County, couldn't be sent there.

Listen to this:

The governor of Alaska, appointed by the President of the United States, is granted under the bill power to enter into reciprocal contracts and agreements with any state which includes the 48 states, the District of Columbia and the territories and possessions. Through these agreements any state governor and the governor of Alaska may "provide for the residents of Alaska by such state care and treatment of mentally ill and for the care and treatment of mentally ill residents of such state by Alaska, each on a reimbursement basis."

And it is within the power of the governor as to where any mental patient will be hospitalized and he has the right to make transfers at any time that he sees fit!

It doesn't take a giant mentality to see that under this set up it can be brought home right here to Orange County.

Under the terms of the bill it is proposed to grant one million acres of U. S. land to the Territory of Alaska "for the hospitalization and care of the mentally ill in Alaska." One million acres is roughly a little more than 1,562 square miles. The state of Rhode Island has a land area of 1,058 square miles and a population of 791,896. Alaska's area is 586,400 sq. miles with a population of 128,643. The total of Alaska's mental cases over the years averages 345 patients. By comparison with Rhode Island's area and population figures you can see the possible number of buildings and persons one million acres or 1,562 square miles could contain.

A mentally ill person is defined as "an individual having a psychiatric or other disease which substantially impairs his mental health. . . ." This is such a broad definition as to include anything from dandruff, headaches, toothaches, or fallen arches.

Commitment of the "proposed patient" (propose: to nominate for membership in a group) may be in a number of ways. It may be upon the "written application of an interested party"; or it may be by "any health welfare, or police officer who has reason to believe that an individual is mentally ill." Without a written authorization he may "take the individual into custody, apply to a designated hospital for his admission and transport him thereto."

Judicial proceedings for commit-

ment will be held under the direction of a United States Commissioner who may omit notifying the prisoner of such a hearing and said prisoner need not be present at the hearing. In fact, the Commissioner may exclude anyone from the hearing and the Commissioner need not be bound by the rules of evidence.

The Commissioner may make commitment for an indeterminate period or for six months. Although the patient may communicate with persons in or out of the hospital, this privilege is at the discretion of the head of the hospital!

Originally H. R. 6376 contained Sec. 128 (p. 31) which related to punishment for wilfully conspiring to cause the unwarranted hospitalization of any individual. This Sec. 128 has been stricken from the amended bill now in the House for passage!

According to House of Representatives Report No. 1399, the mentally ill from Alaska are presently cared for in a private sanitarium in Portland, Oregon, through a contract from the Dept. of Interior.

This legislation, say its opponents, will place every resident of the United States at the mercy of the whims and fancies of any person with whom they might have a disagreement, causing a charge of "mental illness" to be placed against them, with immediate deportation to Siberia, U.S.A.!

"Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing." From "1984," a novel by George Orwell).