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RESPONSE AND CHARGE

By **ROBERT R. LAURITSEN, Past President, PRWAD**

Six years ago next month, the Professional Rehabilitation Workers with the Adult Deaf (PRWAD) was founded at the Sheraton-Jefferson Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. It was fitting in 1966 that the theme of the Workshop that established PRWAD was entitled "The Vocational Rehabilitation of Deaf People . . . A Workshop on Rehabilitation Casework Standards for the Deaf." It is fitting and appropriate today that we have heard E. B. Whitten provide the keynote address for us on "Rehabilitation – A Service System."

Those of us here today would agree and encourage the concept that Rehabilitation is a Service System, equally vital to the American way of life as the education system, the health system, the income maintenance system, the social system, and the emerging manpower system.

Those of us here today are also in concert with the significant characteristics of rehabilitation that contribute to the definition that rehabilitation is a system. Specifically, rehabilitation is 1) individually client centered, 2) comprehensive, and 3) integrative in its approach. We are particularly sensitive to E. B. Whitten's concept that "to be successful, the rehabilitation agency must have its own resources, so it can demand the service of other systems. Therefore, the ability of the rehabilitation agency to purchase services as well as to provide services is the key to its success."

The goals and purposes of the rehabilitation system in America as typified by the National Rehabilitation Association are strongly reflected in the purposes of the PRWAD as stated in Article II of our By-Laws. Various sections of the By-Laws of PRWAD have undergone change since 1966. However, the purposes have remained totally intact.

Since the past is prologue to the future, it seems prudent to reflect for a few minutes on our purposes, activities to date in these areas, and a few comments on where we may go from here.

The first objective of PRWAD is "to promote the development and expansion of professional rehabilitation services for the adult deaf." A significant step forward in meeting this objective and all objectives of PRWAD took place in May 1971, when the Social and Rehabilitation

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Service of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare awarded PRWAD a five-year research utilization project that permits the continuation of the publication of *Deafness Annual*, and the vehicle of a full-time permanent office which is located in the NAD office building, Silver Spring, Maryland. We are indeed fortunate to have Mr. Arthur Norris serve as our Executive Secretary. Mr. Norris, son of deaf parents, (his father is the oldest living alumnus of Gallaudet College) has served deaf persons in the capacities of interpreter, consultant, teacher, athletic director, editor and friend. Additionally, Mr. Norris brings a wealth of administrative experience to PRWAD. The development and expansion of professional rehabilitation services for the adult deaf can be measured in several additional ways. One such way is in the total membership of the organization which is now in excess of 600 members. Our new brochure provides in capsule form information on PRWAD and well states our goals and purposes. Resolutions growing out of concerned membership at conferences are effective. In particular, one resolution from our Third Conference at Rochester, New York, in October 1970, provided valuable assistance to two dedicated professionals in California, Mr. Roy Holcomb, and Mr. Herb Larson in securing permanent teaching certification in the state of California.

A major opportunity facing this Fourth Conference in the development and expansion of professional rehabilitation services for the adult deaf can be found in Article III, Section 3 of our By-Laws. This section permits the creation of Sections composed of PRWAD members who have common special interests. The purposes of such Sections are to facilitate the interchange of specialized ideas and concerns, to establish standards for Section membership, to recommend guidelines for delivery of services, to aid in PRWAD membership recruitment, and to disseminate information on matters of mutual concern. There are fourteen Section meetings that will take place during these several days. The Executive Board of PRWAD strongly encourages anyone or all of these Section meetings to heed the By-Laws should there be a need for stronger recognition and an action base for the establishment of a Section within and under the umbrella structure of PRWAD. We are also rapidly approaching the time when state chapters of PRWAD could be established.

The second objective of PRWAD is:

“to provide a forum and a common meeting ground so that the organization may be instrumental in bringing about a better understanding of deaf people as a whole by encouraging students, professional persons and laymen to develop more than a superficial understanding of the needs and problems of this group — especially the problems related to communication techniques needed to work effectively with the adult deaf in a rehabilitation setting.”

In less than six years, we are now holding our Fourth National Conference. As you will recall, our first conference was held in Pittsburgh in

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October 1967, with 88 members in attendance. This First Conference was the only conference to be piggy-backed or tacked on to a national workshop. Our Second Conference was held in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in May 1969, with over 160 members in attendance. Our Third Conference was held in Rochester, New York in October 1970, with approximately 300 persons in attendance. As of 9 o'clock this morning in excess of 350 persons have registered at this Fourth Conference. Before this conference concludes, the membership will have the opportunity to voice its expression for the date and place of the Fifth National Conference. Our By-Laws state that there shall be at least one conference during each biennium after July 1, 1967. In other words, this Fourth Conference is our first conference during the current 1971-73 biennium. We are free to have another conference prior to July 1, 1973, if the membership desires, and are compelled to have at least one conference between July 1, 1973, and July 1, 1975.

The third objective of PRWAD is:

“to promote and encourage scientific research of the needs and problems engendered by deafness which inhibit in important ways the successful overall functioning of a deaf person.”

The publication *Deafness Annual* is addressed to this purpose by the following objectives:

1. to publish an annual compilation of significant articles and data dealing with research, service programs, patterns of service, innovations in services, and other pertinent information in the area of Deafness.

2. to disseminate this information to agencies, professional workers, training centers, and general libraries as a means of promoting better public understanding of Deafness and deaf people and their problems.

3. to highlight neglected facets of the problems of Deafness as well as to identify and to record fully the current activities and accomplishments of the many different efforts now focusing on the problems of Deafness.

4. to develop a means for professional evaluation and orientation in the field of Deafness, and to facilitate interprofessional exchange of information relating to the needs of the deaf populace.

In other important ways the individual membership of PRWAD are making significant contributions to the attainment of the goal of promoting and encouraging scientific research of the needs and problems engendered by Deafness.

The fourth objective of PRWAD is:

“to promote and develop recruitment and training of professional workers for the deaf.”

The theme of this Fourth Conference addresses itself to this topic. The concern for adequate and appropriate manpower needs in the area of Deafness have been extended to governmental agencies. The presence of Administrator John Twiname as our banquet speaker tomorrow evening gives testimony to our mutual sensitivity to manpower needs. The visibility of deaf youth and adults, the growing relationship between the government

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and PRWAD all speak well to this objective. The volume of mail that the Executive Board receives from persons interested in the area of Deafness also speaks to this objective. We are living in the age of human and public awareness of fellow man, including the deaf man. The increased visibility of deaf people in America today through television, an increasing number of integrated educational programs for deaf people has presented each of us with the responsibility of providing viable ways to bring interested persons from all walks of life into the area of Deafness.

The fifth objective of PRWAD is:

“to sponsor a professional publication for the promotion of inter and intra-disciplinary communication among professional persons primarily concerned with deaf adults and others interested in such activities.”

PRWAD has three publications. Again, reference is made to *Deafness Annual*. The first *Deafness Annual* was published in March 1969. The second *Deafness Annual* will be distributed in June 1972. Special recognition is due the Social and Rehabilitation Service which makes this possible. *The Journal of Rehabilitation of the Deaf* has been issued quarterly since April 1967. Our first editor was Roger Falberg. Our second and current editor is Dr. Glenn Lloyd. Our third publication is the *PRWAD Newsletter*. The *Newsletter* was established by Executive Board action in March 1968 (Knoxville) and has received expert direction under the editorship of Dr. Larry Stewart. The success of any publication depends upon contributions by the membership. The publications of PRWAD are no exception. To excel as publications in the field of Education, Rehabilitation and Deafness, the various publications of PRWAD require and demand your support. Your support is measured not only through your membership, but more importantly, through your contributions. To illustrate this point, I would like to “pick on” the state of Michigan. I had the privilege of visiting Michigan on March 24-25 of this year. In a visitation of less than 24 hours, I became acquainted with four exciting projects in the area of Deafness that I had not previously known about. And from each of these projects, I learned a great deal. One of the four projects I learned about was an exciting and highly innovative project conducted by the Technical Education Division of the Chrysler Motor Corp. for deaf workers. The project at the Chrysler Motor Corp. and the additional three projects being investigated by the Michigan Association of the Deaf are worthy of dissemination through the various publications of PRWAD. The sharing of information by the individual membership of PRWAD will enhance the total rehabilitation effort for deaf people.

The sixth and final objective of PRWAD is:

“to cooperate with other organizations concerned with deafness and rehabilitation of the deaf and with allied services in promoting and encouraging legislation pertinent to the development of professional services and facilities for the adult deaf.”

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PRWAD has been both responsive and aggressive in its cooperative efforts with a variety of National and local organizations. Included in this listing of organizations would be the National Association of Hearing and Speech Agencies, the National Association of the Deaf, Gallaudet College, the Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf, the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, and the National Rehabilitation Association.

Of course, we all are deeply concerned about the status of all legislation that affects our purposes. Of immediate concern is H.R. 8395. The outcome of this legislation requires our constant surveillance.

Pervading all of the purposes of PRWAD is the professional 'esprit de corps' of our organization. Curbstone conferences, Koffee Klatches, and Social Hours all provide opportunity for people of like minds to establish true and meaningful communication. Being a hearing person or a deaf person makes no difference in PRWAD. Those of us at the Rochester Conference were deeply touched as we gazed out at the Conference Banquet of 300 plus people and saw that there were no "deaf tables" and no "hearing tables." This kind of spontaneous 'esprit de corps' is a tribute to our profession.

PRWAD can be justly proud of its accomplishments to date. By the same token, PRWAD should take heed in Murphy's Sixth Law. You perhaps recall Murphy's original law — if a thing can go wrong in any way — it will go wrong. Murphy's Sixth Law states that "if everything is going smoothly, then you surely must be overlooking something."

So on the one hand we can be proud of what PRWAD has accomplished to date. In particular, we can look at our publications, our Conferences, the awarding of the Research Utilization grant by the Social and Rehabilitation Services, committee functions and the individual and collective efforts of the membership of PRWAD. On the other hand, we must realize that the total rehabilitation needs of deaf people have only begun to surface and typify the Iceberg Syndrome, i.e., we have only provided meaningful services to ten percent of the total needs that exist, while the remaining ninety percent still remain submerged. The brief history of Rehabilitation Services for Deaf People unfortunately reflects, as Boyce Williams would say, a graveyard of white crosses. Numerous excellent programs in the area of Deafness have been initiated in recent years, only to pass away into obsolescence due to lack of proper funding, and manpower support. We have no reason to be complacent in our efforts to achieve further "development and expansion of professional rehabilitation services for deaf persons." We do have every reason to believe that PRWAD has strengthened the knowledge that given proper manpower, support services, and funding, deaf people have the potential for making significant contributions to the total functioning of modern society.