

# \$14,000 RESEARCH FOR INDIAN HEAD

Selected as "a typical Saskatchewan community, alive and vital," and well enough established to have a stable population, the town of Indian Head will be the locale for a \$14,000 research study under the auspices of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Officers of the association's Saskatchewan division informed The News that the money for the project had been provided by the Commonwealth Fund of New York, an internationally famous philanthropic organization which encouraged studies in the social sciences.

**The research study will be launched in September and will occupy approximately one year. It will be under the direction of Dr. John Cumming, Regina psychiatrist, who is a graduate in medicine from the University of Toronto. Co-director will be Mrs. John Cumming, a social biologist. They took a special training course at the University of Chicago recently to prepare for the task.**

Purpose of the study will be to determine community attitudes toward health problems, Dr. Cumming told The News. He spoke of the steadily growing interest in recent years in problems of mental illness, leading to an awakened interest in mental health.

At one time, Dr. Cumming said, it was assumed that mental health was merely the absence of mental illness but it had become apparent that many people who could not be considered mentally ill were unhappy because of personality problems and that most people, at one time or another, are less efficient in work or play than they might have been.

People have varying ideas of what constitutes mental health and mental illness. It has been observed that what might be considered normal behaviour in one group of people would be considered evidence of mental illness in another; and

that behaviour thought of as unacceptable in one group might be commendable in another. It then became important to find out what everyone thought and felt about these problems and to try to discover with people why they reacted in the way they did.

At this point the Saskatchewan division of the Canadian Mental Health Association-- an independent voluntary agency-- became active in the work, Dr. Cumming went on. Saskatchewan had already become a centre of interest because of well advanced health programs, the work in mental health particularly. It seemed natural that the 32-year old association should open its first provincial office in Saskatchewan last year. The division was set up with an enthusiastic board of officers and directors, including many prominent Saskatchewan citizens, while Neil Agnew, M.A., became the full time executive director.

The division soon became interested in the problem of defining mental health, and more important, in discovering what non-professional people meant by mental health and mental illness, and how they felt about these problems. After some delay, because funds were not available, the association successfully approached the Commonwealth Fund.

With the project ready to proceed, the choice of a community for the study presented itself. Indian Head seemed to fill all the requirements and only one factor remained in the balance: Would the community be ready to accept the research workers as sincere, friendly people, interested in a scientific search for facts? It that could be achieved, there would be a friendly working together, and there was promise of a study which would result not only in mutual benefit for the investigators and the people of Indian Head, but for the province at large, and indeed far beyond provincial borders, Dr. Cumming said.