Social Workers

~~Suggestions~~

There is a story, I don't know how true it is, that about 175 years ago the President of Harvard University suggested to the Dean of Harvard Medical School that written examinations be required for all medical students. The Dean replied that it was a good idea but unfortunately it was not practical because some of the students could not write.

There have been many advances in the medical profession since then. There is general agreement regarding the education, training, qualifications and licensing of medical doctors. ~~More~~ To some extent the same is true of lawyers.

However, we still have some professions that are ~~relatively~~ in a relatively early stage of development. One of these is social work.

Who is a social worker? As far as the public is concerned a social worker is anyone who is doing

some sort of welfare work. This presents some real problems and I will mention one of them. The legislators of this nation are drawn from all walks of life. They can be looked upon as members of the general public who have been selected by their fellow citizens to represent them at state capitols and in Washington. They have pretty much the same attitudes and ideas as the public at large. Briefly this means that the laws of this country are written by men and women who have ~~little~~ only a shadowy definition of what a social worker is.

From Bob Murphy

This is worth thinking about because the appropriations for welfare purposes are large. ~~Much of the adminis~~ The administration of these funds is largely in the hands of social workers. Frankly there is a great gap between the legislators and the administrators in this instance because there is a

lack of understanding.

Some of us are aware of the ~~efforts~~ work of the National Association of Social Work and the schools of social work. It is very pleasing to know about these things because they mean that there are well-qualified people of professional caliber in the welfare field. It means that we can have confidence that the money appropriated for social welfare will be spent effectively.

But ~~there even to me~~ there are still ~~still~~ problems because it is not easy to identify a well trained social worker as one would for example in the case of lawyers or other professional people. I have wondered if the social workers with good professional training should not adopt a more dignified and meaningful name. For example a pediatrician is a doctor ~~that~~ who is interested in children — the term identifies him immediately. In contrast to this, the person who

collects old clothes for her church guild may state that she is a social worker - and ~~as~~ she has some claim to the term because of its usage for many years.

One of my friends says that he would like to see the social workers call themselves socionomists because they draw much of their basic knowledge from the fields of sociology, social-psychology and economics. ~~Someone may ask~~ ~~as~~ Shakespeare asked "What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." His question was interesting but if he had asked it at one of our Madison Ave public relations firms the answer would have been different. A suitable name is important.

Now I am interested in all of this because I believe that social workers are important. As our society becomes more complicated we have to have adequate means of aiding people in distress. A great

deal of this work must be done by social workers. They must be trained, capable people. People in whom the legislators and the public will have confidence.

Social workers have been developing a great fund of knowledge regarding how people can be helped — how many of them can be made independent, self supporting economic units again. Their efforts to preserve ~~the~~ human dignity in the face of adversities ~~have comprise~~ have been a truly great contribution to our civilization.

For my part it has been a pleasure to be associated with them — to get to know them ~~and to~~ is to develop respect and admiration for their work. I would like to express my very sincere interest in their humanitarian efforts and in their future.