sion as to goals.

The last third of the book is of particular originality and importance, providing a remarkably astute analysis of policy developments and conflicts during the last twenty years or so. The renewed attempts to change the emphasis from large institutions and custodial care toward smaller institutions, group homes and improved community services ran into quite unforeseen difficulties. Many of the people concerned "realized that deinstitutionalization and normalization were not necessarily the same thing"; all too often those advocating the latter policy were social scientists and others of their kind, often from universities, who, I suggest (though Simmons does not) sometimes did more harm than good because of their lack of 'hands on' experience in mental retardation institutions. The move away from the institution was not, the author shows, a rejection of the medical model of care, for since the 1930's "the social welfare function of the mental retardation institution had become dominant." Rather it was analogous to the change from the workhouse to unemployment insurance, a re-orientation toward the same basic social goal.

Unfortunately, government has become more complex since the days of the Poor Law, and attempts at community integration of the retarded were complicated by some awkward facts: the lack of coordination of service provision and funding, resulting in anomalies (more acceptable under a voluntary system than under government); the lack of community residences or group homes; opposition by citizens to the housing of mentally retarded persons in their neighbourhood; and opposition to the phasing down of institutions by most of those who worked in them, together with many of the civil 'servants who were comfortable with the institutional system. Furthermore, it proved unexpectedly difficult to interlace the service provisions of volunteer groups such as the Ontario Association for the Mentally Retarded with provincial involvement.

The paradox was that if the province (against the political philosophy of its PC government) took over complete responsibility for services, it would lose "the important emotional commitment of the unpaid volunteer"; yet if it did not it would imply that in some respect the retarded were an inferior group, not worthy of the same standard of services as the ordinary citizen. In fact, as government involvement has increased, the civil service has developed its own policy groups concerned with retardation, and the voluntary organizations now seem to have little to justify their continued existence.

An uneasy compromise remains, with the Ontario government assisting the mentally retarded but not assuming full 'welfare state' responsibilities. Dr. Simmons seems to think that it should go all the way; I disagree. I question whether there are any 'professionals' in community service who have special knowledge, skill, or motivation which would justify preferring them to the volunteer, (see Brewer and Lait, 1982), or paying them the fancy salaries expected these days by those in the 'helping professions.' There are no experts in living. But such arguments aside, there is no doubt that this is one of the most valuable books on mental retardation published in recent years, of particular relevance to the Canadian reader.

Reference

Brewer, C. and Lait, J. *Can Social Work Survive?* London: Temple Smith, 1982.

Practice issues in social welfare administration, policy and planning,

edited by **Milton M. Lebowitz.** New York: The Haworth Press, 1982; 157 pp.

Reviewer: **Glennis Zilm, B.S.N., M.A.,** *is a writer, part-time lecturer in the School of Nursing, University of British Columbia, and former second vice president of the Social Planning and Review Council of B.C. (SPARC of B.C.).*

Most social agencies today are facing increasing external pressures for better and wiser cost control methods. As well, many agencies are recognizing the need to include economic long-range outlooks in their social planning because of the complex inter-relationships between economic conditions and social needs in the community. With these two concerns uppermost, those involved with social planning are looking for help in the current literature. The title of this new book sounded promising.

The book is worthwhile, although not particularly helpful for meeting the two needs described above. It is intended as a text for current interest and use in graduate social work courses, and it fills this role nicely, especially for its American audience. It is clearly a response to policies proposed by the Reagan administration, although its principles can be adapted in Canada as well.

Eleven noted writers and academics were commissioned to contribute chapters. Produced under the expert guidance of Guest Editor Milton Lebowitz, the book shows less overlap and fewer gaps than most such compilations. The whole forms a comprehensive view of the current U.S. scene.

One of the chapters, by Rosemary Sarri, is especially relevant and useful, with suggestions about use of management models in human service organization. It explores the concept of whether such agencies can be — or should be — run under the same management principles that apply in profit-making organizations; this policy is much favoured by many provincial governments. She suggests that some aspects of models from the private sector might be relevant, but that goal-related principles in the private sector are often markedly different from those in the public sector. She even suggests some ways to try to get this message across to governments.

She also notes that the number of social workers in management positions in (U.S.) agencies has declined sharply. This is partly in relation to the emphasis on a business management approach, and is a factor that needs to be taken into consideration by those concerned with trends.

An interesting, thought-provoking text, although not one for easy reading or quick answers.

Knowing and caring: philosophical issues in social work,

by **Roberta Wells Imre, Ph.D., ACSW.** Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1982, 164 pp., U.S. $8.75 (paper).

Reviewer: **Karl Pfeifer, Ph.D.,** *Center for Advanced Study in Theoretical Psychology, University of Alberta.*

The subtitle to this book suggests that it might be of interest to both philosophers and social workers. Philosophers are apt to be disappointed, though. Most of the philosophical content consists of recapitulation and exposition of familiar themes. Social workers of a reflective bent, on the other hand, may find some appeal in this book. Academic social work, as a maturing discipline, has become increasingly concerned with its foundations, methods, and assumptions, and this book does address some pertinent issues.

Imre's main message, repeated throughout, is a simple one: Outmoded positivistic assumptions about the character of knowledge (e.g., the verifiability criterion) have determined the emphasis of academic approaches to social work, at the expense of the intuitive personal knowledge (alias "practice wisdom") involved in those person-to-person activities which constitute the core of social work.

The author's complaints about the historical influence of positivism, though this is not analyzed very deeply, are fair enough. What is unfortunate, however, is that she seems to conflate logical positivism, which has had its day, with empirical approaches in general. Logical positivism, historically, is just one such approach, and exorcising it from social work should not immediately drive one to the opposite extreme of endorsing mysticism, existen-

tialism, and theology as avenues to a better philosophical orientation for social work knowledge. Latter-day pragmatism, for example, would have been one of many intermediate options of empirical hue worth exploring here.

However — and herein lies another weakness of Imre's treatment — there is not much profit in pursuing the issue of social work knowledge in terms of such "isms" at all unless one has clear views about the various ways that knowledge enters into social work and how these interact. Careful distinctions must first be drawn among the following, to list but a few examples:

— the knowledge embodied in the various theories, generalizations, etc., promulgated in social work academia;
— the knowhow the worker possesses;
— the theories that explain how the worker manages to do what he/she does;
— the theories that the worker can be inferred to employ;
— the theories that the worker *thinks* he/she employs.

Why is this so important? Well, for starters, one can readily agree with Imre that an experienced, competent social worker may have valuable intuitive or tacit knowledge that she or he cannot articulate or justify; that a clever academic can make him/her feel foolish or defensive about such knowledge; and so on. But these are essentially facts about the knower, not the known. As such, they could be compatible with some of the most egregious pronouncements of logical positivism regarding the known. If so, it remains to be established that the supposed undervaluing of practice wisdom is (as the author suggests) a logical consequence of a particular philosophy rather than merely a causal consequence of the character and practices of academics in social work.

Despite its deficiencies, this book could be useful as a text for certain kinds of social work courses concerned with (meta)theoretical issues and intellectual traditions. Its contents are well-organized, and the references are quite helpful for further reading. As a text, it would be best suited to upper level undergraduates who have already had an introductory survey course in philosophy as one of their program options. ■

Field Reports
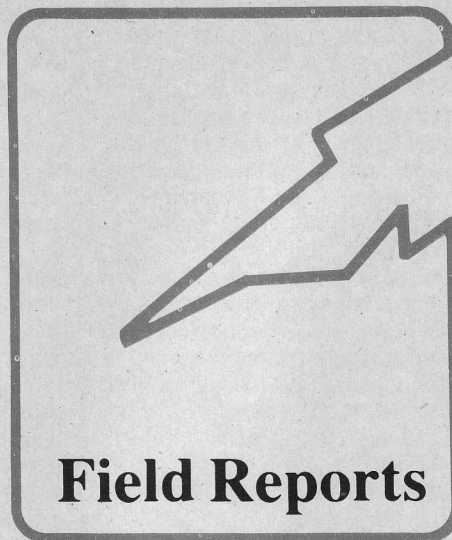
Keeping the elderly at home: an original form of support

SARPAD (Soutien aux responsables de personnes âgées à domicile) is a volunteer organization for people responsible for the care of an elderly person in their home. It serves the Parish of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges in Montreal.

While most existing services are the concretization of an idea, SARPAD has come into being in the opposite way. A personal experience, involving no other intent than to fulfil family responsibilities, was the beginning of this service. A middle-aged woman, a nurse by profession, stopped working in order to take an elderly relative in with her. She had to deal with this relative's occasional illnesses and the host of difficulties related to aging, and despite the skills she had acquired as a nurse, she sometimes found herself unable to cope with the unexpected problems that this new commitment brought with it:

The two years or more she spent at home in this situation had a concrete effect on her. She felt she could not keep all to herself the knowledge she had gained about some of the problems of aging, working her way through them as they came up. And so SARPAD was born.

SARPAD was created in the spring of 1980, out of the inspiration of this parishioner who had experienced what it is like to look after an aging relative. An ad hoc committee was set up to study a trial project, which ran from April 21 to June 2, 1980. SARPAD was legally constituted on October 17, and officially launched on October 22 of the same year, with seven participants.

Philosophy and objectives

The organization's philosophy is based on fraternal support by those who share similar experiences, on self-help, and on the contribution of volunteers. Its objective is to support and assist those taking on the responsibility for an elderly person, specifically by:

- setting up a network of exchanges and mutual support between those with responsibility for an elderly relative;
- providing theoretical knowledge of human aging, its biological, physical and psychological aspects, in order to make it easier to understand the behaviour and reactions inherent to this stage of life;
- organizing practical training sessions in order to assist care-givers in giving physical assistance and day-to-day care;
- informing members of the resources available from government and private agencies for the elderly;
- offering respite and support to care-givers as needed, through volunteer services.

Over the years it has been found that SARPAD plays a significant role in the area of Côte-des-Neiges in which it is located. Its 28 care-givers, 78 volunteers and 2,500 hours of volunteer help per year contribute to improving the quality of the social fabric of this neighbourhood. It fights vigorously against the isolation and for the socialization and personalization of the elderly, regardless of race or creed.

Although most volunteers are drawn from the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges parish, the clientele is not solely Catholic or francophone; a sizeable number of clients are from other ethnic groups. Clients are very often referred by public bodies attached to the Department of Social Affairs.

SARPAD is administered by a six-member committee, which includes the program co-ordinator.

Further information may be obtained from: *Soutien aux responsables de personnes âgées à domcile, 5366 Chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges, Montreal, Quebec, H3T 1Y2. Telephone: (514) 737-2454.* ■