

September 1947

ROCHESTER, MINN. GROUP MARKS FIRST ANNIVERSARY

On July 27 the Rochester, Minn., Group played host to 300 members and friends of this and nearby communities. Attending the first anniversary banquet and reception were representatives from Souix Falls, South Dakota, South Dakota; Fort Dodge, Waterloo, Waverly, Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, and Monticello, Iowa; La Crosse, Sparta and Eau Claire, Wisconsin; and Owatonna, Blooming Prairie, Hastings, Mankato, Caledonia, St. Paul, Faribault, Winona, West Concord, Grand Meadow, Wykoff, Fountain, Stillwater and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Local representatives of the judiciary, clergy, social agencies and of medicine as well as other interested friends were also in attendance.

Following a message of welcome by Lou B. of the Rochester Group and an introduction by toastmaster Andy A., H.A.R. of Eau Claire, Wis., better known as Rip, gave a thought-provoking message built around what he termed the two phases of A.A.

In explaining the two phases of A.A., Rip pointed out that in the first phase the man gets A.A. and that in the second phase A.A. gets the man. The first phase represents knowledge of A.A. as outlined in the 12 Steps whereas the second phase represents the practice of the 12 Steps; in phase one the A.A. serves himself, in phase two he serves

others; in phase one he acknowledges God, in phase two he worships God. Rip stressed the point that the surest way to reach phase two was through action and through development of A.A. ideals which he listed as charity, faith and humility.

Following are other highlights of Rip's message which we wish to pass on:

"In the University of A.A. there are no graduates - all are students."

"Alcoholics Anonymous have won a war by giving up the struggle-and surrendering to A.A. principles of life."

"Alcoholics Anonymous have won a battle against the greatest enemy of man-man himself."

"We are gathered here to celebrate a miracle performed, not by science, not by the wisdom of man, not by will power, not by tragedy or the pleas of mothers, wives and friends, not by any human agency, but by the 12 Steps of A.A. which constitute the staircase to lasting sobriety and peace of mind."

"Humility lowers a man to his proper size without degrading him."

"Good ideas will make you money, but good ideals will make you happy."

The meeting was also addressed by Pat C. of the Minneapolis group and by local representatives of the clergy, the judiciary and medicine.

Pat C. also represented the Mid-West Council on Alcoholism, and

introduced the visiting groups from other communities.

Dr. Harold Trost, representing the clergy, stated that in the past the church had found itself quite impotent in dealing with the problem of alcoholism and that whatever success was gained was usually of short duration. He praised the ideals of A.A., stating that they could be made fit subjects for sermons.

Dr. M.N. Walsh of the Mayo Clinic, representing medicine and psychiatry, likened his experience with alcoholism to his experiences with the medical corps of the army in the theatres of action. He stated that he could minister to the physical and mental ills of the men in service, but against destruction in battle he was quite helpless. So also he felt inadequate to the task of combatting the ravages and destruction caused by alcoholism. Dr. Walsh stated that A.A. has taught psychiatry many things about the value of group therapy and has given suggestions for the treatment of other psychiatric disorders.

Judge Vernon E. Gates of the District Court stated that throughout his service on the bench it has been his duty to commit many persons to penal or correctional institutions, and in many cases he has recommended that if a solution could be found for their alcoholic tendencies, leniency should be shown in

shortening or commuting their terms. According to Judge Gates no such solution was found until Alcoholics Anonymous, with its appreciable success in rehabilitating such cases. Judge Gates also stressed the value of A.A. to the community, the state and the nation.-
W.C.H.