

February 1949

—And South Africa

From Durban, Natal, Union of South Africa

WE started with two alcoholics, one of whom had first had A.A. experience in Dallas, Texas, and the other in Johannesburg, South Africa. We then worked with a third who proved a hard nut to crack. He has now moved to Johannesburg and is a leader of the group there.

The two of us who were left got a newspaper woman in Durban sufficiently interested in us to write an article for the Durban paper. As a result we got a dozen or so miscellaneous inquiries. We followed all the leads and managed to gain two new and presently steadfast members.

The article in the paper excited most interest in an asylum nearby, among the inmates who were committed for alcoholism. We then made a Sunday trip and talked to the inmates. As a result they come to us when they are released. We offer them association and friendliness and otherwise try to be helpful to them.

One of our number has contacted the mayor of Durban, the judges and public prosecutors, and has excited more curiosity about A.A. The clergy and the medical people are now referring cases to us and we have been able to be helpful. Our next step

is to try to convince the provincial authorities that we should have a few beds in the public hospitals for alcoholics, because at present there is no place for the inebriate who is suffering from a bad bout and needs shelter and care.

We have a preponderance of male members. Of our present total membership of about 26, only three are women. Up to now we have met in members' homes but we have now outgrown these quarters.

Since the first of the year we have been using one of the small rooms in the City Hall. We are also now having alternate open and closed meetings.

We have had the usual slips in the group but so far have lost only one member. We are making a pledge to ourselves for the New Year. Each of us will do at least one A.A. task every day. We have to fight a tendency to be too satisfied with the real progress we have made in the six months since we have become a welded group.—*R.G.M.*