

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you very much, Dr. Pittman. It is a very interesting statement.

Mr. Nelsen?

Mr. NELSEN. No questions, except to comment that the success you have had is outstanding, and it would indicate the merit of the bills before us.

Mr. ROGERS. Dr. Carter?

Mr. CARTER. Certainly we realize the great problem that alcoholics present to our country, and I want to commend you on your efforts in this direction. I support the part of this bill for the treatment of chronic alcoholism.

There is one thing that interests me, of course. As you state, some of the courts have held that chronic alcoholism is a defense against arrest for intoxication.

How are you going to manage acute alcoholics who are on the streets and who are some danger to the public? How will you take care of them?

Mr. PITTMAN. The procedure we have developed in cooperation with the police and the district attorney's office, as in the case of an accident victim, or a coronary case that may collapse on the street, is taking the individual to the medical facility for treatment.

The law as it is revised does not remove the arresting process for public intoxication. The determination comes in a court hearing. But, briefly speaking, anyone brought by the police to the detoxification center has a summons left with him. If he undergoes the treatment, then the summons is canceled, and that is the end of that particular episode.

There is a volunteer program, and the ultimate sanctioning, of course, is in the statute itself. If the individual goes to court, he can plead chronic alcoholism and under the statute certain options are open to the judge, that is, a voluntary referral to a private doctor or a psychiatrist. The compulsory sentence in the workhouse is still there for the nonalcoholic.

Mr. CARTER. A compulsory sentence to the workhouse? I hardly see how that would be possible for such an offense.

But how are you going to handle the intoxicated people on the streets?

Mr. PITTMAN. We have had a training program for 10 years on how to handle the chronic alcoholic. It is not a very difficult matter. The police officers have had intensive experience in terms of handling these individuals, and in our experience it has not resulted in any violent episode.

Mr. CARTER. Describe the method of handling them.

Mr. PITTMAN. Well, actually, the officer, when he sees the intoxicated person on the street, asks him to go along with him to the center. The minimal degree of force is used.

There is no handcuffing, no use of extreme measures. The talking procedure is used first, and it has not been necessary to restrain any of the individuals. It may be necessary very rarely for two officers to take an individual to the center.

Mr. CARTER. Where are they taken, then?

Mr. PITTMAN. They are taken to the St. Mary's Infirmary, which is a 30-bed facility with 24-hour service and a hospital staff.