



(Gazette Photo Service.)

MARY MORRISSEY, secretary-treasurer at the Rehabilitation Centre, and who has an artificial right arm, puts Barbara to bed.

Barbara Is An Obliging Baby, She Adapts To All Occasions

By OLIVE DICKASON

Barbara weighs only seven pounds, but she already has two aliases and several personalities for whatever the occasion demands.

She's so obliging, in fact, that she's likely to become a 'he' at any time. . . but the fact that one of her outfits is pink makes that possibility unlikely.

Barbara—or Shirley or Patsy—is a surgical doll. She's at the Occupational Therapy and Rehabilitation Centre on University street, where her main function is to assist handicapped mothers in learning how to handle babies.

"Each group that takes lessons with Barbara chooses its own name for the doll," Constance Lethbridge, the centre's director, explained in an interview yesterday.

Still a Girl

"So far, opinions as to what her name should be have varied, but nobody has thought of changing her sex."

Miss Lethbridge wouldn't hazard an opinion as to whether or not this proved that girl babies are more popular than boy babies.

The doll has proved very useful in giving young mothers enough confidence to handle their own babies, the director said. Women who have been handicapped by polio, meningitis or an accident come to centre for guidance in this difficult problem.

"Sometimes they refuse to handle their own babies at all because they are so frightened of dropping them," Miss Lethbridge said. If

the woman is not too badly handicapped, she can usually be taught to overcome her fears. Even if she's confined to a wheelchair, she can still learn . . . and to do such household chores as washing dishes and ironing as well.

More Men

Women, however, do not make up the bulk of the cases that come to the centre, said Miss Lethbridge. The reason might lie in the fact that they don't get involved in so many accidents as men.

Miss Lethbridge said that the demand is steadily increasing for the centre's services to groom handicapped people for a useful role in life. She referred to one of its new projects this year . . . a garden at the back of the building.

"Gardening is one of the best forms of exercise as it calls for many different kinds of movement," Miss Lethbridge. "Besides, our students like it. We have so many tomatoes right now that we're having them for lunch every day."

Like many another organization, the centre is faced with a housing problem. As the demand for its services increases, it is finding itself in need of more space.

Incidentally, it is one of the few welfare projects in the city that is open to all irrespective of religion or race. It is a Red Feather Service.