

# Drugs, Liquor Menaces, Gov. Talmadge Tells AA

Gov. Talmadge told members of Alcoholics Anonymous meeting here Thursday night that the use of narcotics and excessive use of alcohol are the two greatest menaces of the day.

The Governor's address highlighted the opening session of a four-day program of the Regional AA Conference. More than 1,000 members—all one-time alcoholics—are attending the meeting.

Talmadge said he had personal knowledge of AA work in Atlanta and praised the organization's purpose as being "most humane."

## FAITH STRESSED

The governor was introduced by Monty M., of Albany, who with two other AA members—Marcelle C., of Atlanta and Philip S., of Blakely—also spoke at the first meeting.

The three AA speakers stressed that recovery from alcoholism calls for "faith in a stronger power." First step toward recovery is admitting you are a victim, they added.

Earlier in the day Bill W., of New York, co-founder of the national AA organization, said membership is growing by "leaps

and bounds"—but so is the number of alcoholics.

Bill, admittedly once a "hopeless drunk" himself, estimated there were 1,000,000 chronic alcoholics and more than 3,000,000 potential alcoholics in this country.

He said AA membership now totaled 120,000, and is increasing "at a rate of about 25 percent a year."

In Atlanta to address the AA Conference at 8 p. m. Friday at the Biltmore Hotel, Bill sipped coffee as he attributed "increased drinking" to the state of the world.

## GENERATING NEUROTICS

"We know drinking is more prevalent among neurotics," he said, "and our civilization certainly is generating neurotics at a frightful rate."

A big, blue-eyed, mild-mannered man, Bill stressed he was "not a professional do-gooder . . . not a reformer . . . not an evangelist."

"In AA," he emphasized, "we

are interested only in the individual alcoholic who wishes help."

Bill, who helped found Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935 when doctors told him he would either "go mad or die" because of his alcoholism, said he had not had a drink in 15 years.

"I go to cocktail parties and drink tomato juice or ginger ale," he explained. "I don't dodge liquor . . . I just don't drink it."

## 75 PERCENT RECOVERY

Bill said the eventual recovery rate of persons who seek aid from Alcoholics Anonymous is about 75 percent.

He said the AA organization, first comprised largely of middle-class people, now was attracting both highly educated socialites and poorly educated derelicts.

"Our members represent all classes," he noted. "They include government officials, movie stars, bankers, truck drivers, ditch-diggers."

Bill said as many as 30 percent

of the members of some AA chapters were women.

He summed up the AA organization as one "based on the simple precepts of honesty, tolerance, humility and faith in a higher power." He said it was a "perfect society composed of imperfect individuals."