

## INSANITY AND ITS TREATMENT.

The report of the Inspector of Prisons and Public Charities for Ontario, for the year ended with September, 1883, has lately been issued, and many of its facts and figures are instructive. The total number of insane persons or idiots officially known to the Department is 8,070, and of these there are 2,825 in residence in the different Asylums at Toronto, London, Hamilton, Kingston and Orillia, the last-named containing idiots only, and 65 in gaols. The asylum figures indicate an increase of 3.02 per cent. over 1882.

The sum expended for the maintenance of these five asylums for the twelve months was \$377,095, but a revenue of \$59,922 was derived from 538 paying patients (\$111.20 each), which leaves the actual cost to the Province of the maintenance of these institutions to have been \$317,172. The Inspector calls attention to the low annual cost per patient here as compared with American asylums: \$227 per patient was the lowest he had found in the United States, while the average cost in Ontario was far less. The difference is explained by higher wages paid attendants and servants, more varied food, and more comfortable clothing and lodging among American patients.

The numbers in the different asylums are, Toronto, 703; London, 895; Hamilton, 547; Kingston, 449, making 2,594, to which if we add the 231 idiots at Orillia, 31 insane convicts in Kingston Penitentiary, and 34 insane or idiotic persons in common gaols, the total number mentioned is reached. At the date of the *Report* there were 48 applications on file for admission of lunatics and 109 for idiots, which confirms the statement that "asylum accommodation in the province is worked up to its utmost capacity" and that these buildings are "really doing more work than they should be called upon to do." It is significant however to learn, as we do on page 5 of the *Report*, that despite the efforts made, London, Kingston and Hamilton asylums are all overfilled on the female side, while Toronto is overfilled on the male side. And even this state of things is referred to on page 10 as an improvement. It is satisfactory to learn that, "the ratio of recoveries to admissions, 33.52 per cent., has been higher during the past year than in any year since 1877; and in the cure of the male patients it has reached a higher point than has ever been recorded in the history of these institutions, viz. 37.15 per cent."

While a steady increase in the number of lunatics admitted annually appears—from 437 in 1877 to 519 in 1883—the discharges have been in a still greater ratio, especially during the last three years. Still it would not be fair to infer that those discharged had recovered their sanity; the details of discharges given by the various superintendents show a large percentage "unimproved" as well as those "improved." Among the causes of insanity assigned domestic trouble or bereavement and self-abuse are the most prominent, showing 15 per cent. each. Next to these come business troubles, to which were attributed nearly 10 per cent. of the insane admissions of 1883. Mental anxiety, overwork, religious excitement and intemperance (sexual or alcoholic) are given as exciting

causes of many cases. It is quite possible that the first mentioned two of these causes would probably go to swell the 10 per cent. said to have been driven off their mental balance by "business trouble." We gather from the records kept since 1841 that of the 11,046 persons admitted to asylums in Ontario during the last forty-two years, the majority, 5,568, were unmarried. The Canadians among the patients numbered 4,461; the Irish 2,866; the English 1,557; the Scotch 1,204. As to religious denominations, the Church of England claimed the largest number, the Roman Catholic faith had 2,478 adherents, while the Presbyterian and Methodist bodies followed closely.

Year by year, says Inspector O'Reilly, we find that more and more importance is attached to employment as an important factor in the treatment of lunacy. And so, from 50 to 60 per cent. of the inmates are got to do work about the building and grounds, out of doors when possible, for fresh air as well as cheerful surroundings are admirable curative means. The better to treat curable cases, it is considered that small-sized buildings should be used. Thus the cottage plan, in use in the United States, is adopted by Ontario. Hopeless cases can be made comfortable in the larger buildings already existing. But, the Inspector argues, the incurables greatly outnumber those curable; and the *per capita* cost of the former is greatly increased because the heavy items of asylum maintenance, attendance, supervision &c., which the curables should alone pay, are distributed over both classes.

In older countries there are private asylums which are mostly filled with the insane of the richer class. Such an asylum, the report goes on to say, "has lately been licensed for the reception of private patients under most favorable auspices," in the Homewood Retreat, under the care of Dr. Lett, at Guelph. It is adapted for patients of either sex, who are either insane or inebriates, or addicted to the use of narcotics; and in the points of privacy and quietness of the grounds for exercise and recreation, pure air and water, buildings and arrangements, "is exceedingly well suited" for such a sanitarium.

Naturally and very properly, the Inspector deems it needful that such asylums should be under the strictest governmental inspection, in order to guard against abuses; and indeed, the Act respecting Private Asylums carefully guards this point.

It is satisfactory to hear on such competent authority, that Ontario is now provided with a well-equipped and pleasantly situated institution of the kind. Persons amongst us, whose mental condition requires their seclusion and skilful treatment can now be treated according to the latest and most approved methods without, as was previously the case, being sent hundreds of miles away to private retreats in the United States, at great expense.

—If the Grand Trunk bill passes, the Legislatures will have recognized the amalgamation with the Great Western, as an accomplished fact; an object which, the *Economist* thinks, the parties to the fusion see the desirability of. That journal thinks

"the Great Western stockholders might possibly object to commute their contingent rights for stock, the prospect of a dividend upon which may be regarded as yet the more contingent." And it adds: "At the present time, we do not suppose that the £13,400,000 ordinary stock, represents as much as £4,000,000 spent upon the line; and to have a stock of £21,000,000 (as is now proposed,) representing the same amount of money, widens the difference materially." But the theory is, that the proceeds of the new stock to be issued, are to be spent making a double track west of Montreal. The £21,000,000 must represent more money, and money's worth than the £13,400,000. The criticism has been made here, that the amount of proposed new stock represented more than the cost of the double track. If we counted the new stock at par, this would be true; but the last £2,000,000 of Grand Trunk stock was bought at 18 or 20, we believe. The question is what will the new stock bring?

—The Liquidators of the Exchange Bank, ask from the stockholders, under the double liability clause, a contribution equal to twenty per cent. of their stock. This is the first practical test to which the liability of shareholders for twice the amount of their stock has been put; and it will be interesting to notice how it will work in practice; for the result will give some idea of its value as a resource, when assets fall short of liabilities. Had the bank, in its own name, any stock, on which it made illegal advances? If so, who is to pay the call in respect of this stock? The illicit practice of a bank lending on its own stock, is bound to work mischief sometime. When a certain amount of money has to be got out of the double liability, it is clear that it must be got out of those who are able to pay. If a twenty per cent. call would suffice, if all paid up, forty per cent. would be necessary, if only half the stockholders were to meet the call. In that event, it becomes very important to know who your partners are.

—Canada will soon be a heavy borrower in the English market. Sir Leonard Tilley will leave for England, after the close of the session, to negotiate a loan of fifty millions of dollars, of which more than half—twenty nine millions—will be required to pay off debentures falling due next December. The remaining twenty-one millions is required to enable the Government to make the loan which Parliament has granted to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. £10,000,000 is a large loan; but in this case it means less than half that addition to the public debt. It is probable that many of the holders of the debentures falling due, will exchange the old for the new securities by subscribing to the loan; and this will greatly lessen the amount of new capital to be subscribed. The change is from a higher to a lower interest-bearing security; and it is not probable that the transition will be found difficult. If it should, the legal option which the Government possesses, to defer payment, can be availed of; but, unless the financial atmosphere becomes over-clouded, it is not probable that this will be necessary.