

Aside from the employment of a few patients of both sexes in the cleaning of the dormitories, making beds, helping in the kitchen, and the seasonal employment of a small percentage of the total number of patients at farm work—berry picking, etc.—the patients live lives of idleness.

No attempt is made to occupy those who do not shown ready willingness and initiative for work.

GENERAL REMARKS ON ADMINISTRATION

Here it may be stated that as a general rule those in charge of these so-called asylums appeared to be honest and painstaking people, who assumed an impossible task without adequate assistance or an equipment better than that of the worst kind of a poor-house. Cheap maintenance and no thought of the welfare and comfort of the unfortunates placed in confinement are the dominant notes everywhere.

The fault is not with the officials, who on the whole are apparently making the best of the situation in which they find themselves. It gives us pleasure to note that some of the places visited were kept scrupulously clean, despite the inadequacy of buildings and equipment, the lack of medical supervision, trained help, and facilities for employing the patients' time.

One institution does manage to provide occupation for 50% of its male inmates,—another for 20%. We were pleased to note that one county asylum recognized the need of shade trees in the airing court, and the energy of a wise and humane Superintendent had obtained for those under his care a recreation hall that is utilized for concerts, moving pictures, dances, etc. We recognize that there are individuals making an honest effort to rise to the necessary height. The failure to do so is simply the outcome of an unworkable and unwise system.

The largest of the institutions noted in this section attempts to treat under one roof 267 patients of widely varying types. Practically all the cases are in need of expert medical attention and trained nurses' supervision. It is inconceivable that one physician without special psychiatric training could do justice to the situation by calling only once a day. The mental cases, and there are 105 of them, certainly require highly specialized care.

The best of the county institutions visited are little more than prisons conducted on humane lines.

The whole county system stands condemned in the light of modern knowledge of psychiatric problems which are peculiarly medical ones.