

MEDICAL SERVICE, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Adequate medical supervision of county asylums and alms houses throughout the Province is lacking. With very few exceptions institutions are visited by a doctor at periods ranging from once a week to once a month. There is also a pressing need for trained nurses.

The flies in nearly every institution visited were a veritable plague. The prevalence of unscreened windows is partially responsible for this, but unsatisfactory sanitary arrangements aggravate the nuisance. Lavatory odors were noticeable in one place and in another a bath was noted which drained directly into the ground beneath, and the floor boards were soggy.

One institution was without water supply for a whole month during the summer. In another the well that furnishes the water supply is not lined with concrete, and thus gives ready entrance to the surface wash.

Attention has already been called to the inadequate sanitary arrangements existing in places. In one the method of bathing the patients consists of placing a tub in the centre of the separate sitting rooms for the men and women, and bathing each inmate in turn while the others sit around.

FIRE HAZARDS

In 7 institutions the dangers from fire are so great that special mention has to be made of this. The fact that one old building was without a telephone has already been noted. In another, lit by oil lamps there are no chemical extinguishers.

One county asylum houses its patients in three frame buildings, the original structure dating back 37 years. The whole group is antiquated and in a bad state of repair. The buildings are virtually fire traps with poor fire escapes and no adequate water supply. Each dormitory is locked at night and there is no master key for the various rooms. The fire escapes which are of wooden construction are fast rotting away. Windows lead to them instead of doors.

In another county asylum eleven patients were found sleeping on the third story of a building which houses fifty demented persons. Windows screened and locked, doors locked, no fire escapes, no one to give an alarm, nothing but certain death facing them if a conflagration started during the night. Any person who has had experience with the chronic insane realizes their fondness for fire and while strict precautions may be taken how often they prove futile.

Even in the case of a brick building which was built in 1883, at a cost of \$80,000 to replace a former building that burned with loss of life, the lessons of the disaster do not seem to have been heeded. The top floor of the present building which is used as a maternity ward is not provided with fire escapes.