

Better Doctoring thru Hospitals

Municipal Hospitals in Alberta and Saskatchewan---A Co-operative Hospital.

University Clinics---The Trend of Medical Practice

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There is perhaps no science that has made such marvellous strides in the past decade or two as medical science. This is particularly true of the research or the purely scientific side. The same advancement cannot be said to hold true of the organization of medicine in its application to the great mass of the people. Where properly organized it has been able to work wonders and the work of the medical staffs in this war is a mighty tribute to properly organized application of our medical discoveries. Western Canada has recently had a wave of the keenest interest looking toward such better application and certainly if any place needs it and needs it badly, that place is our prairies.

Our agitation has been particularly strong in Alberta and Saskatchewan. In the latter we now have "The Hospital Act," by which contiguous municipalities may co-operate to build and administer a public hospital. This act deals exclusively with hospitals, and an educational propaganda is being carried on. An organizer is now at work to add to its immediate effectiveness. At present the government of Saskatchewan allows 50 cents per day for every patient admitted to all hospitals in the province where provision is made for six or more beds. The new act would provide free municipal hospitals thru co-operating municipalities. The act limits the taxation for hospital purposes to two mills on the dollar. The whole process of organization for a municipal hospital is well explained in a bulletin issued by the Bureau of Public Health at Regina.

Last winter a vigorous agitation arose in Calgary which recently resulted in the formation of the Free Public Hospitals Association. This association has been carrying on an able and effective agitation for better medical attention, particularly in rural districts. A resolution embodying the most up-to-date principles of more efficient and free hospital service is being circulated over the whole province and is to be presented at the next session of the legislature. It aims at nothing short of the inauguration of a system of free public hospitals as complete as the public schools, supported by a general tax on municipalities served, equipped with well-paid, registered nurses and salaried, qualified doctors, and administered by a special department of the government. Also that a complete system of hospital inspection and licensing of all other than public hospitals be instituted, as well as the taking over of all hospitals now dependant on public money for their support. The campaign was pushed at the summer fairs. The whole matter was thoroughly discussed at a conference of representatives from the United Farmers of Alberta, the United Farm Women of Alberta, the Rural Improvement Association and Rural Municipalities, a basis for legislation approved, and a committee appointed to present the case to the government.

The people have got tired of the neglect of the state in its duty to the individual, particularly those in the lonesome places on its frontiers. We talk much of immigration, but a contented population is the only real basis for such, and that must come from improved conditions in the country where these people must go to settle. Perhaps no country does more for the conservation of its young population than Germany. A government insurance scheme there gives every mother a six weeks' rest at the time of the birth of her child. The motto of the League for the Protection of Motherhood is, "No mother shall bear her child in anxiety and need."

An Efficient Co-operative Hospital

In a little town in the neighboring state of Minnesota not far south of the border, is a hospital that illustrates well the value such hospitals can be to a country. This is the Minnewaska Hospital, of Starbuck, Minnesota. The people of this community were well versed in co-operation and they decided to build a hospital. All the money, \$25,000, was secured by popular subscription. Generous men and women in the country or surrounding villages donated voluntary contributions, and the work of all committees was given absolutely free. Every contributor of \$25 and upwards is a member of the hospital association, and is allowed to vote in the regulation of its affairs. Nine trustees with committees and sub-committees superintend the work, the securing of supplies, hiring of

nurses, etc. The superintendent of the Minnewaska Hospital, Miss B. S. Johnson, is an exceptionally able woman, a member of the National Red Cross Nurse's Association and president of the Minnesota State Board of Nurses. All nurses in training there pass thru her hands and the hospital gives one and a half years of training and nurses can enter any hospital in the United States from it.

There is also a nurses' training school, and special accommodation for four nurses. A nurses' home is to be built there. There are nine doctors on the staff. These men do not regularly work at the hospital, but they take their own patients to the hospital, or they can be consulted there. The president of the board of directors, Dr. C. R. Christenson, is chief consulting physician and carries on his own private practice in Starbuck. It is a very extensive one, too. Dr. Christenson has some very radical views on the question of medical attention and he isn't afraid to voice them either. He said, "Every town big enough to have a real church and a hotel should have a hospital. We run our hospital much like a good church should be run. The community should pay physicians and nurses to take care of the sick and injured of the community." The farmers are using this hospital more and more. Maternity cases at the hospital are increasing rapidly, particularly since domestic servants have become very scarce. At present only the more serious maternity cases can be taken, but special accommodation is being provided to take greater care of this work. The charges are lower at Minnewaska than at most city hospitals, and charity work annually runs between \$300 and \$400. Rooms that cost

katchewan, the village and town of Lloydminster. The governing board is made up of representatives from these different municipalities. The expense of keeping up the hospital, including care of building and all other expenses, costs the municipalities about one and three-tenths cents per acre, or a rate of about 1.03 mills on the dollar.

Regarding this hospital, the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, John Perrie, gave the writer very full information. He says: There is no resident doctor in connection with this hospital. A patient who enters the hospital is attended by the doctor of his choice and that doctor has charge of the case and has, of course, the use of the nursing facilities of the hospital; the patient paying his doctor's bill and also paying for any medicine which the doctor may prescribe for him. In addition, if the patient is a resident of certain municipalities, he may have to pay a fee for the operating room, if an operation is necessary. This fee varies from \$2.00 to \$8.00. Some of the rural municipalities however, which contribute to the support of the hospital, pay this fee for all their patients. For example—if a Mr. Smith, who is a resident of Streamstown Rural Municipality No. 511, is taken sick and goes to the municipal hospital, he is looked after by the doctor of his choice and when he leaves the hospital the only fees he is required to pay are the fees charged him by his doctor and his bill at the drug store for medicines used by him; all hospital fees and the fee for the use of the operating room, if an operation is necessary, being paid to the hospital by the secretary-treasurer of Streamstown Rural Municipality No. 511. Two dollars per day would be paid by the Streamstown Rural Municipality to the Hospital Board for every day during which Smith was in the hospital, and in addition, they would pay the fee charged for the use of the operating room if an operation was part of Smith's treatment; the fee for the use of the operating room varying, as stated, from \$2.00 to \$8.00, according to the nature of the operation; the average fee for the use of the operating room being about \$5.00. All municipalities do not provide for the payment of the operating room, and in such case the patient would be required to pay the fee for the use of the operating room in addition to the doctor's fee and druggist's bill.

The rate paid by each municipality for patients from the municipality receiving accommodation in the hospital is \$2.00 per hospital day, but parties living outside of the municipalities which support the hospital are charged at the rate of \$2.50 per hospital day. The liabilities incurred by the municipality for the amounts payable to the hospital on account of hospital accommodation given to residents of the municipality is collected as part of the general revenue of the municipality. Such revenue is collected on a valuation basis; that is, so many mills on the dollar on the assessed value of the lands in the municipality.

Cost to the Municipality
As to the cost of the hospital accommodation to the municipality, I may give as an example of this expense the figures from the Municipality of Streamstown, No. 511. This municipality, during the year 1915, appears to have had rather more use of the hospital than any other municipality supporting it, therefore, these figures may be taken as a very liberal estimate. The total amount paid over to the Hospital Board was \$2,164.95; total assessed value of the land in the municipality \$2,164,237.00; rate on the dollar for hospital purposes being one mill. The total assessable acreage in the municipality in the year 1915 was 171,618 acres, therefore, the burden placed on the municipality for hospital accommodation worked out on an acreage basis, would have meant a tax of 1.262 cents per acre. The estimated population of this municipality is 2,000 and, therefore, the cost per capita for hospital accommodation in the year 1915 was approximately \$1.08. During the next three years, on account of the construction of the new building some increased rate will have to be paid by this municipality, and it is estimated that such rate will amount to 1.734 mills on the dollar, or approximately 2.191c per acre, or approximately \$1.88 per capita of the population.

Speaking generally in connection with the cost of the medical treatment to the patient, it will be

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The Minnewaska Hospital, built thru the co-operation of the village and surrounding country. It has given these people all the advantages of an up-to-date hospital at a smaller cost than most city hospitals. Its work is being rapidly extended.

\$20 and \$25 in most hospitals cost \$15 and \$20 in this hospital. Several nurses are also kept busy in the country, with the hospital as their headquarters. The nurses' school is affiliated with the City and Country Hospital of St. Paul, from which graduation certificates are given.

In the construction of the hospital building special attention was given to safety, comfort and convenience of patients. Its capacity is of fifteen to twenty beds. It is fireproof thruout its two and one-half stories. All floors are connected by elevator and steel fire escape. Heavy asbestos deadening felt is placed between the floors, and a steel curtain closes communication between the main and second floors. The heating, ventilating and plumbing systems are of greater importance in an institution of this kind than in other buildings. Heat is furnished by means of a silent siphon steam system with 33 per cent. excess radiation. Ventilation is of the individual type, each room receiving its supply of fresh outside air strained thru a fine meshed screened flue passing thru radiator coils and discharged when foul by a separate flue, thus isolating each room from the others. The plumbing, fixtures and lighting fittings embody the latest improved ideas. The Minnewaska hospital offers the advantage of being cared for in practically one's home. Relatives or friends may be close by and the comforts, sympathy or cheer so essential to the sick can be readily offered.

The Lloydminster Hospital

At Lloydminster there is a municipal hospital carried on by two of the rural municipalities in Alberta, two of the rural municipalities in Sas-