

House of Industry and Refuge County of Elgin

THE House of Industry for the County of Elgin was opened in February, 1876, when there were not more than two or three similar institutions in the Province.

The institution is situated two miles west of the City of St. Thomas, in the Township of Southwold. The farm at first purchased was 50 acres in extent and cost \$3,000. The character of the soil, a heavy clay, did not prove entirely satisfactory. It was, however, gradually improved by tile drainage and the application of manure, drawn from the city whenever the farm team was not otherwise engaged. In 1903 the size of the farm was increased by the purchase of 50 acres adjoining, at a cost of \$4,250. The farm throughout is well fenced and

ordinary farm drains. There are no closets in the building and the necessity for sewerage is thereby minimized.

Buildings.

The main building is constructed of brick with stone foundation and slate roof. At first the building had but two wings, which did not provide sufficient accommodation, or for the complete separation of the sexes. In 1891, when the Government grant was received, an additional wing now occupied by the women was erected. The three wings are 26 x 31 feet, one occupied by the men and the other by the women, while the rear wing is used for hospital wards and a sleeping room at the top for men.

In the original plan each wing occupied by inmates



drained. An apple orchard, planted twenty-five years ago, is bearing well, and other fruit and ornamental trees add greatly to the appearance of the surroundings, the entrance avenue being particularly fine.

Water Supply.

In purchasing the farm the question of water supply does not appear to have been considered. This is provided by surface wells and cisterns in which soft water is collected from the roof of the main building. Water for use in the institution and stables is pumped to a tank in the attic of the main building by a hot air engine, which has been found to be in every way satisfactory and better than wind power. In dry seasons, water has to be drawn for the farm stock.

Drainage.

There is no convenient outlet for drainage from the institution. Drainage from the baths and laundry empty on the surface near the manure pile, by which most of the water is absorbed and the balance filters through to the

consisted of but one room on each of the two flats above the basement. This was considered satisfactory, and in building the new wing the same plan was carried out, except in the first flat, occupied by women who are confined to the house, which is divided into two rooms. The sleeping rooms contain from ten to twelve single iron bedsteads with straw ticks.

The keeper's apartments, a kitchen, store-room, and a reception room or office, occupy the centre of the building. The hospital wards, two in number, contain three beds each. These are situated convenient to the kitchen and keeper's apartments. The rooms provided for the use of the keeper are a parlor, sitting-room, four bedrooms and a dining-room. The basement on both sides of the kitchen is used as a dining-room for women and men respectively. The basement of the rear wing provides for two bath-rooms and a clothes-room.

Heating.

Up to 1891 the building was heated by wood stoves, but in that year a complete system of hot water heating