

Houses of Industry.

In villages and the smaller towns situated in the counties where no House of Industry has been established, the system of caring for the destitute poor by out-door relief, devolves upon the municipal authorities, assisted by individual effort, the church and other societies. In the larger towns, where the expenditure is greater, institutes of various kinds have been established. These are the centre of local charity organizations through which grants received from the government and the municipality are dispensed. In the country districts the duty of caring for the destitute poor devolves wholly on the municipal authorities. The system at first adopted in all, was that of out-door relief, but as this was found to be unsatisfactory and expensive, the establishment of county poor houses or, as they are now called, Houses of Industry, was thought advisable. Under the present law it is optional with county councils whether they erect one of these institutions or not.

In 1868 the county council of Waterloo erected a House of Industry, and we find that similar institutions have been established in sixteen counties. It is impossible to lay down any rules or make any suggestions in reference to the system of out-door relief in operation in rural municipalities. Circumstances vary in almost every instance, and it is sufficient to say that the more people become acquainted with the defects of the system, the more active they are in supporting movements for the establishment of Houses of Refuge.

LOCATION.

One of the most important matters for a county council to consider after the erection of a House of Industry has been decided on, is the location. This should be near the centre of the county and not more than two miles from a town or village and a railway station. This will minimize the expense of conveying inmates to the institution, and if convenient to a large town there will be better facilities for securing supplies which is an important matter. A location near the county town is most desirable as it is then accessible to the county councils and grand juries, and continually under the supervision of the county officials. In choosing a farm, the amount of land, the character of the soil, water supply and drainage must not be overlooked. The quantity of land varies in different counties. Fifty acres has, in the majority of cases, been found to be all that can be worked conveniently without increasing the help actually required to manage the institution. The employment of the male inmates suggests a larger farm partially cleared, as they could then be engaged in stumping, wood-cutting and clearing the land, which would increase its value. The rough land would also provide pasture for the stock. If it takes years to clear one field the inmates are the better for the work and an import-

ant question in the management of poor houses is solved. The soil should be of light or sandy loam, such as can be easily worked by the labor of the inmates. An unfailing supply of pure water, and facilities for drainage of the farm and sewage from the institution in an inexpensive manner must not be overlooked.

BUILDING

Having secured a suitable farm, the character of the building to be erected should receive careful consideration. A partial basement with one, or at most two flats above, is considered by many to be preferable. The physical condition of the inmates in the majority of the cases renders them unfit to climb long flights of stairs. Provision for the escape of inmates, in case of fire, favors a low building. The cottage system is generally a secondary consideration, and is not thought necessary, except by those who have had experience; the future development of the institutions already established will be along that line. Cottage or separate buildings for the isolation of certain classes of inmates are necessary. A yard enclosed by a high fence should also be provided convenient to a cottage for the use of inmates who are mentally defective, and who would otherwise require the constant supervision of the keeper.

PLAN.

The plan of the building should provide for a complete separation of the sexes, for bathrooms, for hospital wards, and facilities for the insulation of inmates in cases of an epidemic. Ample room must be provided for a large kitchen, convenient store-room and cooking apparatus of sufficient size. The dining-room should be near the kitchen and in the basement. The laundry should be separated from the main building. The plumbing should receive the attention of an expert, and should be of the most durable character. For heating institutions, the preference in most cases, is given to the hot water system. Two boilers should be used, both of sufficient capacity to heat the building. These should be arranged to run separately, so that in case of accident the inmates will not suffer.

The success of the management depends entirely on the appointment of the keeper and matron. The duties at first are thought to be onerous and unpleasant. They should at all times receive the advice and assistance of the municipal authorities.

COMMITTAL OF INMATES.

Under the Municipal Act, councils are authorized to make rules and regulations, not repugnant to law, for the government of Houses of Industry. These regulations, among other things, provide for the committal of inmates. They are the same in nearly every county, and need not be referred to in this paper. Under the present law no person can be compelled to become an inmate unless the county council passes a special by-law for committing and detaining them for a period

of not more than twelve months. Commitments are usually issued by members of the council, and may be issued by any two of Her Majesty's justices of the peace. In this Province no provision is made for the detention of persons at the Houses of Industry; they are usually controlled by moral suasion on the part of the authorities in charge.

The expense of maintaining inmates is provided in two ways:

1. By a general tax to meet all the expenses of the institution.
2. By a general tax to maintain the farm and the buildings and a special assessment on local municipalities for the support of inmates sent from each. The payment of all expenses by a general tax is, in many ways, most desirable. A great many inmates of these institutes are wandering characters who belong to no particular municipality or county, and are of necessity committed from the municipality in which they become disabled. Efforts have been made to define eligible inmates as those who have been resident in the county or municipality for a stated period, usually two years; justices of the peace are not restricted by these regulations. The greatest benefit would be derived if all institutions were open to residents and transients who may be in need of assistance.

The spiritual welfare of the inmates is often neglected, and where the church societies of the neighborhood or nearest town do not undertake the work, the authorities have, in some cases, found it necessary to pay for the services of a regular chaplain.

House of Industry authorities will find it to their advantage to encourage the work of Children's Aid Societies. All children at present in these institutions, or who may be committed thereto, should be handed over to the care of the society. Counties should be required to assist cities in providing children's shelters, as they are open to all children coming within the jurisdiction of the society.

A great deal might be said in reference to the details of the management of houses of refuge, but such suggestions would be more appropriate for a meeting of those who are particularly interested. It is almost necessary from a municipal standpoint that some organization of those interested in poor house work should be effected, if for no other purpose than deciding on a uniform annual report, containing not only complete statistics in reference to inmates, but as to cost of maintenance, etc. Municipal councils are apt to judge of the success of an institution by the low annual rate of maintenance and comparisons of the reports from different institutions often lead to unfavorable comment and annoyance to those in charge, which would be avoided if uniform reports were prepared.

A Japanese farmer who has as much as ten acres of land is looked upon as a monopolist.