

optimist, as his experiences of the last seven years in connection with Government promises regarding the future had given him every reason to believe that the only way in which the work could be carried on would be through a combination of happy circumstances, and if a clinic was to be constructed it must be on a considerable scale, both regarding size and equipment, otherwise it would spoil the whole problem. Too many half-hearted developments had already been undertaken by the Province, and there is no reason why a psychiatric clinic should not be built on the same elaborate scale as the Toronto General Hospital. One is just as important to the community as the other.

RELATION OF PSYCHIATRY TO PUBLIC HEALTH.

(Abstract).

John W. S. McCullough, M.D., D.P.H., Chief Officer of Health for Ontario, read a paper on this topic. He said that a man confined in an asylum ceased to support his family, and had to be paid for either by his family or the state. As the majority committed to the asylums were incurable, the expense caused in this way was very great. One only requires to think of the number of asylums and the patients confined in them to form some idea of this burden on the community. There are more beds in the asylums in the United States than in all the hospitals combined.

Formerly the treatment of the insane consisted in retaining them in custody, where they were often harshly dealt with, and their whole life was worse than useless. That method has been superceded by our present humane way, which effects a cure in many cases.

In recent years a good deal of attention has been given to the subject of the prevention of insanity. This was a topic of the utmost importance from the standpoint of public health. This led up to a study of the causes of insanity. Among these the following should be noted:

1. Among the causes of insanity infectious diseases play an important part. Syphilis causes from 10 to 15 per cent. of all the cases; and is the direct cause of about one-fifth of all first admissions. It usually assumes the form of general paralysis and is fatal in from three to five years. It also plays a part in hardening the arteries, gumma, and meningitis, all of which may affect the brain. General paralysis causes one-half as many deaths as typhoid fever; and yet syphilis is looked lightly upon by the public.

2. Alcohol is an immediate or predisposing cause of insanity in one-third of our cases of insanity. Drinkers are often of a lowered