

superintendents is, to say the least, questionable. In some instances, the position is said to have been put up to tender and awarded to the lowest bidder. In some instances, the choice has been decided by capacity for the successful prosecution of farming operations. Fortunately, good farmers are usually good administrators, but there is, in some instances, a disposition to glorify the farm at the expense of the institution. The good of the inmates of our institutions should surely be the first and principal consideration, to which everything else should be subordinated, and the factor which should have greatest weight in the selection of a superintendent should be a combination of those traits which would insure the best care of our unfortunates. When it is possible to secure the services of one who has had previous experience in this particular work, and who has demonstrated capacity for the work, it is surely reasonable that such a person should be chosen. When no one with such experience is available, it is suggested that a short period of training at the Nova Scotia Hospital should be required before appointment to a county institution is sanctioned."

We do not agree with him, however, that a short period of training in the Nova Scotia Hospital would get over the difficulty. The only safeguard against the abuses bound to occur under lay management is the establishment of government control under such a plan as that outlined further on in this report. Several of the superintendents in the County asylums have had even more extensive training than that suggested by Dr. Hattie, but it has not resulted in the improvement to be hoped for.

No matter how stringent the regulations may be made, the County system is bound to fail, and without dilating further on the unpleasant facts, the practical point is to find how to remedy the present difficulties. If the County system were a new experiment we might be inclined to suggest a further trial of it, but common sense and experience make it plain that it is hopeless to endeavour to care for mentally diseased people by any such method as that being attempted at present in Nova Scotia. Even if insanity were a crime rather than a disease, the present methods of care would be unjustifiable. The tragedy of mental disease is bad enough without adding to its horrors, and the argument that the cost of maintenance would be increased by a system of government control is not reasonable, and possibly an exaggeration. Maintenance under a humane and properly developed government system of control need not be extravagant, but on the contrary economics may be effected that are not possible at present. However, that whole question will be discussed under the heading of recommendations.

This question of maintenance is full of dangers to the helpless creatures who have no means of asserting their rights to proper treatment, comfortable surroundings, and ample sustenance. Because they