

*Original Communications*

RECENT LEGISLATION IN REFERENCE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANATORIA.\*

By A. P. REID, M. D., Secretary of the Provincial Board of Health.

*Mr. President and Gentlemen:*

It is with pleasure that I introduce these subjects, because, as you will see from the copies of the Acts before you, that they are in line with the most advanced legislation of the day. The Acts speak for themselves and I do not think there is much occasion for me to take up your time dwelling on them.

It is to be hoped that the new Health Officers, when appointed, feeling that they have authority to act, will be able to instruct and direct the local Health Boards, so that our health laws, on the whole—good, will not be dead letters on the Statute Book.

The Sanatorium Bill is specially to be commended, and with a larger money grant will be of great value to those suffering from tuberculosis. That it may be able to accomplish what is expected there are two dominant details demanding careful consideration,—location and management.

*Location.*—The best interpretation I can give to experience thus far is that a location should be chosen that while avoiding cold and raw winds shall furnish a plentiful supply of pure air—air which is not tainted by the vicinity of cities, factories, fog, swamp, marshes or low lands. The water supply must be abundant and from an untainted source. The drainage must be unexceptionable.

The building plot should be dry and sandy or gravelly, with a sufficiency of level ground for the buildings and any probable extension. Also space for gardens, lawns, etc., not less than five acres. The grounds should be extensive and preferably wooded, to permit of walks and drives, with high lands leading upwards from the hospital for exercise. If leading downwards it is apt to be too straining on invalids when returning from exercise and perhaps fatigued. If possible they should have an extent of 100 acres. It should be easily

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accessible by rail and telegraph and telephone, not less than one-half mile from the station nor more than four or five miles distant.

It was at one time supposed that altitude above the sea level was most desirable; but experience shows that this is not necessary and in some cases is undesirable, particularly for those with diminished vitality. To those of the stronger or more rugged type elevation may be a benefit, but it is not necessary.

Undesirable localities are the converse of those above described, particularly near the sea coast, where fog and rain and high raw winds are likely to prevail, or the vicinity of marshes or low lands, or factories, which are apt to have a more or less polluted atmosphere, and particularly the near vicinity of towns or cities.

Our province has many most desirable as well as undesirable localities. Of the former, from what I know of the province, I would say there are three that are very desirable. The upper parts of the Annapolis and Stewiacke Valleys and the higher portions of the Cobequid Mountains, and I think it is very desirable that sanatoria be established in each. I would give preference to the Valley for a commencement, because it is likely to serve the greater number. The better portions of the Stewiacke Valley are at present rather inaccessible, but these objections do not obtain with the Annapolis Valley between Kentville and Berwick or Kingston and Bridgetown. The general healthfulness of the Valley is attested by the increasing numbers of invalids from our own province as well as from the adjoining states, who resort thither for recuperation and strength.

While considering the subject of sanatoria it might be as well to widen our view a little. So far the paramount idea is the cure of recent or the less seriously affected cases. There are a large number of cases that are so far advanced that the question is not so much that of probable cure as of amelioration, which is too often complicated by poverty or want of resources. These now crowd the wards of the Victoria General Hospital, if they can gain admittance, or eke out a miserable termination of their days in crowded tenements.

Whether in the hospital or the tenement they are a continuous and dangerous source of disease to those who are forced to be their co-residents, and something should be done for the relief of the afflicted and the removal of a dangerous contagious disease from the vicinity of those in health. The poverty of the afflicted and the inability of removing them far from their friends are the most difficult questions

to solve. It appears to me that the only solution is that the city, town or community must deal with this on the same lines as now obtain for the relief of the indigent. That the community must furnish a sanatorium, hospital or convalescent home for its dependent members, and some of the best clauses in our recent Sanatorium Bill provides for this contingency and pledges the Government assistance as a means to this end. This necessity has been ably and successfully dealt with in Edinburgh, Scotland, where Dr. Phillips, in connection with the City Dispensary, has established at Craighleath a sanatorium which has proved its efficiency by several years of experience. This may well serve as a model for any community desiring to relieve its indigent members afflicted with consumption or tuberculosis. I do not know that I need do more than thus to mention this latest philanthropic advance.

There is further to be considered the best means of unloading the Victoria General Hospital of its undesirable occupants, and this appeals to every one and particularly to the profession and the government that has the management of our provincial hospital.

After careful consideration I would offer the following suggestions:

The Victoria General Hospital is at present crowded and is likely to be so in increasing ratio and the question of extended accommodation must be considered. The present grounds are sufficiently contracted and extension is desirable in another locality. The Government now owns the Esson farm, near the Hospital for Insane, and it appears to me that the better plan would be to erect an annex to the Victoria General Hospital a sanatorium there to which could be conveyed the consumptive patients that now crowd the wards of the Hospital. Thus we would not only get more room at the Victoria General Hospital, but we could remove a dangerous class who now contaminate its wards, while imposing the probability of added disease to the patients who resort thither for the relief of other maladies. While at the same time the consumptive would be placed under so much better surroundings and with a better prospect of amelioration. The details of its management are self-evident and I need not further discuss the subject.

To my mind the first departure which should occupy the minds of the profession and the government is to establish one sanatorium as a model for enlargement or multiplication, and its success will measure the amount of relief the province will secure. To be successful we must adopt the latest teachings of experience in reference to location.

and management. The former I have referred to in preceding pages, but as to management there may be differences of opinion. I do not hesitate to say that after most careful consideration experience teaches that special hospitals and sanatoria should be under the autocratic management of an expert or skilled superintendent, who should be held responsible for its success; but this can only be had by giving him the authority acting under a Board of Trustees or Commissioners to assist him in carrying out most difficult and onerous duties. The dieting, nursing and general hygiene specially demand his skill and attention. For the class of invalids provided for in the Sanatorium Bill—patients not likely to be much confined to bed or the wards—the treatment by drugs or medication is not the most prominent requirement. The question of segregate or aggregate accommodation is chiefly that of expense—the former being most desirable, but the two systems can be combined with good efficiency.

I have not taken up your time with the many details of construction and management, because these will naturally follow when the general principles that are to guide us have been decided on.

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