

extend any further, it must necessarily lead to overcrowding of the day-room space, and consequently a more serious state of things from a sanitary standpoint; indeed I am not at all certain that this stage has not been already reached, for any one going through the wards in the evening, or on wet days, when all the inmates are indoors, cannot fail to be struck with their thickness on the ground. It would thus be a fatal mistake to increase the dormitory space at this asylum to any great extent, unless provision is also made at the same time for an extension of the ordinary living-room accommodation; the two must be considered together,—and, in my opinion, the asylum is already of sufficient dimensions for efficient administration.

So much importance is given in the present day to the spread of tuberculosis and other diseases of an infectious character, not formerly considered so, and the necessity for checking the same, that too much attention cannot be given to the subject of overcrowding. This naturally leads to the question of the prevalence of tuberculosis in our dairy herd, the means adopted for its extinction, and the innocuous quality of our milk-supply.

At my initiative, about two years ago the Stock Department tested our herd with tuberculin; several animals reacted to the test, but the conditions under which the examination was conducted, as well as the apparently robust health of most of the animals, seemed to leave some doubt as to its reliability in the mind of the operator, and no further steps were taken at the time beyond the fitting up of a pasteurizing plant as soon as possible. It was intended, however, to re-examine the cattle in the course of a few months; but this, being impracticable for some reason or other, was not done.

Towards the end of the year—in December last—Mr. Reakes, the Government Veterinary Surgeon, conducted a very full and careful examination of the whole herd with tuberculin, with the unfortunate result that a very large proportion reacted; since then a large number of the condemned animals have been removed and slaughtered under the inspection of the officials of the Stock Department, and the few that have been kept on for breeding purposes, not supposed to be so badly affected as the others, have been very carefully and completely isolated.

In addition to the above precautions, all the milk used—both fresh and skim—for ordinary dietetic purposes as well as for calf-feed is pasteurized, latterly up to 180 degrees, in accordance with the most recent recommendation of Mr. Sorenson, late Government Dairy Inspector, in a recent number of the "Dairyman." The loss of so many valuable and selected dairy cows and heifers necessarily affected our milk-supply, and will entail considerable expenditure in working up so good a herd.

I was greatly at a loss to account for this marked prevalence of tuberculosis amongst our cattle as compared with the stock of private individuals, which, I understand, moreover, is not confined to this Asylum, but is more or less common in the herds of the other similar institutions in the colony, till my attention was recently drawn to a paper by one of the Inspectors of Stock in South Australia, read before the Institute of Hygiene in Adelaide. That gentleman propounds the theory of the direct infection of cattle by the sputum of man, and quotes several cases which seem strongly confirmatory of the position he takes up. (The work of Sims Woodhead on "Bacteria and their Products," one of the most recent and best authorities on the subject, pp. 215 and 216, seems to leave no doubt about the possibility of this.)

Assuming, then, the bovine bacillus to be the same as in the human subject, or capable of development from it, this direct infection theory would easily account for the greater prevalence of the disease amongst our herds than those in general, for with such a large number of persons many of whom are in different stages of consumption, constantly employed about our paddocks—a comparatively limited acreage—and cow byres, who, moreover, are not particular in their habits of expectoration, our cattle have much greater chance of contracting the disease than those of private persons.

The protracted drought of the last few years had again a very injurious effect on our farm operations and results, and, besides largely reducing our milk-supply, already affected by the above cause, entailed considerable expenditure for special feed—straw, molasses, &c.—in order to get enough milk for our daily requirements, independent of butter-making.

The potato-crop, being on comparatively light ground, was almost a complete failure owing to the above cause, but, anticipating this result, I was able early in the season to purchase the crop of an adjoining paddock (about 7 acres) at about £1 5s. a ton of the estimated yield, which latter being afterwards realised gave a very large profit at the time of digging the crop, when their value had risen more than fourfold. This purchase tided us over the year till our own crop was available.

Hitherto grain-growing has not been altogether satisfactory on our limited acreage, owing to the ravages of birds and the loss by north-western winds, but the drought of the last couple of years still further reduced our yield. I have accordingly concluded that root-growing—potatoes, mangolds, &c.—and peas, associated with dairying and pig-raising, will be more profitable with our abundance of free labour, and our farm operations for the current year are directed on these lines.

The profit on the latter (pigs) for the year under review, including bacon and pork used on the premises, but exclusive of feed—almost entirely kitchen waste, or our own growing—was about £450.

The amount paid into the Public Account for sales of farm produce was over £900, while, including vegetables and fruit, the value of the produce consumed on the premises must have considerably exceeded £1,000. There were 12 tons of fruit alone used in the building in various forms, fresh, cooked, or preserved.

The new airing courts, referred to in my last report as approaching completion, were occupied early in the year, and must have afforded considerably increased comfort and cheerfulness to those using them.

In April of last year a female patient, not previously suspected of being actively suicidal, met her death by misadventure; she was sleeping in an upstairs dormitory owing to the exigencies of