

carrying out artificial feeding according to the most rational methods, form the best means of prophylaxis against the infantile cerebropathies. In the most civilized nations the movement in favour of the use of prophylactic means is very strong and steadily growing. In fact, a notable reduction in the infantile mortality has been effected, and along with this a diminution in the number of the deformed, and of children physically and mentally weak from earliest infancy.' ”

twenty

The following paragraph, taken from my official report of ~~the~~ years ago, still expresses what appears to me to be the most important considerations for the mental well-being and efficiency of the race :—

If women in general were rendered more fit for maternity, if instrumental deliveries were obviated as far as possible, if infants were nourished by their mothers, and boys and girls were given a rational education, the main supplies of population for our asylums, hospitals, benevolent institutions, gaols, and slums would be cut off at the sources. Further, I do not hesitate to say that a very remarkable improvement would take place in the physical, mental, and moral condition of the whole community.

Every year, with its added quota of knowledge and personal experience, goes to deepen and confirm these convictions; and it is some satisfaction to know that in the meantime New Zealand has done something towards engaging the attention of the public and enlisting their sympathies in the right direction. It may suffice to mention, in this connection, the earnest combined efforts now made by the Health Department and the Plunket Society to induce all mothers to avail themselves of the full facilities offered for practical help, education, and training in the safeguarding of mother and child from the onset of pregnancy to actual childbirth—so-called “ante-natal care.” The education of the whole community in the essentials for mental health and fitness, and the prevention of insanity, ought to be regarded in the same light as education in the essentials for bodily health and the prevention of disease in general. The public ought to be brought to realize the inestimable value of nervous and mental stability, and the cruel and costly handicap of instability and insanity; but these things will never be adequately appreciated until the present absurd and grotesque notions as to the causes, onset, and nature of insanity, and the characteristics and treatment of the insane, are cleared away. The sooner the public understands that mental disease is for the most part a symptom and expression of bodily disease the better.

Fortunately my colleague, Dr. Theodore Gray (now Deputy Inspector-General of the Department), made an excellent start in the right direction when he gave a popular lantern lecture in Wellington some four years ago entitled “Mental Hospitals, Ancient and Modern.” It is our intention to follow this up with further illustrated lectures throughout the Dominion, in which we shall try to impart what we feel can be conveyed interestingly and with benefit to all concerned—i.e., actually or potentially, directly or indirectly, almost every one in the community. Sound common-sense, simple reliable advice and instruction is what is most needed in order to enlist the sympathy, help, and intelligent co-operation of the public, so that they may help us to get in touch with people threatened with nervous or mental breakdown at an early stage, and advise them and their friends as to the best course to pursue—whether that happens to involve admission to a sanatorium or mental hospital, or simply some change of locality or environment, or in the course of life and habits.

F. TRUBY KING, Inspector-General.

MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENTS' REPORTS.

AUCKLAND MENTAL HOSPITAL.

DR. PRINS reports :—

I have the honour to present my report for the year ending 31st December, 1925.

During the year we have had 1,325 patients under care, with an average of 1,068 resident. Our admissions totalled 236, of whom 203 entered the institution for the first time. We have discharged recovered 109 patients, or 47 per cent. calculated upon the number of admissions.

We had 71 deaths during the year, the principal cause being senile decay.

The general health of the patients has been good, and there has been little zymotic disease.

Very considerable structural alterations have been carried out during the year with the view of improving the amenities of the patients and effecting the desiderata outlined in your general report for last year.

The ventilation throughout the building has been greatly increased by means of ventilating-shafts, electric fans, &c., and the necessary alterations to windows originally constructed so as not to open.

The Wolfe Home has now reassumed the function designed for it by its donor—i.e., to be a reception home for suitable cases who would thereby be saved from entrance to the main building and association with the less amenable types of patients. Numerous repairs and alterations have been effected in the Home to render it more comfortable and less institution-like, such as the removal of barred windows, and the substitution of windows similar to those found in ordinary homes and capable of being thrown widely open.

A good admission dormitory has been instituted, so that those requiring night observation and attention could enjoy those benefits without the stringent precautions necessary when such cases are admitted to single rooms.