

## BURMAH.

The report is for the year 1926, and deals with the working of (1) the mental hospital of St. John's Road, Rangoon, (2) the new mental hospital at Tadagale, Rangoon, and (3) the temporary mental hospital at Minbu. These are the hospitals for mental disease that serve a country with an area roughly about four times the size of England and Wales, and a population, mainly agricultural, of approximately 13,000,000. The total accommodation at the three hospitals was 930—that for males being 658 and females 272. The average population during the year at Rangoon and Minbu was 846 males and 135 females.

During the year there were 234 admissions to the Rangoon Mental Hospital (to which most of the new cases go), and the largest number of these were of the coolie and cultivator class. The recovery-rate for the year was 12·4%, calculated on the admissions.

Of the etiological factors amongst the admissions, insane heredity was only established in a comparatively few cases; in a considerable proportion of cases toxic agents were considered to be either a predisposing or exciting cause, the chief being alcohol and *cannabis indica*, with opium and cocaine taking a secondary place. Syphilis and tuberculosis were considered ætiological factors of importance in many cases.

One case of cholera was correctly diagnosed on admission, and the infection did not spread, all the patients in the hospital having been inoculated with anti-cholera vaccine shortly before.

## FEDERATED MALAY STATES.

The Federated Malay States proper, namely, Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, occupy an area of about 27,000 square miles, or rather less than half the size of England and Wales, and have a mixed population of Eurasians, Europeans and Americans, Indians, Chinese and Malays (in the proportions respectively of 1, 2, 100, 150, 160). It is from this population that the Central Mental Hospital, Tanjong Rambutan, mainly receives its patients, though it also receives from the Crown Colony of Singapore and the Protected States of Kedah and Kelantan. The total number of patients remaining in the hospital on December 31, 1926, was 2,021 (M., 1,550; F., 471); the percentage of recoveries for the year was 32·1 and that of deaths 6·6. The total number of States patients admitted during the year was 644 (M., 489; F., 155), the largest number ever admitted; Dr. Samuels attributes this partly to increase of the general population, and partly to the more enlightened knowledge of the people.

Primary dementia easily heads the list of forms of mental disease on admission, and this chiefly amongst the Chinese section of the population:

“ Seeing that the classification of mental disease is not yet all that one would like to see it, we cannot place too much reliance on the primary dementia figure, as the personal equation is, as things are at present, very prone to have an undue

effect, and what one man diagnoses as primary dementia might by another be classed as something else.

"Still, there is no doubt there is an alarming increase in primary dementia, which should be taken as a warning that education might with advantage be taken a little more slowly. I have too many of the derelicts left in the track of the storm of modern education."

General paralysis is responsible for a large number of cases, also mainly Chinese, and in this connection it is to be noted that very active propaganda work is being undertaken throughout the States to combat venereal disease, which it is hoped will eventually lead to a diminution of this figure.

"All nationalities, I think I might say, suffer equally from syphilis, and years ago I put up a possible suggestion that the fact that the Chinese participated so much more than the other nationalities in speculative business—making greater demands on their brains—might account for the susceptibility of the Chinese to G.P.I. Now we must find a cause for the remarkable increase in G.P.I. amongst the Chinese.

"What is the new factor ?

"I should say without hesitation alcohol. Syphilis has always been present, or rather, was present, long before the Central Mental Hospital was thought of. Yet, up to 1912, the existence of G.P.I. was denied. Its presence was proved in 1915 on cases collected in 1912, 1913, and 1914, though the cases were few, but they grew in numbers steadily, and, since the war, have gone up by leaps and bounds year after year.

"Sixteen years ago the Chinese had their opium and did not need alcohol. Since then opium has been, in many cases, put out of the reach of the Chinese, and discouraged in the case of those who could afford it. The result has been a steady increase in the consumption of alcohol amongst the Chinese. Along with this increase in the consumption of alcohol we had a steady increase in G.P.I. It is known that alcohol is, in the presence of syphilis, a contributory cause of G.P.I., and I am convinced that the cause of the increase of G.P.I. in the Federated Malay States is the increased consumption of alcohol by the Chinese."

And this in spite of the fact recorded in the report of the Principal Medical Officer of the Federated Malay States (Dr. Dowden) that the campaign against the use of opium, and the wards opened for the cure of the opium habit, have been a complete failure.

As regards the treatment of general paralysis, Dr. Samuels reports :

"Experiments were carried out with the treatment of general paralysis of the insane by malaria, but the results were anything but hopeful.

"Why the malaria treatment should be apparently useless in this country it is hard to say, unless it is that most of the inhabitants of the country having had a considerable amount of the malaria, an antibody has been formed, which interferes with the action on the spirochætes which takes place in a malaria-free individual."

#### UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

##### *Report of the Commissioner for Mental Hygiene 1924 to 1925-6.*

There were admitted during the year 1925 (first admissions) to the mental hospitals and institutions for the feeble-minded 1,663 persons (in the proportion of 804 Europeans to 859 natives, coloured and Asiatics) and this has been a steadily increasing figure from 1918, partly owing to increase of population, and partly owing to the opening of institutions for the feeble-minded.