

Hospitals for the Insane in British North America. By JAMES R. DE WOLF, M.D., Edin., Medical Superintendent of the Nova Scotia Hospital for the Insane, Halifax.

IN the dominion of Canada and the adjacent provinces, embracing a population of three and a half millions, there are eleven asylums and hospitals for the insane. The smallest of these accommodates forty patients—the largest, six hundred. Their character, as curative institutions, varies equally with their capacity. The annual reports of the greater number present very satisfactory returns as to the proportion of recoveries, the rate of mortality, and their economical administration. No one institution will be found to excel on all these points, but the statistics of those best managed will compare favourably with those of the leading asylums of Britain or America.

1. The oldest institution for the insane in British America, and one of the best on this continent, is that at Toronto, Ontario. It dates back to A.D., 1843, and has recently been enlarged. When completed it will accommodate upwards of six hundred patients. It is built with a view to proper classification, and furnished with all needful appliances. The heating is by circulation of hot water, which even in this northern latitude is found to afford an equable and comfortable temperature. This asylum, with its university branch, and those at Amherstburg and Orillia, are under the control of the government of the province of Ontario.

2. Next to the Toronto asylum, in point of seniority, is that at Beauport, near Quebec, a private institution, in which there are six hundred patients. A large majority of these are supported by the province of Quebec, the proprietors receiving a liberal allowance for their maintenance. Although the present buildings are comparatively new, and by no means unimposing in outward appearance, the inmates are crowded, while the ventilation is greatly defective. Many of the single dormitories are prison-like in the extreme, having no windows, but opening into a corridor by a door with an open space above. This most objectionable arrangement is all the less excusable, since the proprietors are themselves medical men. The statistical returns are by no means full or satisfactory.

3. The hospital for the insane, Saint John's, Newfoundland, was opened in 1847, and is under the control of the

government of that colony. It accommodates one hundred and twenty patients, and bears an excellent reputation. So far as the reports have been published, they afford very satisfactory returns as to its operations.

4. The provincial asylum, St. John's, New Brunswick, has been established for twenty years. Its annual reports show a large proportion of recoveries, while the administration is in every way economical. A well tilled farm of forty acres yields abundantly, and the site of the institution is one of the very best. The number of patients is two hundred and twelve. The single dormitories are large and airy, the corridors spacious, and the whole well ventilated. Steam heating has been introduced, and other improvements are in progress.

5. Of the asylum at Charlotte Town, Prince Edward's Island, nothing praiseworthy can well be said. It is an alms house with lunatic wards (so called), and averages about forty patients. The cells, for they deserve no better name, are in part underground, with the smallest windows, no ventilation, barely heated with stove pipes; and altogether so repulsive in their appearance as to impress the visitor most unfavourably. This institution has no resident physician, nor are any reports published otherwise than in the newspapers. The insane of the better class are, as a matter of course, sent abroad for treatment.

6. The University branch of the Toronto Asylum, with seventy-five patients, has been in operation since 1856. The assistant physician of the parent asylum attends daily, there being no resident medical officer. When the Toronto Asylum is completed probably this branch will no longer be required.

7. The Nova Scotia Hospital, for the insane, was opened in 1859. The present capacity is for two hundred and thirty patients; when completed it will accommodate three hundred. It stands on a commanding site, overlooking the harbour and city of Halifax. In its construction all the modern appliances have been introduced. The heating, cooking, and washing are by steam, as also the mechanical ventilation. The gas for lighting the building is made on the premises. The water supply is perhaps unequalled, the drainage excellent. The tables of the Medico Psychological Association of England (of which the superintendent was the first colonial member) are introduced in the annual reports, and exhibit satisfactory returns. The admission of patients and their discharge (often on probation) is more assimilated to British practice than in other North American Asylums. A propor-

tion of the inmates are private patients, but the majority are maintained by the respective counties to which they belong. The religious services are held by Episcopalian, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, and Baptist clergymen in weekly rotation, the Roman Catholic patients having a short service of their own. The institution is highly eulogised by official visitors.

8. The Maldon Lunatic Asylum, at Amherstburg, Ontario, was originally a branch of the Toronto Asylum. It has now an independent existence. At date of last report the number of patients was two hundred and thirty-five. The building is defective, not having been designed for its present use. In provisioning the asylum an economical plan is adopted. Cattle are fattened and slaughtered on the premises, reducing materially the cost of their beef. The statistical returns are very satisfactory, especially considering the class of patients admitted. This institution has been nine years in operation.

9. Rockwood Lunatic Asylum, Kingston, Ontario, was originally an asylum for insane criminals, and connected with the Provincial Penitentiary. Since the confederation of the colonies it is the only institution for the insane remaining under the control of the Dominion Government, and is the only one free from crowding. The hospital is a handsome and substantial structure, well planned, and adapted for patients of a higher order. In his last report the superintendent suggests that the accommodation at his disposal be made available for private patients, and for country patients of the adjoining districts. Among the so-called criminals in this asylum are two of the Aborigines, perhaps the only recognised instances of insanity occurring in the North American Indian. The degraded habits of these sons of the forest, when brought into association with the pale-faces, carries them off prematurely. The entire race appears free from hereditary taint.

10. The Provincial Lunatic Asylum at Orillia, Ontario, hitherto a branch of the Toronto Asylum, has been occupied since 1861. Five-sixths of the inmates admitted were transferred from the parent institution. It accommodates one hundred and twenty patients. The building was originally designed for an hotel, and is surrounded by eight and a half acres of land only. The management is favourably commented upon by the late Board of Inspectors.

11. The Provincial Asylum, Saint John's, Quebec, scarcely deserves the name of an asylum. It is designated by the Inspectors "a miserable temporary make-shift, to be abandoned at the earliest possible moment." Every credit is given to the

medical superintendent for his zeal and good management under pressing difficulties; but the use of what was once a court-house—a wooden structure, to which only two acres of land are attached, as a residence for eighty-two insane patients—proves how difficult the task has been. With apparently nothing to recommend it, this institution appears to be the most expensively managed of any within the dominion. Situated not many miles from Montreal—the chief city of Canada—it is a matter of great surprise that long ere this steps have not been taken to supply in its stead an hospital for the insane worthy of the colony, and creditable to the country.

In each of the provinces additional asylum accommodation is required, and must of necessity soon be provided. To ensure their being built and sustained, it is merely requisite that the people should be convinced that more asylums are needed. The legislature of each province has heretofore granted the means required, and will, doubtless, continue to provide whatever funds are wanting for the erection of hospital buildings, while the respective counties may well be called upon to defray the cost of maintenance, as is already done in Nova Scotia.

One only of the present number is a private institution, and as its engagement with the Government for the support of the inmates will shortly terminate, probably this large asylum will revert to the Province of Quebec by purchase, or an institution will be built under the authority and control of the local government.

It is questionable whether under the recent confederation of the colonies, this class of hospitals should not have been transferred to the general government of the dominion. A board of competent inspectors could have had the supervision of the whole, as was recently the case in Canada, and a degree of uniformity might have been secured in their management, tending to elevate to a proper standard of excellence those hitherto allowed to retrograde.

With the two or three exceptions already noted, the Hospitals for the Insane in British North America, in their construction, management, and efficiency, are not far, if at all, behind those of any other country. *

* In the foregoing sketch, the terms "Hospital" and "Asylum" are used synonymously, and the insane are all designated "Patients." To the British reader it may be necessary to explain that within the past two years (July 1st, 1867), the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have been incorporated with Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Quebec) into a confederation styled the Dominion of Canada. Newfoundland and Prince Edward's Island remain isolated colonies.

**NOMINAL LIST OF HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE IN BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.
1868.**

DATE OF OPENING.	TITLE.	LOCATION.	PROVINCE.	NO. OF PATIENTS.	MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT.	REMARKS.
1840	Provincial Lunatic Asylum	Toronto	Ontario	400	Dr. Jos. Workman	Recently enlarged
1846	Quebec Lunatic Asylum	Beauport	Quebec	603	Dr. Jno. W. Pickup	Proprietary
1847	Hospital for Insane	Saint John's	Newfoundland	120	Dr. Hy. H. Stabb	
1848	Provincial Lunatic Asylum	Saint John	New Brunswick	212	Dr. Jno. Waddell	
...	Lunatic Asylum	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island	40	Dr. Mackeson	Poor's House and Asylum
1856	University Branch of Provincial Lunatic Asylum	Toronto	Ontario	75	Dr. B. Workman	Soon to be relinquished
1859	Nova Scotia Hospital for Insane	Halifax	Nova Scotia	210	Dr. Jas. E. De Wolf	Recently enlarged
1859	Malden Lunatic Asylum	Amherstburg	Ontario	235	Dr. Andrew Fisher	
...	Rockwood Lunatic Asylum	Kingston	Ontario	139	Dr. J. P. Lithfield	Criminal Asylum
1861	Provincial Lunatic Asylum	Orillia	Ontario	120	Dr. J. Ardash	
1861	Provincial Lunatic Asylum	Saint John's	Quebec	82	Dr. Hy. Howard	