

and for general maintenance, painting and cleaning and for improved amenities such as gardens and grassy lawns with gardeners to take care of them.

Now, Mr. Minister, what about being a really brave man and issuing a few Statutory directions to our Hospital Management Committees?

## Poliomyelitis in Denmark.

### PART III—PHYSIOTHERAPY

By Gladys M. Hardy.

IN COPENHAGEN, PHYSIOTHERAPY is commenced almost as soon as the patients are admitted with poliomyelitis. Kenny Packs are applied to painful limbs and as soon as the doctors give instructions gentle passive movements are commenced. Later in the chronic stage, and whilst patients are still receiving artificial ventilation of lungs, they are assisted to the standing position two or three times daily. The standing position in addition to being a tonic to some muscles, is also psychologically uplifting to the patient. We saw this treatment being carried out, and I personally received a slight shock on seeing how eagerly the patients co-operated. Three physiotherapists assisted in the operation and there was no doubt about the pleasure it gave to the patient. Gentle stretching of paralysed muscles was carried out daily. *Very little splinting of muscles is done at Blegdam, and NO MASSAGE AT ALL is given to polio patients.*

On Friday and Saturday, June 26th and 27th, we visited the special physiotherapy departments. At Blegdam we observed a continuation of the work carried out in the wards, e.g., the application of Kenny Packs with gentle muscle stretching. Others were having passive movements and manual stimulation of muscles. It was explained to us that this assisted nerve fibres which had become alienated from their muscles to get back again along their old forgotten tracks.

We also saw the American "Hubbard" Tank in use. It is a deep stainless-steel tank—shaped like a cottage loaf cut horizontally—with a waist-line, for giving helpless spinal patients hydro-therapy. Water is prepared at body temperature for the immersion of the patient on a stretcher, the stretcher being lowered in and out of the tank by pulleys and ropes suspended from the roof. Physiotherapists can get quite close in to the patient at the waist of the tank and give passive movements, etc., to the patient. The water is made hotter after the immersion of the patient.

Other patients were having wax treatment. This assisted in the breakdown of hard contractions which were resistant to Kenny Packs. The wax is applied in layers. As one layer commences to melt, another layer is applied until eight successive layers have been added.

One very useful gadget to which our attention was attracted was an exact reproduction of the entrance to a Copenhagen tram, with exact measurements and height of steps, etc. Patients with crutches and other walking aids practise getting in and out of the tram with agility, and it was remarkable to note the ingenuity and speed with which the patients mastered this exercise.

During a chat with the chief physiotherapist we questioned her about the efficacy of Kenny Packs. She felt strongly that they were of infinite value to the patients, and should be more widely used in the early stages of the disease, as well as in the chronic stages. She said they relieve pain, and cause a definite hyperaemia which is soothing and comfortable, and which brings much relief, psychological and physical, to restless patients.

At a Special Institute in another part of Copenhagen we saw a wonderful new deep swimming pool, which cost £30,000, in use. There were also two more Hubbard tanks for treatment for spinal patients. We saw patients being walked about, cycling and undergoing various other exercises

and having the different muscles stretched. All the patients appeared to be full of hope and optimism, and felt that their complete cure was only a matter of time.

On Monday, June 29th, we set off on a pleasant journey to Hornbaek, in North Zealand, in order to visit the Hydro which has been converted into a rehabilitation centre for the treatment and education of the Copenhagen polio cripples. We left Copenhagen by express and travelled along the glorious coast to Helsingor, and then caught the famous "Lady Bird" to Hornbaek, arriving there about 12 noon. The Hydro occupies a commanding position on the water's edge, and is simply ideal for the purpose for which it has been acquired.

Internally it has been adapted as a school for crippled children and also contains a large occupational-therapy centre for adults. A lovely and very large central hall has been adapted, with every conceivable useful device for physiotherapy and the re-education of crippled limbs and backs.

We saw adults of both sexes—more males—with crippled lower limbs making baskets and leather bags, etc. All materials were supplied by the municipality of Copenhagen and were freely circulated. From their workrooms, the patients had a beautiful view across the narrow sea to Sweden and on lovely sunny days the waters were sparkling and most inviting. Most of the children were out in swimsuits, sea and sun bathing on the beach, and their little bodies glowed with sun tan.

We next visited the children in their classrooms. Apart from their poor little crippled limbs, they looked beautiful, and quite normally happy. They were dressed in gay-coloured rompers, or blouses and trousers, yellow, pink and blue predominating, which contrasted beautifully with their fair hair and skins and blue eyes. Those with paralysed spines and legs did their lessons sprawled out on the clean floors, whilst the severely paralysed spinal children wore additional bright yellow braces, by which they were picked up and moved about the room as necessary. The bright yellow braces were in use in all departments so that teachers and physiotherapists—as well as doctors—were constantly reminded of the extra care and attention their little wearers required. We saw them being automatically picked up and placed in another spot for a change, or to be near another child, etc.

Next we visited the two new deep pools, almost nearing completion. The Queen Ingrid of Denmark and Queen Juliana of Holland had recently inspected the Hydro and gave their Royal approval particularly to the pools. Upstairs again we saw the Hubbard Tanks in daily use. Downstairs we watched the tiny tots having their walking lessons. The bigger ones were using the new hand crutches, which looked extremely comfortable. The smaller ones were crawling in the prone position over wheeled stools with canvas tops. They got about quite quickly too! We were told that weak spines made wonderful progress with such treatment. In odd corners we saw large Dunlopillo-type mattresses spread around and we noticed some gaily clad toddlers in utter oblivion on them. Specially constructed hand-rails were built-in to assist those who were re-learning to walk. The Danish children are really quite beautiful, blue-eyed, fair haired and sun-tanned fair-skinned cherubs.

After visiting other adults undergoing passive treatments, we sauntered down to the beach—one minute's walk only from the Hydro. It was a white-hot, dazzling sunny day. The waters were warm and still, very shallow and very clean. More children were bathing and splashing about, blissfully happy and totally unaware of their physical limitations. How kind and sympathetic must the Copenhagen City Fathers be, to provide so generously for their young and crippled citizens!

A crimson, flamboyant sun was slowly sinking to the west when we reluctantly returned by the coast road, back to

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