

OPENING OF NEW BUILDINGS AT BARNET ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

The Committee of the Barnet Isolation Hospital were fortunate in beautiful weather for the opening of its new extension by Sir Joseph Priestley, K.C., Chairman of the Hertfordshire County Council, and its subsequent dedication by the Rev. P. C. Dean, M.A., the Rector of Chipping Barnet.

Sir Joseph, in the course of his remarks, referred to the undignified methods of collecting funds for the general hospitals in the streets, to which the rate-aided method was preferable.

The new buildings are one-storied and consist of new wards, laundry, administration accommodation and an addition to the nurses' home. The visitors divided into four parties, each with a guide and going in opposite directions.

We were fortunate in being allotted to Sister O'Byrne, who made us conversant with all the new and very complete gadgets.

The outstanding feature, to our mind, was the efficient, tasteful and very simple equipment of the wards and hospital, and one was impressed that here had been demonstrated in a very practical manner that it was possible to have tasteful and comfortable arrangements without extravagance.

The nurses' bedrooms were an example with their wash-basins with hot and cold water, electric lighting over the bed with convenient switch, and the little safe where money and valuables could be securely left, by no means an unnecessary provision. The furniture—good, plain and pretty—was enhanced with pretty chintz and bedspreads. The prevailing note throughout the building was a soft green.

The wards, owing to the nature of the hospital, were designed for isolation.

One consisted of cubicles, with glass panneling, so that the whole 10 beds could be kept under observation at the same time from the service room at the end. This arrangement thus provides for scarlet fever, diphtheria, etc., to be nursed at a minimum of outlay without fear of contact. The general wards were of a different character where patients suffering from the same infection will be nursed on the ordinary lines. A small ward at the end of each is provided for discharged patients, who, after bathing and disinfection, spend 24 hours there before returning home.

We saw the new laundry, a very important place with up-to-date equipment.

We were much interested in the Aga cooking-stove, which was demonstrated by the "lady chef" in her business-like white overall and chef's cap. She told us that, though the initial cost of the stove was heavy, "it paid for itself," as she assured us that the fuel cost only 3d. a day.

The mortuary, or, as it was called, a "viewing room," contained a bed, screened off by glass, a necessary precaution in this type of hospital.

Tea was served in a large marquee, at which the Matron (Miss B. M. West), Sisters and Nurses acted as hostesses.

We understand that the Matron has had a very strenuous time during the past weeks in order to complete the arrangements in time for the opening day, and we heartily congratulate her on the result, but it goes without saying that Miss West, with her first-class organising ability, would have everything in order not only for the opening ceremony, but for the future welfare and comfort of the patients.

H. H.

HOLIDAY HOMES FOR MENTAL PATIENTS.

The Central Association for Mental Welfare has since 1932 had seaside homes for patients from mental hospitals and from institutions for defectives.

They are admitted in small parties generally with their own staff and spend a fortnight by the sea in a small house so arranged as to have the atmosphere of a private home, with small bedrooms instead of large dormitories, and separate tables in the dining room, with bright china and linen. No ordinary holiday or convalescent home will receive these patients, because, although they can enjoy simple pleasures just as much as can other visitors, they are often not able to mix happily with them.

Some of these patients have lived for years in an institution with no holiday and no friends to whom they could go even for a few days' change. These seaside homes offer a chance of a break in this terrible monotony.

Once a home is opened, visitors' payments meet the running expenses, but each home costs about £500 to equip and furnish. A new home is badly needed to replace one that has now to be closed as the building has been sold. The small capital fund given for the purpose is exhausted.

It is hoped to open another holiday home in the South-West of England at Easter, 1939,

but other areas have to be served also. Last year over 3,000 patients enjoyed a holiday in the then existing homes at Bognor, Redcar, Rhyl, and Seaford, but this year many applications have had to be refused.

Further information on this good work can be obtained from the Secretary of the Holiday Homes Committee at the offices of the Central Association for Mental Welfare, 24, Buckingham Palace Road.

The Mental After Care Association, Grand Buildings, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2, founded in 1879, cares for mental patients after they have left hospitals, and find holidays of great benefit in improving the health of the patients.



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