

# HOSPITAL PLAN GIVEN ONTARIO

Building Program, Increase in  
Staffs Advised as Re-  
sult of Survey

## COMPREHENSIVE POLICY

A program to put the hospitals system of Ontario in the forefront of North American institutions is contained in a series of recommendations made to the Hepburn Government by the Mental Hospital Survey Committee of New York, recently appointed to probe Provincial mental hospitals.

The report was tabled in the Legislature last night by Hon. Harry C. Nixon, Provincial Secretary.

Chief among the recommendations are a comprehensive building program to relieve overcrowding; an increase in the medical staffs; amalgamation of all nursing activities; demolition of outworn structures; and the initiation within five years of an institution for mental defectives.

### Situation "Intolerable."

A feature of the report is the blunt statement that lack of foresight or indifference to the needs of the sick, or the devastating financial disintegration of the depression period, have brought the institutions of "this generous Province to a lamentable plane of incapacity. Everywhere one finds overcrowding. Beds have been put into all sorts of unsuitable places. It is superfluous to say that the state of affairs is intolerable and should be quickly remedied. This means that a building program is urgently demanded—not so much for the further increase in patients, as for those who at present are not decently accommodated."

The report in dealing with the overcrowding of hospitals, declares that accommodation for 3,000 more should be early provided, on the basis of present overcrowding.

"Let it be repeated," declares the report, "that all construction undertaken for some time to come will merely relieve the deficit caused by the presence of these hundreds of patients crowded unsuitably into a hospital."

Special attention is called in the report to the recommended increase in the medical staff, the construction of a hospital within a few miles of Toronto to accommodate 500 tuberculosis patients and 1,000 infirm patients, erection of a hospital to contain 1,200 beds at Fort William, a new unit at Woodstock to contain 400 beds; and, as an emergency measure, the arrangement of provisional quarters for 1,000 patients in some fireproof factory or similar structure.

Advocacy of the use of an existing building, such as a factory, is regarded as proof of the serious situation that exists in regard to overcrowding in mental institutions.

In a section devoted to major policies, which the Survey Committee believes should be adopted, are included a program of repairs, reconstruction and expansion to cover the next seven years. It is recommended that closer relations be developed between the institution for mental defectives and the school system; that more responsibility be bestowed upon each Superintendent for building up his organization; and that the local Health Officer be made responsible for the care of the mentally sick pending their removal to mental hospitals.

### Overcrowding Stressed.

The report has the following to say regarding overcrowding: "In the mental hospitals (including Cobourg) there are nearly one and one-third times as many patients as there are accommodations. The most overcrowded hospital is Hamil-

ton with about one and one-half times as many patients as accommodations. The hospital with the least overcrowding is Whitby, with an excess of only 8.2 per cent. over its capacity."

Orillia has an excess of 23 per cent., and Woodstock 13 per cent. The overcrowding for all the hospitals (mental, feeble-minded and epileptic) is about one-third greater than their capacity. A comparison with the States of Massachusetts and New York shows Ontario institutions overcrowded by 32.6 per cent. Massachusetts 13.4 per cent., and New York 13.3 per cent.

"It is apparent that the mental hospitals of Ontario are understaffed," the report reads in part. "The hospital with the most adequate staff is New Toronto, with a ratio of 181 patients to each physician. The hospital with the least adequate staff is Penetang, with a ratio of 296 patients to each physician."

### Overloading Compared.

"Comparing this data with the standard set up by the American Psychiatric Association of one physician to each 150 patients, the overloading of the physicians varies from 97 per cent. of the standard load in Penetang to 21 per cent. overloading at New Toronto."

In referring to the deficit of physicians in the Ontario mental hospitals, the report says about sixty-nine physicians are required to give adequate care with the present patient load. Since there are only forty-eight physicians now in service, there was a shortage of twenty-one, the report points out.

Turning to the nursing phase of institutional care, the report finds that the hospital with the least adequate nursing staff is Hamilton, with a ratio of 10.6 patients to each nurse in attendance. The hospitals with the most adequate nursing staff are Whitby and New Toronto, with a ratio of 7.4 patients to each nurse and attendant.

For all the hospitals the ratio is 8.2, which is just below the standard set by the American Psychiatric Association of 8 patients per nurse.

"In the schools for mental defectives, Ontario lags behind with 6.5 nurses and attendants per 100 patients, while New York has 10.5 and Massachusetts 13.1," says the report. "In the colonies for epileptics, Ontario has almost twice as good a ratio of nurses and attendants per patient as New York and is only a little below Massachusetts."

It is noted that Ontario has the lowest per capita costs in mental hospitals and shows the greatest divergence from the other States in the United States in the amount spent for salaries. In the schools for mental defectives, Ontario again shows the lowest per capita costs. The only institution in which Ontario excels the States in per capita maintenance is Woodstock.

The report estimates that the present population of the Province could be expected to fill 13,700 beds. The number of beds now available, even though patients have been crowded not only into bedrooms and dormitories, but also into halls, corridors and porches, is 1,200. Accordingly, 1,500 beds would soon be occupied if available and properly distributed, quite without regard to relieving the present overcrowding.

A stronger medical organization, with more individual attention to the problems of patients, is recommended. The number of medical positions should be increased by twelve a year until an adequate standard is reached, it is advised. While the report finds that neuropathological service is not yet satisfactory, the best arrangement of this service is in Toronto. It is felt that funds should be found for a pathologist to give all his time to the study of nerve tissue at the Ontario Hospital.

With regard to the nursing profession, the report points out that the tendency to shorter hours in the industrial world has spread to the field of nursing in many regions. Probably this question would sometime be raised in Ontario and the Government is advised to study the subject beforehand and prepare a policy and schedule of readjustments.

### Citizens Will Demand It.

Dealing with objectives, the report says that the citizens of Ontario will, in the long run, demand that its facilities for the treatment of the mentally ill, the treatment of epileptics, and the training of defectives, shall be as good as they can be made.

"It must be confessed that any Government might regret the necessity of facing present conditions. There is much indeed to do. Present organization and equipment are inadequate. The troubles of the division are very largely due to terrible overcrowding. When patients must spend their time in turmoil, so thrown together that peace is impossible, when an able-bodied patient must spend months in bed because of the danger of combat if he is up in narrow confines, when there is not enough space for eating together because beds have supplanted all other accommodations, then it must be time for radical action in the field of construction."

Dr. Samuel W. Hamilton and Grover A. Kempf, of the Medical Hospital Survey Committee of New York City, prepared the report.

## HOUSE UPHOLDS 50-MILE SPEED

Bill to Raise Limit Goes  
Through Committee of  
Legislature

### PREMIER IS SATISFIED

Motorists in the Province of Ontario will shortly be able to travel at fifty miles per hour on the open highways and at thirty miles per hour in cities, towns and villages.

The bill to increase the present speed limit passed quickly through Committee of the Whole House yesterday afternoon without any opposition and stands now for third reading. It will become law upon proclamation, probably soon after the House prorogues. The limit today is thirty-five miles per hour on the highways and twenty in populated areas.

Originally the bill called for complete abolishment of speed limitations. It was introduced by J. H. Clark (Lib., Windsor-Sandwich), but in the Municipal Law Committee the Liberal members agreed to a proposal from Hon. George S. Henry that a fifty-mile per hour limit be set.

### Premier Satisfied.

"I agree that this is a contentious question," Premier Hepburn told the House. "I know the member for Windsor-Sandwich was disappointed about the amendment, but the Leader of the Opposition made a very fine compromise. I do not believe fifty miles is an excessive speed. Buses have to travel that to keep on schedule. Personally, I'm satisfied to curb my driving to fifty miles and keep within the law."

Leopold Macaulay (Cons., York South), suggested a forty-five-mile limit.

"Make it forty, that's fast enough for me," offered Hon. Duncan Marshall.

The amendments were not put in motion form and a few minutes later the bill passed through committee stage.