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ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL OFFICERS OF AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS FOR IDIOTIC AND FEEBLE-MINDED PERSONS.

FIRST SESSION.

THURSDAY MORNING, MAY 16, 1901.

The twenty-fifth annual session of this Association was held in Baltimore, Md., May 16 and 17, 1901. The session was called to order at 9 A. M. in the Carrollton Hotel by the Vice-president, Dr. F. W. Keating'.

On motion of Mr. Alexander Johnson, Mr. A. R. T. Wylie was elected secretary, *pro tern*, in the absence of Dr. Rogers, Secretary.

In answer to the roll-call the following persons responded: —

Dr. Geo. H. and Mrs. Knight, Mr. and Mrs. Alex. Johnson, Mrs. Mary Harper, Mrs. Johnson, Dr. F. W. Keating; Mr. Stonaker, of Denver; Miss M. Gundry, Dr. J. M. Murdoch, Miss Jackson, of

Baltimore.

On motion it was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting.

Letters from Dr. Rogers and Dr. Carson regretting their inability to be present were read.

Dr. Keating invited the Association to hold one session at his Institution at Owings Mills.

On motion of Mr. Johnson the invitation was accepted.

An invitation to visit the penitentiary was read and accepted.

It was decided to postpone the appointment of the committees on resolutions, time, place and organization, till more members should be present. Dr. Murdoch was asked to report for the committee on the program.

DISCUSSION.

Dr. Murdoch: Early in the winter we solicited papers from various members of the Association but with the result that only a meagre program could be printed.

On motion it was voted that the program provided for the evening of the 16th should be made the order of the day for the 17th. Without any formal paper or address the remainder of the evening was devoted to an informal discussion of the advantages or disadvantages of caring for the feeble-minded and the epileptic in the same institution, of which the following is an abstract.

Mr. Johnson: What is the proportion of epileptics in the Maryland Institution for the feeble-minded?

Dr. Keating: Over twenty-five per cent of our applicants are epileptics.

Mr. Johnson: That is about the per cent of our institution.

Dr. Murdoch: We have twenty per cent. It is our opinion that it is better to have them scattered among a large number of feeble-minded rather than to have them in one department, for unless you have four or five hundred you cannot have proper classification without great expense. In a large institution you can separate the different grades among the epileptic.

Mr. Johnson: We have got ours pretty well separated. We have thirteen grades of girls and eleven of boys. Some of the lower grades are with the feeble-minded.

Dr. Murdoch: There is a certain grade on whom the association has no effect and then I see no objection to putting them together. There is a class of high grade children who are rather sensitive to their association and they should not be associated with low grades whether epileptic or not.

Dr. Knight: Where is the harm in putting a high grade epileptic with a feeble-minded child of the same mental ability?

Dr. Murdoch: We have found no harm in it.

Dr. Knight: I haven't either.

Mr. Johnson: Neither have I.

Mrs. Knight: Do you not think that by having the two together you can get better care-takers than through the low paid service that you would otherwise probably have?

Dr. Murdoch: Yes.

Dr. Mnight: Is it not true that an epileptic child placed with no epileptics has a less number of seizures than if in a group of epileptics?

Dr. Murdoch: I could not say.

Mr. Johnson: I do not think it makes much difference. We divided our brightest girls into two divisions, epileptic and non-epileptic, and there has been no difference in the spasms yet.

I shall know in a year whether it makes any difference.

Dr. Knight: Are they under any kind of treatment?

Mr. Johnson: They are under more or less treatment. I do not believe we have an epileptic that is not taking bromide.

Dr. Murdoch: Having them together might facilitate routine treatment, particularly if they were at separate tables.

Mr. Johnson: That is the point, the dietary.

Mrs. Johnson: For the highest grade we do not have to make any change in the dietary. They eat the same as the others except during the seizures.

Dr. Keating: I do not see how a state institution that receives feeble-minded children can exclude them if they are epileptic.

Dr. Knight: It can not, unless they are provided for in another institution.

Dr. Keating: If a child is imbecile and epileptic I see no objection to receiving it, but if it is normally intelligent and is an epileptic I think we should not receive it.

Mr. Johnson: The Indiana law reads that we shall receive all but paralytics.

Dr. Keating: Our law says that we shall have two departments: —

One is for feeble-minded, and when sufficient funds are obtained there will be a department for epileptics. We have a small cottage building, built by a former president of the board of trustees, which holds twenty boys.

Mr. Wylie was asked to speak on this point.

Mr. Wylie: I think the idea in Minnesota is to separate them. We have four cottages for epileptics now. I believe they are going to acquire more land and arrange the colony something after the Craig plan, putting the boys on one side of the river and the girls on the other.

Q. Is the idea to make that the germ of another institution?

Mr. Wylie: I think that may be the idea. The new law has made several changes. The Feeble-Minded will be under the Board of Control.

Dr. Murdoch: It seems to me there is no objection to separate institutions, provided the state has enough to establish thoroughly good ones with competent management and oversights Unless it can do

that, it would be better to have both classes under the same' management. I would not establish such an institution unless I expected it to contain five or six hundred inmates.

Mr. Johnson: There is not a state in the union where you would not soon get up to five or six hundred. If we could get thoroughly organized institutions for the feeble-minded and for epileptics in thirty or forty years it would not be necessary to increase them whatever the increase in population. In preparing for epileptics it is well to remember one thing in getting the dormitories ready, that hair pillows are the best. It would be almost impossible to smother in a hair pillow during a spasm and we know that it would be possible' with feathers.

Dr. Murdoch: A number of epileptics have been smothered in feather pillows. The mucous escaping from the mouth glues the lip's to the pillow.

Mr. Johnson: When we began using hair pillows for the epileptics, the girls would steal the pillows from the other beds, so we had to take away all the feather pillows. There was some grumbling at first, but I think a hair pillow is much more sanitary' than a feather one.

Dr. Murdoch: It is better also to have very low beds for epileptics.

Dr. Keating: I have had several badly hurt by falling from beds.

Mr. Johnson: We have a bed with a side rail. There are few accidents. We have had two cases that fell so often forward that they had to wear padded caps.

Dr. Murdoch: We have a good many who fall backwards and it is a pretty severe fall when they strike on tiled floors. We also use padded caps.

Q: Have they a prescribed diet at the Craig Colony?

Dr. Keating: Dr. Spratling thinks the diet should be regulated I carefully.

Dr. Murdoch: They have a great many attendants in the dining-room who give certain portions to each individual.

Mrs. Knight: It is said that at Gallipolis they serve dinner in courses of small portions, with attendants to see that they eat properly. I should think that would be rather difficult to carry out.

A: They have a great many attendants.

Mr. Johnson: We cut all the meat fine for our epileptic patients. We do not give as much meat to low grade epileptics as to the others, and the meat we do give is minced fine with sausage cutters, after being properly boiled. They get meat once a day, and we use a great deal of milk.

Dr. Murdoch: Giving too much cereal food is apt to lead to fermentation. In that case you get benefit by lessening the quantity and giving milk and egg diet. I do not think meat itself is harmful, to epileptics, except that when they have it they are more likely to overeat.

Mr. Johnson: The trouble is they do not masticate it. They swallow great big pieces. If the meat is well cooked and minced up.fine it does not produce the spasms that it otherwise does. <

Mrs. Knight: What will Maryland do "with her epileptics?"

Dr. Keating: The head of the Lunacy Commission thinks there should be a separate institution in a different place.

Mrs. Knight: He believes in small institutions then?

Dr. Keating: I do not know.

Mrs. Knight: Is there money enough to do that easily?

Dr. Keating: I suppose there is money enough if the legislature would give it. If it were given to state instead of to private institutions there would be abundance of money. It is a question which it would be most advisable to do. In the first place the charter did not provide for epileptics. It was amended to do so, but the state never made any special provision, except that it gave the board of directors power to receive them, but it did not give any appropriation for them. We have only taken a few that a private individual has provided for.

Miss M. Gundry: The state provides for but one institution. The insane asylums are only partly supported by state appropriations.

Mrs. Knight: Do you have more applications for epileptic than for feeble-minded children?

Dr. Keating: They are more persistent. We have a long waiting list of which twenty-five per cent are epileptics.

Mrs. Knight: I think there ought to be a committee to educate legislatures and boards of trustees! If any one is willing to take charge of feeble-minded children and epileptics and to properly care for them they ought to be helped to do it. Legislators seem to think that people are falling over each other in the effort to do this work. They ought to learn just how difficult it is.

Dr. Keating: We went so far as to take a lot of children down to the House of Delegates at Annapolis. We went further and invited the members of the legislature to the institution and forty of them came.

Mrs. Knight: But it is the pride of superintendents and their wives to put the best foot forward. If the legislators should see the very worst set, such as you talk about in conferences, the set that is under your eyes every minute from morning till night and again until morning, that would be the thing that would affect them. But you have a kind of a personal pride in keeping the worst cases out of sight and showing only the brightest, so that they do not appreciate the terrible need there is of such care.

Mr. Johnson: When we show the general public the institution we do that, but we tell them we have lower cases. We show the low grades to the legislators. We have found it a good plan to show the school children in school and then to bring in squads of the low grades, those who are only capable of the physical training. Then we show the work of those who are self-supporting. That leaves a good effect on the legislators.

Mrs. Knight: How would it do to begin with the highest and

leave off with the lowest? When I was sharing in the work in Minnesota I was just as eager to show off the best side as you are.

Dr. Murdoch: We made that mistake in our Institution at first.

Adjourned at 10:15 p. m.

SECOND SESSION.

FRIDAY MORNING, MAY 17, 1901.

The session was called to order by the President, Dr. Polglase, who appointed the following committee:—

Committee on time, place and organization: Dr. George H. Knight, Mr. Alex. Johnson and Mr. A. R. T. Wylie.

The treasurer's report was received and was referred to an auditing-committee consisting of Dr. Murdoch and Miss Gundry.

Mr. Johnson invited the Association in the name of the trustees of the School for Feeble-Minded at Fort Wayne, and in his own name to hold the next annual meeting in Ft. Wayne in 1902. The invitation was for any time during the summer, but preferably in the month of June.

Dr. Polglase said he thought the meetings held at Institutions had been the most successful. He then read the President's address after which the Association adjourned to Owings Mills.

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THIRD SESSION.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 17, 1901.

The Association was called to order after dinner, and a visit through the Institution at 5:30 o'clock. Dr. Murdoch reported for the auditing committee that the accounts had been examined and found correct. The report was accepted and adopted.

The committee on time, place and organization reported, and recommended that the invitation to Ft. Wayne should be accepted for June, 1902, and the following names were presented for officers for the ensuing year:

President, Dr. F. W. Keating; Vice-president, Dr. J. M. Murdoch; Secretary, Dr. A. C. Rogers; Committee on Program; E. R. Johnstone; Editorial Committee to hold over.

The report was accepted and adopted and the persons named were declared elected.

The following persons were elected to active membership, Mrs. Lucy Sickles, Michigan.

To adhering membership, Mrs. W. B. Williams, Lapeer, Mich.; Mr. A. W. Butler, Indiana.

An address on the "Causes of Idiocy" was given by Dr. Hurbert Richardson, of Mount Hope Retreat, Maryland.

*The "President's Address" Was published in the June, 1901, number.