

ASYLUM NEWS.

LONDON COUNTY ASYLUMS.

At the last meeting of the County Council a report was presented from the Asylums Committee at Banstead which stated that Dr. Clay Shaw had resigned his appointment after twenty-four years' service. The Committee bear testimony to his important and valuable services, and express regret at the loss of so able an officer. A full superannuation allowance was voted to him. The same report also contained the sad information that Miss Orange, M.D., one of the Assistant Medical Officers at Claybury, had been compelled through confirmed illness to vacate her appointment. It appears that Dr. Orange's health had been materially damaged by assaults perpetrated by patients on two occasions, resulting in severe head injuries. A liberal superannuation allowance was granted, the Chairman of the Committee expressing the hope that, despite the grave report, some useful work might yet be in store. Dr. Collins said that he thought this report should not be allowed to pass in silence. He had sat under Dr. Clay Shaw as a lecturer at St. Bartholomew's, and bore emphatic testimony to his eminence as an alienist, as well as to his administrative skill. He expressed the hope that the mature experience of Dr. Clay Shaw would be given to the profession in the shape of some addition to the literature on the pathology of insanity, and added that he felt sure that Dr. Shaw carried into his retirement the good wishes of the County Council. Dr. Collins also bore testimony to the work of Dr. Orange, who, he said, came of a well-known medical family, and he expressed the general regret at the sad illness which had interrupted so promising a career; he added that Londoners should remember the constant valuable services, often at the peril of their health and lives, that the staff of the asylums rendered so ungrudgingly to the community.

NEW ASYLUM FOR MIDDLESEX.

The foundation-stone of a new lunatic asylum for the county of Middlesex was laid on Tuesday by the chairman of the Asylum Committee. The site of the building is 440 acres in extent, and was purchased at a cost of £45,000. It is situated just outside St. Albans. The plans are by Mr. Rowland Plumbe, who has designed the buildings in the pavilion style to accommodate 1150 patients, 100 of whom will be in a separate building, which is to be used only by paying patients. A hospital to accommodate 234 persons is included. The estimated cost of the buildings alone is £358,100, or £311 per patient.

EDINBURGH DISTRICT ASYLUM.

A lively newspaper correspondence has been in progress regarding the new asylum proposed to be erected at Bangour. It would appear that the cost of construction upon the Alt-Scherbitz plan has laid hold of the imagination of certain of the ratepayers, and comparisons have been made with the expenditure per bed in other localities. We understand that the Bangour buildings, exclusive of the site, etc., are estimated by the architect's measurer to cost £400, compared with £431 at Gartloch.

The Chairman of the District Board has made a statement relative to the whole question, and we hope to have an opportunity of reproducing it in due course. It is of great importance that there should be a complete answer to criticism at such a crisis. In adopting the village type of asylum, it was expected that the ratepayers would benefit by the moderate cost of the buildings, and that the patients would benefit by an improved system of construction. It will be most unfortunate if the Parish Council are compelled to depart from their intention of leading the way in this matter, and of adapting the principles of Alt-Scherbitz to Scottish conditions.

PERTH DISTRICT ASYLUM.

The increase of the patients at Murthly has given rise to the usual dangers and discomforts. Dr. Bruce presented a report to the Committee, showing that the number of patients had increased by forty-seven during the previous year, and stating that it was impossible to explain the facts in face of a diminishing popula-

tion in the district. The Committee accepted Dr. Bruce's statement that the senile admissions and the accumulation of chronic cases are the two factors at work, and proceeded to apply a remedy by urging Parish Councils to relieve the asylum of the care of senile cases, and those who are not strictly "paupers." It does not appear probable that the asylums will be relieved as the Committee desire, for a great change has come over the country in the feeling towards these institutions, and the lower middle class will not, generally speaking, endure the miseries of the private care of aged, fatuous, and troublesome demented in their crowded homes. As for the exclusion of all who do not bear the "pauper" brand, it is late in the day to raise that question, seeing that it has been proved that four fifths of the State-supported insane are not of that class. Scotsmen have had a legitimate pride in the title "District Asylum," which is the term used in the Lunacy Acts; but, as reported by the 'Dundee Advertiser,' it has been the fate of Murthly to be doubly miscalled by its own Committee when they write it down the District Pauper Lunatic Asylum. They further fortify their position with the opinion of Dr. Forbes Winslow, who "censures the policy of extending the accommodation;" but, after all, they indicate that they might sanction the erection of an hospital, which would be useful for the treatment of infectious diseases and phthisis, which last Dr. Bruce has shown should be treated separately.

INSANITY IN FIFE.

The same cry for more accommodation comes from the Fife District Asylum, and the Dunfermline Parish Council, desirous of relieving the pressure, applied to the General Board of Lunacy for a licence enabling them to provide wards in their Poorhouse for the care of insane patients. The Secretary of the Board, however, informed them that he was directed to state that, while no general resolution on the subject of granting new licences to lunatic wards in poorhouses has been come to by the Board, their policy has for several years been against licensing such wards; and further, that there is no probability that they would license lunatic wards in connection with Dunfermline Poorhouse.

The Chairman of the Parish Council said he supposed it was useless in the meantime to take any further steps, because it was evident that the Lunacy Board intended to put their foot down upon the proposal. This was not an isolated case of the kind, and he would say this, that the powers granted by Act of Parliament to some of those bodies was in excess of the intelligence they possessed to administer them. These be brave words, yet hardly persuasive.

FIRE AT COLCHESTER ASYLUM.

An alarming fire occurred on the 27th December, but the flames were happily overcome without injury to the patients.

LANCASHIRE INEBRIATES' ACTS BOARD.

We learn from the *Manchester Guardian* that at a meeting of the Lancashire Inebriates' Acts Board, under the presidency of Sir J. T. Hibbert, the Sites Committee reported that their offer of £17,000 for the Brockhole Estate had been accepted. The Committee considered that every effort should be made by the Board to get their plan prepared, so that the buildings might be commenced as early as possible.

The report of the Sites Committee was unanimously adopted, and it was decided that, as the duties of this Committee had now been fulfilled, another committee, to be called the Works Committee, should be appointed, this latter to deal with the preparation of the necessary plans and estimates and the general direction and supervision of the works.

AN INEBRIATES' HOME FOR YORKSHIRE.

At the January meeting of the West Riding Council, at Wakefield, a resolution was adopted approving of a scheme for the establishment of a reformatory for inebriates by a joint committee representing the county councils and the county boroughs of Yorkshire. It is proposed that the reformatory shall provide at the outset for sixty males and forty females, and it is estimated that the cost will be £300 per bed, the proposed initial outlay thus being £30,000.