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A Valuable New Institution Opened Near Limerick

"THERE is a pressing need in this part of the country for this institution," said Dr. Ryan, Minister for Health, when this afternoon he opened a home for mentally defective children in Woodsdown House, Lisnagry.

The Institution is being run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, who run a similar home at Cabra, Dublin.

The new home was blessed officially by Most Rev. Dr. Rodgers, Coadjutor Bishop of Killaloe, assisted by Most Rev. Dr. O'Neill, Bishop of Limerick. The following clergy were in attendance: Very Rev. Dr. Cowper, P.P.; Rev. W. O'Grady, Adm.; Very Rev. Canon O'Kennedy, Monsignor Quinn, V.G.; Canon O'Malley, P.P.; Rev. Father O'Leary, C.M.; Rev. J. White, C.C.; Very Rev. Father Vaughan, P.P.; Rev. Father Purcell, C.M.; Rev. Dom Athanasius, O.S.B.; Very Rev. P. J. Canon Lee, P.P.

At the official opening, Dr. Ryan was assisted by Very Rev. Father Sheedy, C.M., Director-General of the Sisters of Charity Order.

Among the lay attendance were: The Mayor of Limerick (Mr. Stephen Coughlan), the City Manager (Mr. M. Macken), The County Manager (Mr. P. J. Meghen), Chief Supt. Dirreen, Messrs. T. Crowley, T.D.; J. J. Collins, T.D.; M. J. Keyes, T.D.; Senator W. Quirke, Ald. G. E. Russell, Mr. A. J. Sexton, Mr. Roger O'Sullivan, solr.; Dr. J. McPolin, Co. Medical Officer of Health, and Dr. N. B. O'Higgins, R.M.S. of the Limerick Mental Hospital.

MINISTER'S ADDRESS

Dr. Ryan said he was tremendously impressed with the work of the Sisters of Charity and with the results they had achieved at Cabra. He was, therefore, especially pleased that they were extending their activities by acquiring Woodsdown House.

"We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the Sisters, and, indeed, to all the Orders who devote themselves in this country to the care of mental defectives," the Minister said. "Their work demands, and never fails to bring forth, the virtues which were so well possessed by their Foundress, St. Louise de Marillas—faith, humility, courage, affection, tact and imagination. In every one of their institutions they have created an atmosphere of sympathy and understanding. It is refreshing also to see the enthusiasm with which they seek fresh fields for their endeavours. No obstacle is too great, no self-sacrifice is denied when an opportunity presents itself of taking under their care those afflicted persons who need their help so badly. I will not, I think, be the first to run short of adjectives in paying tribute to their work."

PRESSING NEED

Dr. Ryan added: "There is a pressing need for this Institution in this part of the country. The Sisters are carrying out considerable extensions to their Dublin houses, but in the Munster region we have no institution for female mental defectives and it is good to see that a start is now being made. The Sisters propose to adapt the existing dwellinghouse for the accommodation of 30 young children and junior low-grade girls in the first instance, and then, later on, I understand they intend to expand to provide for higher-grade children of school age and for female adults incapable of being rehabilitated, so as to cater eventually for 300 to 400 mental defectives. I am happy to be able to be in a position that I have just sanctioned a grant of £5,000 from the Hospitals' Trust Fund to meet the immediate needs of the Institution in the way of equipment and furniture. This is not all I will give them; I will be only too happy to see the Sisters coming to me for more and more as they find it necessary. I, or any other Minister for Health, couldn't but be sympathetic with such an object as the Sisters have before them here."

The Minister said that although the accommodation they had in this country for mental defectives generally was still far short of what they required he was happy to say that the projects included the Short-Term Hospital Building Programme most of which were well under way. This would make a considerable improvement in the position.

MORE THAN TWICE AS MANY BEDS AS AT PRESENT

"When these are completed," he said, "we will have about 1,400 additional beds, or approximately 2,600 beds altogether, more than twice as many as we have at present. That, of course, will still not be enough, but unfortunately, owing to the present commitments on the Hospitals' Trust Fund, there is some difficulty in making a spectacular contribution to that shortage."

The Minister ended by thanking the City Manager, through whose good offices the house has been purchased. "On behalf of the Sisters," he said, "I would like to acknowledge their indebtedness to him."

After the ceremony, Sister Columba, the Superioress, and her Community entertained the guests to luncheon.

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WILL YIELD RICH DIVIDENDS OF HAPPINESS.

Of course, the cultivation of such a home life will necessarily impose many sacrifices on the parents. Yet, be assured, if undertaken for love of God, it will yield rich dividends of deepest happiness. Then the parents will realise that they are fulfilling their vocation—that they are leading the full life that God has planned for them. They are doing His Will; they are advancing in grace and wisdom in the midst of another holy family. Just one word more: If parents are to make their home another Nazareth, then Mary must resign as queen there, too. And as each day draws to its close, the family will gather together to honour her. The Rosary recited in common will assemble both parents and children before the image of Mary in a wondrous union of hearts. Then, in the words of Our Holy Father: "It will unite them all more firmly in a sweet bond of love with the most Holy Virgin, who, like a loving mother, will come among her children, bestowing on them an abundance of family peace. Then the home of the Christian family—like the home of Nazareth—will become an earthly abode of holiness." ("Ingruentium Malorum").

"BEST ORGANISED PILGRIMAGE EVER."

It was a great compliment to those in charge of the pilgrimage to hear the parish priest of Knock, Very Rev. Father Malone, say in public that it was the best organised pilgrimage ever to come there to Knock. Father Malone told our reporter later that he was very much impressed by the orderly way in which the pilgrims behaved. "It was really magnificent," he said.

It was interesting to hear the opinions afterwards of the stretcher pilgrims. One man who was crippled with arthritis, said to our reporter: "I will never forget it. It is a sight never to be forgotten." That expression was shared by all the others.

In all there were twenty-two stretcher invalids. Five of them, as well as two semi-invalids, came from the County Hospital, Croom; there were seventeen, including two non-stretcher invalids, from the City Hospital; one stretcher case from Rathkeale, and a big number of other invalids came from Limerick, Kilfinane, Castleconnell, Clarina, etc. They were under the care of Doctors R. O'Donnell, Sheila Moriarty and Margaret Kelly, with four nursing sisters of the Little Company of Mary, as well as nurses from the City Hospital and the County Hospital, Croom.

In the pilgrimage was Mr. Tom Duggan, General Secretary of the Arch-Confraternity of the Holy Family, who wore the Papal decorative honour recently conferred on him.

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