The Dominica Chronicle

A SEMI-WEEKLY PAPER
Published every Wednesday and Saturday
AT THE BULLETIN OFFICE ROSEAU, DOMINICA

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Terms of Subscription in the Colony
One Year 12/6 Half-Year 6/6
Inland $3.50 & $1.80
Abroad $4.50 & $2.40
Single Copies 3d

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ROSEAU, WEDNEDAY, MARCH 11, 1953.

Future of Roseau Hospital Building.

IF the Goodwill "new Hospital" scheme proceeds according to official blue-print, in writing and on the draft board, the Roseau Hospital building will become vacant in 1955.

The plan, I understand, is to build bungalow hospitals with an average capacity of 24 beds to each building. It is expected to complete, at least, two such buildings (or wards) this year to which patients will be transferred from the Roseau Hospital whilst construction of other wards continues —the process to continue as each ward is completed until the hospital is evacuated.

A recent article in the CHRONICLE invited suggestions on the use to which the Hospital building ought to be put after it has been vacated. The writer gave a lead by suggesting its use for the proposed Handcrafts Centre and House for the establishment of which the Legislature has voted $7,200.

A thousand and one uses to which the hospital buildings (main and adjuncts) could be put can immediately spring to the mind—not least of which is a Handcraft Centre. But what is desired is the best, the most useful purpose it can be made to serve when it is no longer occupied by the sick.

A "Handcrafts Centre"! What is a "Handcrafts Centre" anyway? I fancy I see visions of young girls (and, maybe, boys as well) learning the art of fibre plaiting, hat and mat making, embroidering, picture framing, bookbinding etc., etc., and turning their products to the market.

But why not an Industrial School, since quite obviously the products of a Handcrafts Centre, maintained by the taxpayers, cannot be expected to be thrown into competition with the similar wares produced by the same taxpayers? But again, the place for an Industrial School is at Goodwill where our chief industry (Agriculture) can be taught in addition to trades and crafts.

My ideal conversion use of the hospital premises would be, firstly, to educational purposes, or secondly, to health purposes—to house the Grammar School or a huge Mixed School, or establish a Health Centre.

Educational

I'm afraid I cannot plead too strongly on the Grammar School proposal without running amuck the plans already approved for the extension of that school and, perhaps, causing the delay of this greatly needed work. But the use of these ideal premises for the chief Secondary School of the Colony from where we expect to get our future professional men, Civil Servants and leaders in public and private life presents an "irresistible" temptation to alter what may be an "immovable" policy or plan.

The existing Grammar School building could then be partitioned into offices for Education, Labour, Social Welfare, Income Tax at a saving of over $1,200 in rents to the Government per year. The savings thus effected could be added to Outdoor Paupers' Relief whose present extent can hardly reach 500 persons with a ridiculously small dole per week.

$4,000 of the $24,000 for Grammar School Extension could be used for structural improvements renovations, etc. The balance ($20,000) to which could be added over $5,000 saved on Supply Control which should be abolished before 1955 (except World War III springs into real action by that time) could be utilised on the establishment of an Industrial School at Goodwill for delinquent boys and girls.

Alternative Proposal.

The alternative suggestion to the above is the utilisation of the entire hospital compound premises, plus the Maternity Ward, into a huge Elementary School nest, with separate wings and outbuildings for boys' and for girls' classes, trades' and crafts' rooms, etc.—the spacious yard and proximity of Windsor Park adding to correct the glaring deficiencies of playground that affect the suitability of the Roseau Mixed and Roseau Girls' Schools for elementary school purposes

Health Centre

The third (or second alternative) best use to which I should like to see the Roseau Hospital and premises devoted, when they become vacant, is to a veritable Health Centre which would form a busy hub in the pursuit of Disease Prevention and Health Preservation and the dissemination of knowledge in Hygiene, Sanitation and so on, gained through experience and experiment. A Centre of this kind could very well form a "first school" for the training of Sanitary Inspectors who, afterwards with Elementary School Head and other Teachers, could take "refresher courses."

A lecture hall could be reserved in the building at which members of the Medical profession, professional Nurses, Sanitary Officers, Nutrition experts, etc. could give lectures to the pupils of our Secondary Schools and gathering of adult citizens.

The services given by the Children's Clinics, the Government Dental Surgeon, the Government Laboratory, and others, such as milk and food analysis etc., would be carried at the Centre which also would undertake Expectant Mothers' clinical work.

Money spent on Health Preservation (which strictly is preventing disease) is a national "gild edge" investment.

Now, reader, to which public use you think the Roseau Hospital buildings and premises should be put after, say, 1954? Take up your pen; your views and opinion are desired NOW.

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