

Pioneer Prison Became Pheasant Farm

Saanich Star Feb. 22, '51

And Now Serves as Provincial Mental Home

Built originally as a jail, in 1913, the large red brick structure on the west side of Wilkinson Road has, since 1919, been operated by the provincial government as a branch of the mental hospital at Essondale.

Surrounded by well-tended, park-like grounds the appearance of the mental home belies the seriousness of its purpose. The ground upon which it stands was originally purchased from John Jones and the intention of the government was to erect a jail on similar lines to those of Oakalla.

The structure was completed in 1913 and was operated as a jail until the beginning of the First World War.

Prisoners were then transferred to Oakalla and the building taken over by naval authorities as a detention barracks. Names of sailors who were sent there were still scratched on the walls and the number of days still to be served marked on improvised calendars when the provincial government took over the building in 1919. At that time, staff member [unclear] [unclear] days of the men [unclear] [unclear].

Pheasant Farm

For a brief period after the navy relinquished the barracks, the 25 acres it stood upon were operated as a pheasant farm for the provincial government by Mr. Cummings.

It was first used as a mental home under the supervision of G. Farvat and the original list of patients numbered only nine. As it is today, the home was used only as a branch of Essondale for male patients, and there were no direct admissions. All patients are transferred over from the mainland hospital.

One reason for this, the present medical supervisor, Dr. L. G. C. d'Easum, M.B., stated, was the lack of single rooms over at Essondale.

"Some patients become disturbed at night if they have to sleep in dormitories, whereas we have a large number of single rooms here," Dr. d'Easum stated. "This, we find, helps the patients considerably."

At present, the supervisor continued, there are about 200 patients at the Wilkinson Road mental home. "Of these, there are only a few who could be termed criminally insane."

No Strait Jackets

Queried as to the greatest difference in handling of mental patients over the last few years, Dr. d'Easum replied that he thought it was the lack of restraint that is used now. Gone are the old ideas of the strait jackets and the restraining sheets.

"We would rather have an attendant stand by than use restraining methods."

Patients receive full treatment at Essondale before being transferred to the Wilkinson Road home. A large part of the grounds, which have been swelled to 200 acres with the inclusion of the Samuel Jones farm as well as that of present Councillor George Austin, is used for occupational therapy.

Certain types of patients are aptable to working during the day, and to this end the institution now has a large building expressly for occupational therapy.

Beautiful products in woodwork, metal spinning, plaster casts and painting are turned out by the patients. A section of the grounds is still kept for farm use and the home has its own dairy, and grows much of its own pro-

duce. It also has its own laundry, sawmill and greenhouses.

Extensive Staff

Dr. d'Easum heads a staff of approximately 90 members, which include the services of a resident psychiatrist, Dr. P. T. McLeod. The medical supervisor also is kept busy by his work with the Child Guidance Clinic which calls for his services in the Greater Victoria area as well as Island points.

The Mental Home also receives the services of a visiting physician, Dr. George Hall.

Man Once Hanged In Colquitz Yard

A medieval castle-like structure on Wilkenson Road in Saanika, now known as the Provincial Mental Home, was built as a provincial jail and was used in that capacity for about seven years, a former jailer said yesterday.

One man was even hanged for murder on a gallows erected beside the building's imposing walls, said Robert G. Smith, 1389 Glyn Road,

JAILER THERE

"I was a jailer there for seven years and I remember that at least one man was hanged there. It was built for a jail, not for a mental home," he said.

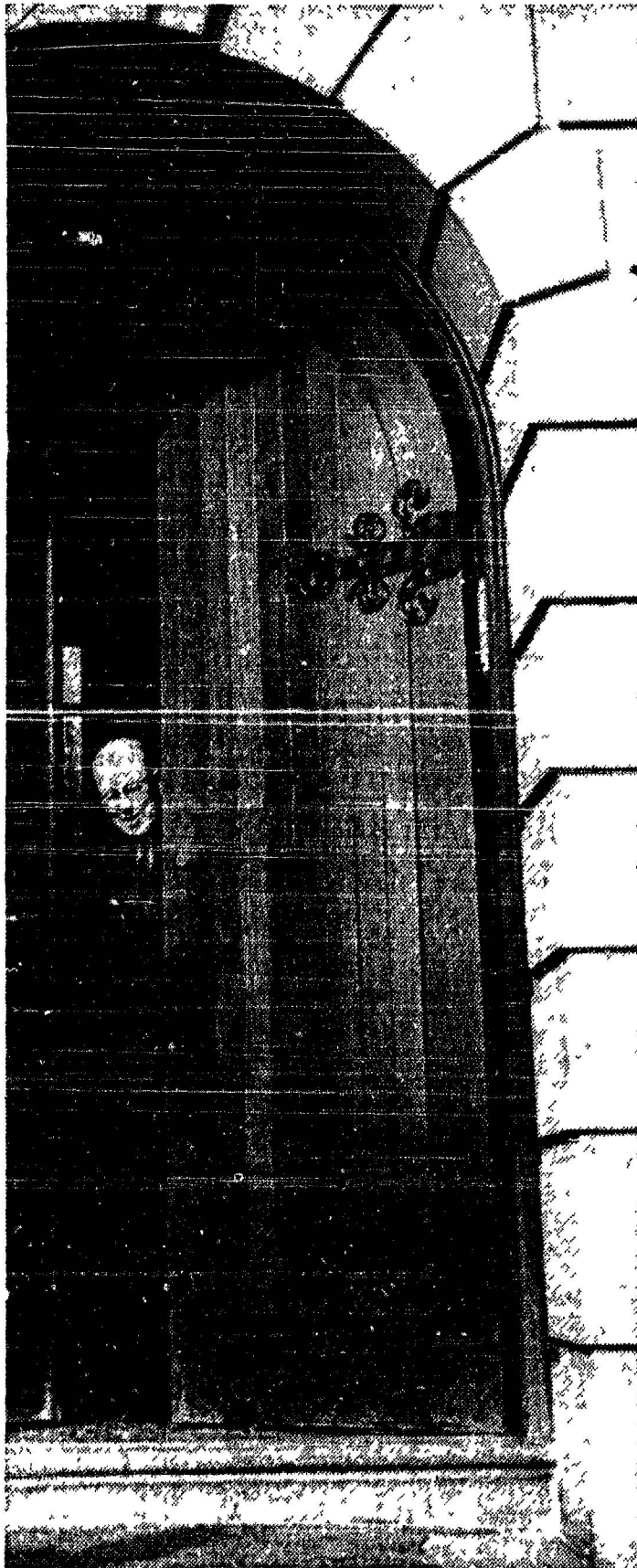
Mr. Smith couldn't

remember the exact years that the jail was in operation, but he recalled that it was closed during the First World War, when prisoners were transferred to Oakalla.

NEVER USED?

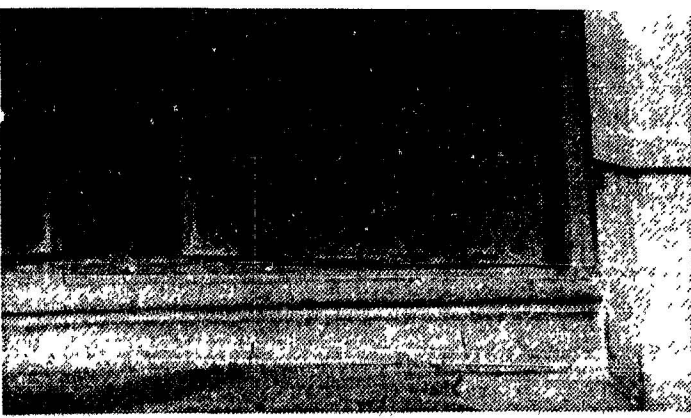
A mental home official said Monday following the fatal shooting of Const. Ronald Kirby by an escaped inmate, that although the maximum security building was constructed in 1913 as a provincial jail, it was never used for this purpose.

He said that the building which now houses nearly 300 mental patients was turned over to the navy during the First World War and then used as a mental home in 1919.



Health Minister Martin symbolically shuts heavy doors at Colquitz Mental Home, which was closed yesterday after 45 years of operation. — (Ryan Bros. photos.)

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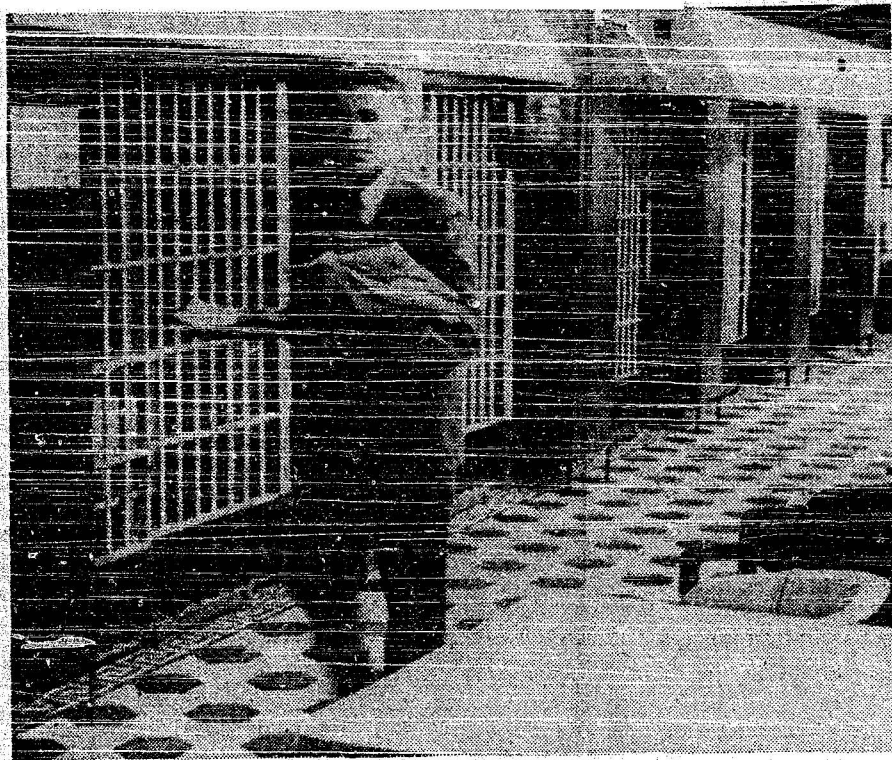
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Bob Dudman, butcher at the home for 15 years, bids goodbye to patient as bus pulls out for ferry trip to mainland hospitals.

★ ★ ★



Staff member removes records from offices near empty maximum-security cells as transfer of patients begins.

Colquitz Doors Shut Dreary Story Ends

Colonist Jan. 30 '64 p. 21.

By JIM RYAN

I saw a dreary chapter in the history of B.C. mental health services end here Wednesday.

With an emphatic crash, Health Minister Martin slammed shut the heavy, wooden front door of the Colquitz mental hospital for the criminally insane on Wilkinson Road and turned the forbidding, grey building over to Works Minister Chant.

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Plans call for its "temporary" use as a prison.

History repeats itself.

Half a century ago, the building—with its row upon row of steel-barred cells—was built for use as a maximum security prison.

Since then, up to 300 criminally insane mental patients at a time have been housed within Colquitz hospital.

★ ★ ★

Wednesday, the last patients—30 of them—boarded a bus for transfer to the Essondale mental health complex on the mainland.

I watched as they said goodbye to the only home many of them have known for 30 years and more.

For some of the patients, the ferry ride was a rare look at the changing times.

★ ★ ★

I noticed on the luggage of one patient a label. Its date read: June 2, 1936. He had

been at Colquitz for 27 years and eight months.

I live a short distance from the hospital—but in the 15 years I have been a newspaper photographer I have never been allowed inside. I've always wondered just what it looked like.

Wednesday, I found out.

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It was a strange and chilling experience.

I saw tier upon tier three stories high of small cells in the two wings of the building. They contained two objects—a bed and a toilet.

My feet echoed as I walked along the empty corridors.

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I was told the building could house up to 300 patients, and over the years has been full almost to capacity. It was described as one of the best-constructed and maintained buildings of its type in the province.

As I left, a patient was pointed out to me.

He had been at Colquitz for 40 years.

The world outside would be a strange experience for him.

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I thought to myself: For 15 years, I've wanted to look inside Colquitz... but how many of the patients must have wanted to change places with me and look at it from the outside?

A great many, I imagine.

Victoria Times

TODAY'S NEWS

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FIRST STEP IN WILKINSON ROAD PHASE-OUT

Convicts to Jordan River

By **DEREK SIDENIUS**
Times Staff

Forty prisoners likely will move to a new trailer camp near Jordan River in the first move toward phasing out antiquated Wilkinson Road jail by the end of the year.

Hal McGillivray, deputy director of the prison, said Wednesday the corrections branch is acquiring 40 acres in the provincial forest reserve seven miles beyond Jor-

dan River on the road to Port Renfrew.

He said four acres will be developed into a campsite consisting of dormitory trailers for 40 of the 90 men at Wilkinson Road, as well as trailers for cooking, recreation, office and storage.

Initial outlay for the new camp is expected to be \$100,000. The figure does not include costs for clearing or installing basic services.

McGillivray, who is implementing the program, said he hoped to complete a budget by next week.

It will be reviewed by a special three-member panel which the attorney-general's department struck last month to consider alternative programs for the men in Wilkinson Road jail.

The members include Ed Stanton, probation officer in the Victoria area; Martin Mc-

Neil, a University of Victoria graduate student, and Ted Pollard, a Victoria lawyer.

McGillivray hoped work on the site could begin within two weeks.

There is a 30-day delivery on the trailers, he said.

"We would like to be able to start the program by the end of November ... although it could be anytime between now and Christmas."

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"We would like to be able to start the program by the end of November ... although it could be anytime between now and Christmas."

The inmates — all mini-

mum to medium security risks and serving sentences of less than two years — will not be involved in setting up the camp, but will make improvements to the property.

Rayonier of Canada holds a tree farm licence on the 40-acre site and McGillivray hopes the licence will be transferred to the corrections service. The company reforested the area in 1957.

See WILKINSON Page 2

JAILHOUSE BLUES SHADE LIGHTER NOW

By CECIL CLARK

A few weeks ago, by quirk of circumstance, I found myself back in jail. Out one morning with the camera looking for a scenic shot for Sunday's paper. I found myself driving south on Wilkinson Road. Then slowed opposite the wrought iron grill work of a pair of gates, to study the red brick ramparts of what in an earlier day we called the Saanich Prison Farm. The scene not only triggered my photographic zeal but also a few memories.

I remembered for instance how 50 years ago the late George Hood and I (then a couple of \$65 a month provincial policemen) took inventory of the deserted building before it was handed over to the provincial secretary's department to become a repository for the criminally insane George, in the course of time became the founder of our present (and widely copied) system of motor vehicle registration, and headed the branch for many years.

History of the Wilkinson Road building goes back to 1914 when the old provincial jail on Topaz Avenue and the old provincial jail at New Westminster were phased out to be replaced by the Oakalla Prison Farm and the Saanich institution one to serve the lower mainland, the other the Island.

Alas for planning. A month before Wilkinson road opened Canada was at war and in the ensuing years the prison population slowly dwindled. Dwindled because from B.C.'s population of 450,000 about 4,500 volunteered. About one in every five of the total population exclude old men and children and it's more like one in three.

The Wilkinson road building (I remember correctly cost around \$100,000 (which would probably be a million today) and its architect was the well known Col W. Ridgeway Wilson. From his drawing board also came the Bay Street artery, you can see the effect.

First warden of the new Island jail was John Munro. 12 years in the service and four years warden of the Nanaimo jail before coming to Saanich.

In early spring of 1918 with most of the guards overseas the handful of remaining prisoners were packed off to Oakalla and Jack Bay. I mentioned the building was taken over by the provincial secretary's department. For the next 45 years the turreted bastille on Wilkinson Road housed the criminally insane, the inmate population rising from nine to 300. Finally in January 1961 announcement was made for them on the mainland and a month later Wilkinson Road was once more a common jail under the supervision of the present Warden S. A. L. Hamblin.

As I sat in my car taking in the building it took me back to a day when the interurban ran from Victoria to Port Moody and every now and then a group of prisoners would be taken to



WARDEN S. A. L. HAMBLIN
... this woul group therapy

windows old Denis Cox the senior constable, used to hand each a dime with the laconic instruction "Be back in half an hour."

In their grey denims a big broad arrow on the seat of the pants and another between their shoulder blades (flanked by the letters PG for provincial gaol) they were off.

Off to Johnson Street to crash the first pair of swinging doos and hoist a couple of nickel schooners. It all seems rather casual in the light of today but I suppose I was linked with the pioneer past. I'll be tossing plugs of tobacco to the chain gang or the attitude that saw jaymen in Nanaimo trials ribbed to the Old Flag during a luncheon recess to kindly bend their elbows but charge up the dinks to the government.

Our men in gray however were always back in time to catch the interurban.

Except on one rare reddening occasion when Const Jock Conly was despatched to John's Street to see what was keeping them. After poking his head in to see the resorts Jock finally glimpsed them back to back in a wicker or flying feet and fists. Someone apparently passed a disparaging remark about Warden Munro and the prisoner belted him. It was as I have intimated a cur incident.

Jock phoned the city police and the warden arrived (the old 1914 Cadillac) with Bob Ireland, Bill Barnes and Wes Huppert and the trouble was soon over. I remember Jock who hailed from Glasgow that Cox with a retelling emphasis: "Man they were fighting like wild dogs."

During the first of the war years while civil prisoners got fewer quite a few British prisoners were entered on the books mostly from British armed merchantmen and possibly the furious shell-toned Kent. Seems strange that a judicial process either civil or naval should disband the service of a sailor fresh from a naval victory like the Falkland Islands and consign him to three months in the puke. Matter of fact when you think of it about a third of the prisoners in the old Hillside jail were from British navy or

The term off beat reminds me how many years ago a local business man filed an accident report describing how his car struck a tree opposite the entrance to the Colquitz Mental Home. Seems an inanimate, on some plumbing job, was carrying a toilet bowl across the vast lawn when figuring he needed a rest, put it down and sat on it. So intrigued was the passing motorist by the spectacle that he veered off the road and hit a tree! This is no legendary story, for I took the report.

You could also count among the off beats, a curious character called Sigurd Jussila who lived in a hole in the ground near Lake Kathryn north of Smithers. Finally after he murdered a lonely homesteader, it took the police weeks to find his bush hideout. Like the scene in "The Fall of Man," his abode was finally spotted by a tell tale two feet of un stove pipe sticking out of the ground. When Andy Fairburn (who lives today in Ladysmith) had him in the lock, Sigurd started tearing pages out of a magazine to cover up the spaces between the bars. Somehow he still wanted to be hidden from sight.

Perhaps the strangest pair to lose their marbles were a couple of bank robbers who must have spent close to 40 years out at Wilkinson road.

They were part of a seven-man gang of Russians (all from Siberia) who, in April 1914, held up the tent-like Union Bank of Canada in the boom townsite of New Hazelton. However before they could make their getaway, they found themselves in a rip roaring gun battle with the townsfolk. The score at the finish ... two killed on the spot, one died in hospital, three went to the penitentiary for 20 years and the ring leader (with loot to the value of \$1,100) plunged into the bush and was never seen again. Two of those in the penitentiary went round the bend and were transferred to Wilkinson Road.

So with these and other thoughts in mind I pulled into jail grounds to call on Warden S. A. L. Hamblin and discovered that he was a graduate of Insp. Colin Mackenzie's B.C. Police Academy 25 years ago. After a couple of years in the police he transferred to the prison service which in those days were under one head.

After 19 years in the jail service on the mainland, during which he helped set up the Haney Correctional Unit, Warden Hamblin came here four years ago to reopen the Colquitz institution.

Today he has a staff of around 60 and in addition supervises a couple of up Island road camps, Snowdon and Lakewood in the Sayward district. Each camp has 14 on a staff, with about 60 men in each.

As we chatted he was interested to hear the background of the building and remarked that when he first came he was struck by a ridiculous sort of desk with a circle cut out of it.

"I know," I said and thought of Granby Farrant the one time superintendent of the mental home who weighed 330 and could outwalk his inkwell. Neither could he get behind the wheel of a car.

It was a most interesting session and I learned a lot about the new look in penology.

For in the old days let's face it the prison theme was "society wants these guys punished and that's why they are here." Today there is a changed viewpoint with the emphasis on reformation and rehabilitation without considering it mawkish sentimentality. For instance on an occasion recently Warden Hamblin went to the city police court to put in a word for a prisoner who had escaped. When I heard his reasoning there was sound psychology behind the action. For the man had been a professional

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As I sat in my car taking in the building it took me back to a day when the interurban ran from Victoria to Brentwood and every now and then a guard brought in a couple of prisoners to do our janitor work in the Bastion Square police headquarters. Apparently we were too lowly to merit government janitor service and had to fend for ourselves.

Usually in the late afternoon, when the "boys" had finished polishing tops and washing



WARDEN S. A. L. HAMBLIN
... tells about group therapy

windows, old Denis Cox, the senior constable, used to hand each a dime with the laconic instruction: "Be back in half an hour."

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During the first of the war years, while civil prisoners got fewer, quite a few naval prisoners were entered on the books, mostly from British armed merchantmen and possibly the famous shell-torn Kent. Seems strange that a judicial process, either civil or naval, should disavow the service of a sailor fresh from a naval victory like the Falkland Islands and consign him to three months in the pokey matter of fact when you think of it, about a third of the prisoners in the old Hillside jail were from British navy craft, monotonously charged with breach of the Naval Discipline Act.

In addition there were quite a few prisoners of war held at Wilkinson Road, but only by a man with more than passing interest in looking up Canada's war effort.

Though in its assiduous days the old institution was lacking the will for concerted action, still there were occasional single ship ventures that separated the men from the boys. Staff was

You could also count among the off beats, a curious character called Sigurd Jussila, who lived in a hole in the ground near Lake Kathlyn, north of Smithers. Finally, after he murdered a lonely homesteader, it took the police weeks to find his bush hideout. Like the scene in Peter Pan, his abode was finally spotted by a tall tale two feet of tin stove pipe sticking out of the ground. When Andy Fairbairn (who lives today in Ladysmith) had him in the lockup, Sigurd started tearing pages out of a magazine to cover up the spaces between the bars. Somehow he still wanted to be hidden from sight.

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For in the old days, let's face it, the prison theme was "society wants these guys punished and that's why they are here." Today there is a changed viewpoint, with the emphasis on reformation and rehabilitation, without considering it mawkish sentimentality. For instance, on one occasion recently, Warden Hamblin went to the city police court to put in a word for a prisoner who had escaped. When I heard his reasoning there was sound psychology behind the action. For the man ran because he was afraid. Afraid of impending parole, and wanted to be recommitted. In and out of jail for the best part of 13 years his existence had made him a stranger to society. As the warden put it: "This guy didn't know how to put a nickel in a Coke machine."

It's fairly axiomatic that you can judge the man in charge by what goes on around him. I liked what I saw at the Victoria Island Unit as current definition. The punished officers, spent in

appearance, seem keen and intelligent, and though they are in a building 54 years old, everything is pin neat and antiseptically clean.

As we chatted Warden Hamblin explained some of the work projects, spoke of the nursery where seedling trees are raised, the root and vegetable crops and general farm work. He is particularly proud of the beef herd he is building up. Finally, of interest to you taxpayers, is the fact that the institution is practically self-supporting.

I was surprised to know the amount of land they had. Back in 1914 it was about 25 acres. Now it's around 300.

In his views on rehabilitation Lew Hamblin explained the purposes of group therapy, a series of frank discussion periods where the inmate may learn self-awareness. Remember the old saw about leading a horse to water . . . ? In the same fashion you can't nag an alcoholic into sobriety, neither does severe punishment straighten up the wrongdoer. Reformation must come from within, and group therapy often opens the door. When the inmate quits blaming others for his problem, he's on the way out.

As a work incentive, the old Good Conduct fund has been expanded.

In my day it was 10 cents a day, merely calculated to provide the discharged prisoner with sufficient fare to get away from the jail. Now there is an ascending scale, depending on skill and aptitude, and a man can get 30, 40, 50 or 75 cents a day. A few, a couple of dozen on the mainland, get a dollar a day. Though in the past there was a ticket of leave or parole system applied to federal penitentiary prisoners, it never applied in the provincial jails. Now it does.

Of course these ideas have to stand up those emotionally charged moments when the public screams for vengeance. Which isn't the answer.

You only need to think back to the early 19th century when Sir Samuel Romilly's bill was defeated in the British House of Lords. And what did Sir Samuel want to do? Well, he wanted to abolish the death penalty for theft of goods to the value of \$10 from a house, OR A DOLLAR AND A QUARTER FROM A SHOP! Lord Ellenborough, the chief justice, speaking on behalf of the judges, said passage of the bill would "demoralize the structure of society" and, would you believe it, a lot of high churchmen supported him.

If this type of thinking sort of baffles you, isn't it possible that in another 50 years or so, our current thinking will baffle someone?

Nine years ago, Lord Birkett, in the very same House of Lords, quoted statistics to show that of those 21 or younger charged with indictable offences in Britain, only two out of a hundred went to jail, 65 were put on probation, 20 were fined, and the rest went to approved schools or training centres. Today, with crime the national headache in the U.S. it's interesting to note that London, only slightly bigger than New York, has one-ninth of the crime.

I was sorry I didn't meet Deputy Warden H. R. McGillivray on my Wilkinson Road visit, but he happened to be on holiday. However, I did chat with his stand-in, Senior Correctional Officer George Moffat.

George, a tall and angular product of Auld Reekie, bears the unmistakable stamp of his 22 years in the Royal Scots. I was interested to hear from him, in light of this freer society, how the "hinnie" settled in.

"No problem," was George's quiet comment, then added, "but of course they get a hair cut." Which is a pretty soul-shattering re-introduction to society.

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I spoke of taking a horse to water. Warden Hamblin quoted the exception that proved the rule. It was the case of a middle-aged Scandinavian prisoner who signed his property slip with a cross. Inquired the warden: "Can't you read or write?"

"Nope," said the big Swede. "But I get by."

"Wouldn't you like to read and write?"

"Nope," came the decisive answer. "Because it's too late to learn."

"But you are going to," said the undaunted Lew.

"Try and make me," was the discouraging comment.

At Hamblin's nod he was escorted to isolation where, after a day on bread and water, he decided he might try reading and writing.

"Do you know," said Hamblin with a reminiscent smile, "when that fellow mastered the alphabet and got going, you couldn't stop him. I think he wanted to read everything that was ever printed." We had to wrestle his books away from him at lights out!"

Reminded me somewhat of the Doukhobor kids under Clarkson's rule at the Nakusp school. Once they started they wanted to read night and day. One girl did three years' school work in one.

Before I left the red brick "home from home," west Saanich style, I inquired idly if

they'd ever run across the grave of Bob Suttie. When I got blank stares I realized they hadn't heard of Wilkinson Road's one and only hanging.

A story that started early in the morning of May 14, 1914, when Bob Suttie, working with an up-Island road gang four miles south of Oyster River bridge, got at cross purposes with foreman Dick Hargreaves.

From what I can learn, Suttie, who was in the gravel pit hand-loading with a shovel, blamed one of the teamsters for trying to speed up the loads. Hargreaves finally told him to quit trying to tell the teamsters what to do.

It was about midday when Suttie must have gone back to the Oyster River camp and got his rifle. Returning, he put two shots in Hargreaves' back, the second one witnessed by a fellow worker. After which he tossed the gun aside, and sat sobbing on the roadside where he was arrested three hours later by Prov. Const. Jeff Hannay.

It was all very unnecessary and very sad. For according to evidence at the trial, Suttie was normally a very friendly and likeable fellow, but with a weakness for booze.

His hasty action apparently sprang from the depressing effects of a bout with the bottle.

Though he was ably defended by Vic Harrison, brother of Victoria's ex-mayor Claude Harrison, a Nanaimo jury turned thumbs down on him and on the morning of Jan. 5, 1915, he was hanged at Wilkinson Road, and buried in the jail grounds.

His was just one of the many stories forming the background of the "castle on the hill." Today, however, thanks to a new look at crime and its causes, plus a somewhat higher regard for human dignity, the Jailhouse Blues are a shade lighter.

Bid to rebuild jail fought

Saanich's Heritage Advisory Committee wants the Wilkinson Road jail moved instead of expanded.

The B.C. Buildings Corporation officials met recently with Saanich staff to discuss expansion.

"They're talking about modernizing the old building, or adding two new wings at the rear of the jail," planner Neil Findlow said.

"The government is certainly not contemplating phasing out the jail. I certainly got the impression they would not be relocating or replacing the jail," he said.

Opened Sept. 12, 1914, as the Saanich Prison Farm, the jail and its property were designated heritage by council two years ago.

Findlow said: "If the plan is to modernize, then we want to preserve the facade. No new building should be allowed in front of the existing building."

Building contractor Chris Pike said the jail is in the rapidly growing Wilkinson Valley area, which he called the Gordon Head of the future.

"That's no place for such an institution," he said. "If they sold the land they'd make enough to build a new prison in the sticks."

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Pike acknowledged some of the land in the area is outside the urban containment boundary and development would not occur unless council amended its policy regarding municipal services outside the boundary.

"It's time council stood up and told people we're going to allow residential development outside the boundary.

"Are we going to throw away the key and lock the door after all available land inside the containment boundary is used?"

"Even in Hong Kong where people live almost shoulder to shoulder, they haven't resorted to turning people away. I can't see it happening in Saanich no matter what the local politicians say.

"The lack of realistic planning by Saanich will cause real problems for future generations," Pike said.

He said: "It's time the jail was moved to allow growth in this area of the municipality."

He predicted residents would protest "very strongly" any move to add more buildings on the property. "I'm sure they want to see the jail phased out," Pike said.

Colonial May 21 81 P.17

Mr. Ray Paine,
Editor "The Gem."

In your news views and changes this month, you might lend a few lines to the closing of "Colquitz" Mental Hospital. The change as a gradual plan, is well underway. Our patient census of a once 288 is now down to 155. Our employees with the Dept. of Agriculture, Dept. Public Works, and Dept. Health Services and Hospital Insurance, a total staff of 91 Civil Servants (some with 30 years service) is thinning out. Our B.C. Government Employees' Association Charter has been returned to Headquarters and our membership transferred to the very seat of Government, "Victoria Branch". For Association membership, "Colquitz" was for many years close to a 100% Branch. Some of our staff were active in the first formation of our Provincial Organization. We have sent numerous delegates to our nineteen Conventions and have had one member elected to the Provincial Executive.

In thinking of "Colquitz" you will know that we have been for several years one of the Province's two mental hospitals. Woodlands, designated a school for retarded, Vernon and Terrace homes for the aged under Hospital Services.

Our main building boasts the stone cut date over the entrance of 1918. Two lions are passed by all who enter here, and to me the builders and English architects did a good job in 1918, for this is still a building of imposing, sturdy and sound structure of brick and stone. This property on Wilkinson Road has the most enduring front yard fence of fine cut stone, and there is nothing like it for miles around on private or government site. We have a genuine Totem pole, and though I cannot read it, I hope it is never moved or desecrated by some wrecking crew. Our Totem was carved, raised and dedicated on the spot by a champion man, a Haida Indian Chief, I have been told.

Our farm Clydesdale horses passed away long ago and their teamster masters, there is no stable, harness shop or harness maker now, the gas and oil pumps I suppose their descendants somehow. There are no "horses off feed" reports, no "carriages for repairs" lists to bother office staff.

The "Colquitz" once large herd of prize bred Holstein cattle from the Esson-dale Colony Farm stock, the hundreds of ducks and turkeys, sheep, pigs and farm produce raised here by our patients and staff during the decades would make up many a train load of the best of good foods. At times we have raised canaries, peacocks and gold fish and hundreds of rabbits. Once, some 20 years ago, we had a bear cub with a proper cage and shelter. He did in the Super's dog, and that act caused his own demise!

It seems appropriate at this time, Mr. Editor, to say something of the early rules and regulations of "The Public Hospital for Insane", (this was the official title some 50 years ago). The staff at this period lived on the premises, and many hospital workers today would get a good shock if asked or ordered to abide by the rules of the day; - in bed at 10:30, lights out and front door locked at 10:30 p.m., no smoking in hours of duty, taking drilling by the chief attendant, rising on signal at 5:40 a.m. Married staff having families residing in the hospital vicinity received all-night permits on alternate evenings only. Conversely, some of the rules fifty years ago were just, good and thoughtful and have endured in the regulations of today.

In 1908 the words taken from the "Last Judgement", St. Matthew, Chapter XXV, verses 32-40 are a preamble to the regulations and a pretty good outline for any hospital staff; as well as the policy "Do as you wish to be done by".

The institution and all its resources belong to the patients. The Hospital is built and maintained for the care and cure of those who are sick in mind (and in body too) and it exists for no other purpose. Some position titles have changed, and some duties and responsibilities have remained much the same over the years. (continued over)

South African Holiday Cont'd

wheeled carts drawn by ponies or mules, and some riding on bicycles. It was rather incongruous to notice occasionally a modern car parked outside a native kraal.

Along the north coast of Durban we saw rolling fields of sugar cane, with occasional banana plants. When we stopped for a while along the roadside one hot summer day, it was surprising to learn that the loud noise which sounded to me like a lawnmower, was in fact the hum of numerous insects - another fascinating discovery.

At Durban our hotel overlooked the Indian Ocean, its rolling surf ceaselessly beating on the miles of golden sand up and down the coast. There were certain restricted bathing areas where surf riding was enjoyed and where shark nets had been installed. During our visit there one young man, a skin diver, had been rather badly bitten by a shark when diving alone.

In contrast to the roaring surf were the quiet waters of the lagoons along the coast. I recall one which we saw in the glow of the evening sun - calm and peaceful in the soft light, with a lone bird wheeling across it - a moment which only a painter could have captured.

A recollection comes to mind of sitting outside one evening at Umhlanga (pronounced Umshlanga) Rocks after dinner (which had consisted of oysters in the shell and sole with white wine sauce) watching the play of beams from the nearby lighthouse under a canopy of a myriad twinkling stars and hearing the murmur of the ocean surf below.

These are just a few random recollections of a most happy and memorable trip, every moment of which was packed with interest and pleasure.

H O B B I E S .

Civil Servants have many interesting hobbies to fill their spare time. Some are collectors, handicraft experts, sports enthusiasts, and club stalwarts. Others are T.V. - watchers.

One unique activity in which a few Government employees are engaged is the building of their own aeroplanes.

Bill Rogers of the Highways Department spends his leisure time constructing a 2 place Mini-Cab, which he expects to fly in the summer of "64".

Bill is the President of the local chapter #142 of the Experimental Aircraft Association. The E.A.A. have hundreds of members in Canada and the U.S.A. who build and fly their own ultra light aircraft to various meets and competitions throughout the country.

Hugh Thomas, maintenance supervisor for Highways Aircraft, is the Technical Advisor for the local group. Don Strang, Public Works Department, Mechanical Division, is the Secretary. Don Mason of Highways, also belongs to the 20-member chapter. These hobbyists will be pleased to welcome any interested fellow employees.

A man telephoned the Montreal police station one night and excitedly reported that the steering wheel, brake pedal, accelerator, clutch pedal and dashboard had been stolen from his car. A sergeant promised to investigate.

But soon the telephone rang again. "Don't bother", said the same voice -- this time with a hiccup. "I got into the back seat by mistake."

"Colquitz" story cont'd.

Our Association has taken an important hand in helping management, and I am sure all the better supervisors appreciate our efforts.

This letter, of necessity, contains nostalgia, it could not be avoided; 15 to 30 and more years' friendship and associations must now carry inflections. In the name of progress our Departmental Heads and the Minister have new and better plans for the population.

Our staff should not lament or regret over this aspect of the closure, and with the reassurances received to date, take hope and bid to take a favorable and active part in the new policy and changes at "Colquitz". We cannot remain unchanged in a changing sphere in mental health.

So let this be 30 for now and just the commencement and bud of what should be and could be.

Yours fraternally,

The "Colquitz" Councillor,

DICK HILTON.

FARM AT PROVINCIAL MENTAL HOME, COLQUITZ

The building which at present houses the Provincial Mental Home on the Wilkinson Road at Colquitz was constructed originally as a jail and was opened on September 12, 1914, under the name of Saanich Prison Farm, for the reception of prisoners transferred from the old provincial jail at Victoria. ⁽¹⁾ During the war it also received prisoners of war and offenders against the Naval Discipline Act, but in November 1917 the establishment was closed, all the prisoners being transferred to Oakalla Prison Farm. ⁽²⁾

The Wilkinson Road jail was surrounded by some 25 acres of land which had been bought by the Provincial Government in 1912. ⁽³⁾ Throughout the period of its use the various activities of the "outside gang" of prisoners included (as had also been the case at the old Victoria jail) the clearing of land and "sowing and reaping the crops," which consisted of potatoes, carrots, onions, and hay. ⁽⁴⁾ As soon as the closing of the jail was mooted, representations were made to the Government not to let this "valuable property" and its "fine plant" remain idle. One Saanich councillor suggested that

the grounds might be placed at the disposal of the School Trustees of Saanich, so that the children might learn the most up-to-date way of growing potatoes in a sort of agricultural college. ⁽⁵⁾

However, the Government decided to put the establishment to a different use. In 1918 it was reported that the ^{Provincial} Game Board was

energetic efforts...to increase the stock of pheasants, and the principal farm for raising the same has been started at the Wilkinson Road Lock-up.... ⁽⁶⁾

The pheasant farm apparently remained there until the end of 1919, ⁽⁷⁾ by which time the property had been transferred to the Provincial Secretary's Department for use as a mental hospital.

For so great had been the increase in the number of patients at New Westminster and Essondale that the Government had decided, instead of remodelling a wing at Essondale for the purpose, to utilize the empty jail at Colquitz "for the accommodation of our male criminal insane."⁽⁸⁾ On March 25, 1919, the Provincial Mental Home was opened there with nine patients of this type from the New Westminster institution.⁽⁹⁾ By the end of March, 1920, there were 99 patients⁽¹⁰⁾ and by 1959 the figure had risen to 281.⁽¹¹⁾

It would seem that the operation of the farm and garden at Colquitz was managed as far as possible along the lines which had already proved so successful at the Colony Farm at Essondale. Various projects were "carried out by the staff assisted by patient-helpers,"⁽¹²⁾ and the principal aims in view appear to have been the production of food for the institution and the improvement of the patients through the therapeutic effect of outdoor work. The official annual reports are for the most part brief and lacking in detail; but there are a number of references by the Medical Superintendent to the fact that the patients at Colquitz were "the insane criminals and criminally insane,"⁽¹³⁾ and that therefore "the quantities of produce and supplies produced there" were produced "under difficult conditions."⁽¹⁴⁾

Nevertheless, by 1929 the Victoria Colonist was able to report that the farm

with the exception of stock feed - hay and oats - grows sufficient fruit and vegetables for the upkeep of the institution,

although it was only "some twenty-three acres in extent." There was also a "sufficient supply of eggs and rabbit meat," and "a herd of twelve or fourteen cows cared for by the patients, under supervision of a superior dairy hand." The reporter added that

these different departments of livestock are not only economical, but at the same time create a useful and healthy employment for the patients, which is beneficial and greatly appreciated by them. (15)

Ten years later the Victoria Times published an article by J. K. Nesbitt on the "splendid farm worked by hospital patients" at Colquitz. He described this as "a small, but first-class branch of the famous Colony Farm at Essondale," and pointed out that while the Colquitz farm did not exhibit, it provided a sort of "training ground" in the matter of prize livestock, animals showing particular promise being set aside and sent to the Colony Farm. The Colquitz institution was "practically self-contained," and although the Hospital occupied "only 26 acres" it was able to grow enough vegetables (except potatoes) to meet the annual requirements of the 250 patients and 40 male attendants. Furthermore, "the work [was] done by those patients well enough to be outside under supervision." (16)

By 1951 the land attached to the Mental Home had been increased to over 300 acres through the acquisition from time to time of adjacent property. (17) The Saanich Star recorded that a large part of the grounds was now being "used for occupational therapy," for which a special building had been constructed; nevertheless, the reporter added, "a section of the grounds is still kept for farm use and the home has its own dairy, and grows much of its own (18)

Throughout the period during which the mental home has been in operation, the annual reports of the Medical Superintendent, while recognizing the fact that the criminally insane are "a more difficult type to treat and care for," (19) have also noted that "more (20) is being done for the patients than was at one time deemed possible";

that "there are more activities, and these have been appreciated."⁽²¹⁾
In the years 1951-53 about 60 per cent of the patients "were
engaged in some form of useful occupation" apart from "ward routine
activities."⁽²²⁾ But the emphasis is placed on "occupational therapy"
in the narrow sense, and on "industrial therapy" carried out by
"patients under the supervision of the Maintenance Department."⁽²³⁾
As in the case of the more recent reports on Essondale, there is
no specific mention of the therapeutic value to the patient to be
derived from work on the farm.

Provincial Archives,

May 5, 1960.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) J. Munro, Warden, to C. S. Campbell, Inspector of Gaols, November 11, 1914. Saanich Prison Farm. Warden's Letter-book, MS., Archives of B. C.
- (2) Saanich Prison Farm, Keep Accounts, September 12, 1914 - November 15, 1917; Daily Journal, entries for September 16, 1914, and November 5, 1917. MS., Archives of B. C.
- (3) The property, consisting of Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4, Lake District, covered 25.18 acres (after allowing 0.31 ac. to Saanich Municipality for the widening of Wilkinson Road, and 0.05 ac. to the B.C.E.R. for a right-of-way), and its purchase was approved by Order-in-Council, April 20, 1912. This information was supplied by Mr. W. D. Lougher-Goody Architect-Planner, Department of Public Works. Cf. also Public Accounts, 1912-13, in British Columbia Sessional Papers, Session 1914, p. C 170.
- (4) See the annual reports of the Warden to the Inspector of Gaols, November 8, 1911; November 16, 1915; November 16, 1916; and November 12, 1917. Saanich Prison Farm, Warden's Letter-book, MS., Archives of B.C.
- (5) Victoria Colonist, October 17, 1917.
- (6) Annual Report of the Provincial Game Warden...1918, Victoria, 1919, p. 86.
- (7) See the "Report from Provincial Constable A. P. Cummins on the Operations at the Colquitz Pheasant-farm, April 1st to December 31st, 1919," Report of the Provincial Game Warden... 1919, Victoria, 1920, p. 27.
- (8) Annual Report of the Mental Hospitals...for 15 months ending March 31st, 1920, Victoria, 1920, p. Y 7.
- (9) Ibid.
- (10) Ibid.
- (11) Report, 1958-59, p. I 101.
- (12) Report, 1923-24, p. P 12.
- (13) Report, 1946-47, p. S 15.
- (14) Report, 1923-24, p. P 11, and cf. Report, 1947-48, p. EB 15; 1948-49, p. HH 17; 1949-50, p. V 22.
- (15) Victoria Colonist, May 5, 1929. "Saanich Public Institutions. Provincial Mental Home, Colquitz....By George M. Watt."
- (16) Victoria Times, April 22, 1939. "By J.K.N. [i.e. J. K. Nesbitt]"

+ (17) In 1944 the Government purchased the "Simpson Property" [which appears from Archives Map No. 8500-C to cover some 15 acres]; in 1947, the "Glyn Farm owned by George and Philip George Austin," 198 acres; and in 1949, the property owned by C. A. McCloskey, 55 acres. Other lots were purchased from Spanish Municipality from time to time as they reverted for taxes. Information from Mr. W. D. Lougher-Goodey.

* (18) Sidney Spanish Star, February 22, 1951. According to this article, the Mental Home had also taken over the Samuel Jones farm, but no confirmation of this name has been found in the information supplied by Mr. Lougher-Goodey.

(19) Report, 1947-48, p. BB 15.

(20) Report, 1948-49, p. HH 17.

(21) Report, 1949-50, p. V 22.

(22) Report, 1951-52, pp. Q 81 and Q 84; 1952-53, p. T 94.

(23) Report, 1955-56, p. Q 176.

+ Total acreage according to this map, as calculated by Mrs. Goodey = 350.71c

* W. E. J. says that Samuel Jones was a son-in-law of one Simpson; so Jones Farm = Simpson property purchased 1944.

DBS

Colquitz Mental Home

" ... \$100,000 ... is preliminarily provided for the new Provincial Jail here (on the Saanich car line extension) ~~plans~~ for which plans were prepared several months ago by Mr. W.R.Wilson."

See Victoria Colonist, December 22, 1912, p.5:
"A Sextette of Court Houses."