

penal servitude. The accused appealed, and the case came before the Court of Criminal Appeal on December 19. A somewhat interesting point arose in the judgment. The Lord Chief Justice said that certain passages in the summing-up had seemed to imply that it was not murder unless Dix fired with intent to kill; but, of course, if the shot was fired with intent to commit any felony, that would be murder. In reply to a question, the jury said that they found Dix to have fired intentionally, but that he did not reasonably anticipate the consequences; had they been asked whether Dix had intended to inflict grievous bodily harm, they might have said "Yes," and that would have amounted to a verdict of wilful murder. The Court declined to interfere with the sentence.

Occasional Notes.

The Retirement of Sir Frederick Willis, K.B.E., C.B., from the Chairmanship of the Board of Control (England and Wales).

WE were glad to hear that the opportunity had been taken at the recent Quarterly Meeting at Bristol of referring to the retirement, on March 31, of Sir Frederick Willis from the Board of Control, over which he had presided with such distinction since 1921.

The occasion was singularly appropriate, because it was at Bristol that he received his education, first at the Merchant Venturers' School, and later at the University College of that City.

The tributes paid to him by Dr. J. Greig Soutar and Lt.-Col. J. R. Lord were no mere encomium, but expressions of the sincere regret which was felt by all administratively or medically associated with mental institutions or services in this country, at the great loss they were about to sustain. Particular reference was made to the value of his services to the Association, of which he has been an Honorary Member since 1923. The meeting by a unanimous vote endorsed all that was said of him, but time was short, and only a meagre description could be given of the debt really owing to this distinguished civil servant for his services to the State and to the public.

That omission it will now be our duty briefly to amend.

Sir Frederick Willis found little difficulty in passing the competitive examination for entrance into the Civil Service in 1886 as an Examiner in the Patent Office. His education had been mainly mathematical and scientific, and in the open competition he took a first place.

In 1890 he was transferred to the Local Government Board.

Public health, supervision of the administration of the Poor Law, housing and town-planning, local government finance and audit were its chief activities. It had little or no concern with lunacy administration.

There he gathered most valuable experience and knowledge of public affairs until the Board, with other and allied administrative departments of the State, such as the Insurance Commission, were, in 1919, merged into the Ministry of Health, of which he became Principal Assistant Secretary.

While in the Board's service his duties brought him into contact with a great variety of difficult problems affecting the public welfare which could not fail to broaden his social outlook and deepen his insight into human nature, thus facilitating his practical dealings with the affairs of his fellow men in every walk of life. As will be seen later, it was a unique experience, and peculiarly fitted him for his new post at the Ministry, and his subsequent career fully justified the wisdom of his appointment, which was not only a compliment, but a reward he had fully merited.

Though our chief interest in Sir Frederick Willis lies in the work he did after he joined the Ministry of Health, where mental hygiene and the lunacy administration and services came within his purview, we may be permitted to mention in more detail those prior activities to which we have just referred.

Soon after joining the Local Government Board he became private secretary to Mr. T. W. Russell, then its Parliamentary Secretary. He did a great deal of work in connection with the Select Committee on Professional Money Lending, over which Mr. Russell presided.

Following this he acted as secretary to several Departmental Committees, and in 1898 became the Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Disposal of Sewage and Trade Wastes. He afterwards became one of its members. The scientific investigations and research carried out by this Commission were of the greatest importance, and even now many of its reports are regarded as the last word on their various subjects.

In 1908 he did the public good service by his thorough and painstaking inquiry into the affairs of a Board of Guardians, which resulted in the clearing up of a bad patch in Poor Law Administration. His reading of the Law and call to the Bar at the Middle Temple in 1900 amply fitted him for this particularly difficult piece of work.

From 1910 he was Assistant Secretary to the Local Government Board, and for an eventful seven years or so supervised the Department of Public Health, which period saw the emergence of national

measures for the prophylaxis and treatment of tuberculosis and venereal diseases.

Following upon this, in the Department of Public Works, local authority finance and local authority legislation engaged his attention, and for some years he was responsible for the Board's reports to Parliament on local Acts.

His promotion in 1919 to be Principal Assistant Secretary of the newly created Ministry of Health we have already mentioned.

In 1921 he was appointed Chairman of the Board of Control, which on May 17, 1920, had become closely linked administratively with the Ministry of Health. No better selection could have been made for about this time lunacy administration, both local and central, was being assailed on every side, and his long administrative experience and unrivalled knowledge of local government were a valuable asset.

As was remarked by Colonel Lord at the Bristol meeting, "Sir Frederick Willis proved to be the right man, in the right place, at the right moment." Not only was there a recurrence of that suspicion and abuse of the mental institutions and services which originated in the '50's of last century, but the public mental hospitals during and after the War had been working under difficulties consequent upon depletion and dilution of staff and overcrowding, and the Board's work was being re-organized in consequence of the transfer of most of the powers and duties of the Home Secretary relating to lunacy and mental deficiency to the Minister of Health. All these problems demanded his immediate attention.

In regard to the first of these Sir Frederick spared no pains in probing deeply into any case in which there was *prima facie* evidence for inquiry, but he soon realized that in the great majority of cases the charges had little to support them or were entirely baseless.

Of perhaps greater moment were the difficulties under which the public mental hospitals were being administered, owing to the depleted state of the national and local finances. Development had ceased and the progress of psychiatry was hampered thereby, though post-war idealism and enthusiasm were great. Under the circumstances it was a happy thought which led him to organize a national conference of representatives of visiting committees and medical superintendents to discuss frankly the difficult problems that had arisen. It was with no idea of either justifying or animadverting on the past that the conference was called, but solely for envisaging the future.

The conference met for its first session on January 19, 1922, and

Sir Frederick faced a unique gathering at Spring Gardens, Westminster. There was a tense expectancy when Sir Alfred Mond, as Minister of Health, rose to open the conference. Everybody had some iron in the fire. Some were out to spend, some to save, some to mend the "lunatic," some to end him. Pathologists wanted laboratories, clinicians clamoured for early admission of cases and the provision of "acute" hospitals. Others wanted nurses' homes and a revision of pay and conditions of service of the nursing staff. All were united in condemning certain restrictive provisions in the English Lunacy Acts. Whatever view might be taken of the Minister's sympathetic and invigorating address, it was clear that he had confidence in both central and local lunacy authorities, and was hopeful, even optimistic in regard to the treatment of the mentally afflicted. In all this we have no doubt he was influenced by the reflection that Sir Frederick Willis was at the head of the Board and likely to remain so for some time.

The Conference, which was continued on the following day, led to the setting up of various departmental committees to consider and report on special aspects of the work in which improvements were deemed to be necessary. The finding of these committees have already borne fruit, largely due to the care exercised by Sir Frederick in selecting their personnel.

At the conference a resolution was unanimously passed calling upon the Government to modernize lunacy administration by facilitating the early treatment of mental disorders, and a Bill, which would have in a large measure removed the existing anomalies in the English Lunacy Acts, was subsequently presented to Parliament. Had this Bill become law it would have been the coping stone to the fine work Sir Frederick Willis had done for lunacy in this country. Nevertheless he will be remembered as one who guided with consummate ability the policy of his Board, and paved the way for fundamental reforms which, when they come to pass, will call to mind his fruitful occupancy of the chair.

It cannot but be a source of regret to him that under the age-limit he has had to retire before effect could be given to many of those ambitions for the welfare of the mentally afflicted he has striven so unflinchingly for during the whole period of his Chairmanship. Though the Report of the Royal Commission of Lunacy and Mental Disorder raised hopes of immediate legislation, there are as yet no signs that the Government will take action in this direction. Sir Frederick may, however, find consolation in the reflection that not only has he assisted towards the presentation of a case so strong that such action cannot for long be delayed, but he has also been the chief participator in formulating

the directions which the much-to-be-desired reform and modernizing of the lunacy law should take.

Before concluding this very inadequate summary of his work on the Board of Control mention must be made of the progress under the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913—a great measure of social reform. During the war and for some years afterwards very little could be done towards bringing the provisions of this Act into full play, but with the advent of Sir Frederick progress was made, chiefly due to his tactful stimulation of the local authorities in regard to their duties and responsibilities under the Act. The Act has now been largely put into operation throughout the country.

It may be asked: What has been the secret of his success both before and after joining the Board of Control? Undoubtedly his ability to make friends and allies and to inspire them with the spirit of optimism and co-operation. This, backed by a ready wit, sincerity and unflinching good temper, has enabled him to solve many difficult problems, and to meet successfully the exigencies of trying and even dangerous situations.

As regards his work on the Board, probably to a greater extent than any before him he has succeeded in getting into close touch with the local authorities and medical superintendents of the mental institutions. Three times has he summoned in conference the local lunacy administrations.

No one hesitated to approach him with difficulties or troubles, and no one went away without sympathy and help.

Sir Frederick's coöperation with the Royal Medico-Psychological Association has been of great benefit to both the Board and the Association. The capacity he had for clear thought and ready recognition of essentials made his presence at committee meetings welcome and of great advantage.

It is not often that local authorities take the trouble to record by resolution their regret on the retirement of one of the "mandarins," but several have done so in his case, while a precedent in the history of the Board of Control has been created by the whole staff making him a presentation on the eve of his retirement.

The Civil Service view that a man is beyond useful work at 65 is shown to be fiction by the appointment of Sir Frederick to the Chairmanship of the Departmental Committee on Ethylated Motor Spirit, a post involving work that would tax many a younger man.

During the war Sir Frederick rendered valuable service to Belgian refugees for which he was awarded the Commandership of the Order of Leopold.

He was created C.B. in 1914, and a K.B.E. in 1920.

He may rest assured that he has the whole-hearted respect of the Association and also that of the mental hospital services, and the sincerest good wishes of all for his future.

The Cinematograph in Medical Education.

At a Conference of the National Board of Review, New York, on January 26, 1928, Dr. J. F. Montague gave an address on "The Possibilities of Medical Movies."

Referring to future developments in the use of the cinematograph in medical education, he speaks with appreciation of the endeavours of the National Board of Review to introduce into all educational fields the motion picture film.

Isolated and fragmentary films on matters of medical interest have been made from time to time in the past. He believes the film to be a potential form of literature. In time, like paper literature, it will acquire form and style. Monograph films will undoubtedly lead the way. Next, will be coördinated series of cinema lectures; and finally complete motion-picture courses on various special phases of medical science.

Thus the text-books of our next medical generation will be printed on celluloid instead of paper!

In this way the detailed dissection in anatomy can be demonstrated, experiments in physiology shown and the appearance of diseased conditions exhibited. Every detail of medical treatment and surgical technique may be made clearly visible in a degree not hitherto obtainable. These films will afford the advantages of presentation of clear data permanently and instantly available and capable of countless repetitions. Moreover, films are capable of additions, editing and re-arrangement from time to time to conform with medical progress.

Such films will in no way supplant printed literature, but will facilitate its being understood. They will furnish a method of reducing the time required for medical studies.

In public health, the film carries with it great possibilities as a medium through which instruction could be effectively distributed.

Of more interest to the medical profession are the possible uses of the motion picture as aids to diagnosis. Films of diseased conditions afford an opportunity for prolonged examination without undue strain or fatigue on the part of the patient. They constitute a series of records for comparison as to the effects of treatment or as to the progress of the disease. This will be especially valuable in conditions of the intestines and other organs.