

that he very much doubted if the recrudescence of crime experienced after the war would continue to abate if the infliction of penalties of the law was to be left to the discretion of experts in Harley Street; and whether, seeing that such a statement indicated the need of a clear definition of the law relating to criminal lunacy, it was proposed to introduce legislation to remove any ground of judicial misunderstanding or divergence of judicial opinion.—Mr. SHORTT replied that he had seen a newspaper report of the learned judge's remark. As regards the latter part of the question the matter was one for careful consideration, but he was not prepared at present to say that legislation was either necessary or desirable.

Sir DONALD MACLEAN inquired whether the Home Secretary would consult the Leader of the House as to what opportunity would be given to the House to discuss this matter, not merely in relation to the particular case, but on the general question of principle involved.—Mr. SHORTT said he would consult Mr. Chamberlain.—At a later date Sir DONALD MACLEAN pointed out that the subject could not be taken on the estimates, as legislation might be required, and that could not be raised on the estimates.—Mr. CHAMBERLAIN replied that in the present state of public business he did not see how it would be possible to find a day for supplementary subjects, especially if the House was to rise in anything like good time, having regard to the probability that it would have to meet in the autumn in respect of Irish matters. On a further question, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN said he thought it might be possible for the subject to be discussed on a vote in Committee of Supply, provided that no mention were made of legislation.

In reply to another question Mr. SHORTT said that since the Court of Criminal Appeal was established in 1908 the sentence of death had been respited and the prisoner removed to Broadmoor after statutory inquiry in eleven cases. He knew of only one case similar to that of True—namely, the case of Townley in 1864—when the prisoner was afterwards certified sane. In that case the sentence of death which had been respited was commuted to one of penal servitude for life, and the man was removed from the asylum to prison. In no recent case had the prisoner been certified sane under Section 3 of the Criminal Lunatics Act, 1884. There was nothing in the law to prevent a man being executed after he had recovered his sanity, but whether it was done was another matter. Mr. Shortt said that in eight of the eleven cases that had occurred since 1908, either the judge or the Court of Criminal Appeal, or both, while satisfied that the verdict of the jury was correct and that the prisoner had been properly found guilty of murder and not insane, in the legal sense, when he committed the crime, nevertheless suggested that it was desirable that further inquiry under the powers vested in the Home Secretary should be made as to the mental condition of the prisoner.

RETIREMENT OF SIR JOHN MACPHERSON, C.B.

SIR JOHN MACPHERSON, C.B., M.D., F.R.C.P., who recently retired from the position of His Majesty's Commissioner of the General Board of Control, and is shortly going to Sydney as Professor of Psychiatry, was on June 6th presented with a testimonial by professional and other friends in recognition of his long and useful services devoted to the interests of the insane. The ceremony, which took place in the Hall of the Royal College of Physicians, Queen Street, Edinburgh, was largely attended. Professor Sir Robert Philip, President of the Royal College of Physicians, presided, and among others present were Lord Polwarth, Lord Salvesen, Sir David Wallace, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, and Lady Wallace; Sir James Hodsdon, Sir George McCrae, Sir David Paulin, Sir John Rankine, Dr. John Fraser, Dr. J. Crawford Dunlop, Registrar-General; Mr. R. Addison Smith, C.V.O., Mr. H. M. Cadell, of Grange, Dr. H. C. Marr, Commissioner, and Mr. A. D. Wood, secretary, General Board of Control.

The CHAIRMAN said that Sir John Macpherson was one of their most beloved Fellows of that College, a man to whom Fellows in time of difficulty went for advice, feeling sure that they would have shrewd, tactful, wise counsel.

Lord POLWARTH, in making the presentation of a piece of plate and a cheque to Sir John Macpherson and a diamond brooch to Lady Macpherson, said it was with a sense of real pleasure that, after reading a somewhat long list of names, he found

the name of one who really and most sincerely deserved the honour which had been accorded to him the other day. (Applause.) They congratulated Sir John and Lady Macpherson on the honour which had so rightly been awarded by His Majesty. He first knew Sir John Macpherson when he became Commissioner in Lunacy in 1899. Prior to that he had acted as Medical Superintendent of the Stirling District Asylum, Larbert, his services to Scottish lunacy extending to a period of nearly forty years. During his long public service Sir John Macpherson was actively associated with the many reforms which had taken place to improve the care of the insane and advance the treatment of mental disease. He was not retiring into oblivion or idleness on a pension well earned; he was going out to a new country to give that country the benefit of his great experience acquired in the old country. They wished him a very happy time in Sydney, and a safe return. Sir John Macpherson had played a very important part in lunacy administration in Scotland, which he ventured to think for long and still was probably the best in any part of the world. They had seen of late much about alleged abuses of lunacy administration south of the Border. From many of these, he thought, they had been entirely free in Scotland, but certainly no one could have conducted his duties with a truer spirit of humanity and kindness and consideration than had been shown by Sir John Macpherson. (Applause.)

Sir JOHN MACPHERSON said it was impossible for him to express in adequate and suitable language the gratitude of his wife and himself for their great kindness. After referring to the services rendered by Lord Polwarth on the Board of Lunacy, he said his own connection with Scottish lunacy dated back to 1883, when as a youth of 23 he became an assistant medical officer in Stirling District Asylum. Shortly afterwards he went to Morningside under the then greatest living authority, Sir Thomas Clouston, whose memory as a master and teacher he revered. He drilled into his pupils that psychiatry was one of the most important branches of medicine, that mental disease was a physical disease, and that physical disease had its mental side. These facts were only now beginning to be realised. In the course of a professional experience of nearly forty years, he had, of course, witnessed many changes in the methods of care of the insane. He thought he might say that in that time their methods had been completely revolutionised. In his experience the greater number and the most important reforms in administration originated with and were carried out by the medical superintendents of Scottish mental hospitals. It was necessary, however, to qualify that statement lest some of his friends should become conceited, or lest he should expose himself to a charge of fulsome flattery. The reason why Scottish medical officers were able to originate and carry out reforms which not only transformed Scottish administration, but had spread from here over the civilised world, was that it happened, in the providence of God, that the original members of the General Board of Lunacy were so intellectually eminent as to be incapable of believing that wisdom in these matters was their own sole prerogative. They set the policy which had been faithfully adhered to down to the present day. They said, in effect, "Whatever project is advantageous we will encourage; on that which is doubtful we will reserve judgment; what is obviously wrong we will condemn." Under such conditions, with a practically unrestricted field for individual effort, Scottish genius so asserted itself that in this small and remote kingdom in Northern Europe the torch of reform has burnt brightly from time to time, and cast its rays over the whole world. (Applause.)

An indirect result of the wise policy of their predecessors was the invariably friendly relations which had existed for more than 60 years between the Central Board on the one hand and the various local authorities and the medical officers of mental hospitals on the other. Of course, in this, as in all human affairs, there must be differences of opinion, often sharp; but he was not aware that there had been as a result any personal animosity. Within that hall and in the precise circumstances in which he now stood he had listened at separate times to three of his predecessors returning thanks for presentations made to them. They all three testified to the cordial relations in which they stood with the medical and lay authorities in Scotland concerned with the care of the insane. With diffidence, and in all humility, he thought, in his turn, he might say the same. Co-operation in a real sense and for a common purpose explained this good feeling, which, unfortunately, did not always exist between Government Departments and the public.

With regard to the changes and reforms to which he had alluded, he could

imagine someone quite properly asking what results of a tangible nature had been achieved by them. It might be asked, for instance, "Has insanity decreased? Are we any nearer a knowledge of its nature, its causes, or a method of curing it?" He feared none of these questions could be answered in the affirmative. But he would ask them to consider three of the great advances and reforms in medicine and surgery—vaccination by Jenner, chloroform by Simpson, antiseptics by Lister. These discoveries did not abolish disease, but they diminished some of its most loathsome and most horrible features to the irreducible minimum. It was exactly the same thing that had been achieved by reforms in the care of the insane. By the hospitalisation of asylums, skilled nursing, open-air treatment, open-air work, and as great an extension of liberty as was consistent with actual safety, features that formerly were loathsome enough had become not unpleasant to look upon, suffering had been relieved, and life under abnormal conditions had been rendered more endurable. (Applause.)

Of the nature and causes of certain forms of insanity, those who had devoted their lives to investigation would be found most ready to admit how little was really known. Although insanity was not decreasing, although the recovery-rate in mental hospitals was very slightly but perceptibly decreasing, and although no preventive or curative measures had as yet been devised to combat it, the prospects were never more hopeful than at the present time. Throughout the whole field of scientific medicine constant advances were being made, many of them having a bearing on their subject. Some day—it might not be in their time—a light would be thrown upon problems which were now obscure. Even when that day came problems would remain presenting themselves, as now, under two aspects—a constant and a variable one. The constant was the insoluble problem of life; the variable was the view they chose to take of it. From their views of life all their civilisation had proceeded. It was the same with insanity. The constant was the problem of its nature and causes. From the variable had proceeded all the advances and reforms in its treatment, which had resulted in Scotland in such a uniformly high standard of excellence. (Applause.)

On the motion of Dr. MARR, a vote of thanks was accorded to the chairman; and on the call of Mr. A. D. WOOD acknowledgment was made of the services of Dr. R. B. Campbell, medical superintendent, Stirling District Asylum, Larbert, who had acted as hon. secretary and treasurer.—*Scotsman*, June 9th, 1922.

PSYCHIATRY IN AUSTRALIA.

SIR JOHN MACPHERSON, C.B., Edinburgh, who lately retired from the post of Commissioner of the Board of Control for Scotland, has been offered, through the Agent-General for New South Wales, and has accepted for a period of three years, the post of Professor of Psychiatry in the University of Sydney. This Chair is the first of its kind in any university in Australia.

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION.

At the last meeting held at Boston, 1921, the American Medico-Psychological Association changed its name to the American Psychiatric Association. At the same meeting the *Journal of Insanity* became the *American Journal of Psychiatry*.

LONG GROVE MENTAL HOSPITAL, EPSOM.

The charges made by a witness against the staff of one of the most up-to-date mental hospitals in the United Kingdom, before the Departmental Committee appointed by the Ministry of Health to consider the allegations made against asylum administration contained in Dr. Lomax's *Experiences of an Asylum Doctor*, were sown broadcast by the Press, but, carrying out its usual inconsiderate attitude to mental hospital employees, the same publicity has not been given to rebutting evidence.