

procured an order from the Home Secretary under Section 66 of the Mental Deficiency Act, whereby the Mental Deficiency Committee is appointed to be the Asylums Committee. It will, of course, be bound in the latter functions by the Lunacy Acts until Parliament assents to the Council's proposal, but much of the statutory powers of managing the asylum will be shown from it. Mr. H. F. Keene, being the Clerk to the Visiting Committee, has been appointed to the same office under the Mental Deficiency Committee. The County Medical Officer, who is also the School Medical Officer, is appointed to office under the latter Committee; this is a step which is certainly wise. An elaborate memorandum has been drawn up defining the duties of each of these two executive officers, so that neither overlapping nor friction should lessen that ease of administration which is so much called for by the extent of the work to be done.

Mr. Keene, who, we suppose, has drawn up this portion of the report, details some of the difficulties connected with the administration of the Mental Deficiency Act. Among others is that coming under the second series of tests which must be passed before a person can be dealt with under the Act. It is only a few who can, in all conscience, satisfy requirements. He instances the common case of a defective child (*i.e.*, not an idiot or imbecile) who needs after a time more special care or education than the fondest of parents can give. Can such a child be deemed to be neglected, abandoned, without visible means of support, or cruelly treated? The difficulty is partly solved by concluding that the word "neglected" must cover cases where, without any wilful omission, the care and accommodation provided, which might be adequate for a normal person, are inadequate for one who is defective; in other words, that neglect may be constructive as well as positive. This has enabled action to be taken in many cases. Some negotiation, which indeed must be delicate, is passing between the Council and the Metropolitan Asylums Board, whose institutions are obviously most suitable for the mental defectives belonging to the Council.

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#### Part IV.—Notes and News.

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##### THE MEDICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

THE QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING of the Association was held at the Medical Society's Rooms, No. 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London, on Tuesday, May 16th, 1916, Lieut.-Colonel David G. Thomson, M.D., President, in the chair.

*There were present:* Drs. T. S. Adair, H. T. S. Aveline, Fletcher Beach, D. Bower, J. Chambers, R. H. Cole, M. Craig, J. F. Dixon, A. C. Dove, T. Drapes, R. Eager, J. H. Earls, C. F. Fothergill, A. H. Griffith, H. E. Haynes, T. B. Hyslop, J. Keay, N. T. Kerr, R. L. Langdon-Down, N. Lavers, H. J. Mackenzie, A. Miller, J. M. Murray, A. W. Neill, W. F. Nelis, H. H. Newington, D. Orr, J. G. P. Phillips, W. A. Potts, R. G. Rows, Sir G. H. Savage, J. N. Sergeant, G. E. Shuttleworth, R. P. Smith, J. G. Soutar, T. E. K. Stansfield, H. F. Stephens,

J. Stewart, F. R. P. Taylor, H. Wolseley-Lewis, and R. H. Steen (Acting Hon. Gen. Sec.).

*Present at the Council Meeting:* Lieut.-Colonel D. G. Thomson, M.D. (President) in the chair, Drs. T. S. Adair, H. T. S. Aveline, J. Chambers, R. H. Cole, T. Drapes, J. Keay, N. T. Kerr, N. Lavers, H. J. Mackenzie, A. Miller, H. H. Newington, J. G. Porter Phillips, J. N. Sergeant, J. G. Soutar, T. E. K. Stansfield, H. Wolseley-Lewis, and R. H. Steen (Acting Hon. Gen. Sec.).

*Apologies for absence were received from:* Drs. R. B. Campbell, C. C. Easterbrook, R. R. Leeper, G. D. McRae, Bedford Pierce, and W. R. Watson.

#### MINUTES.

The minutes of the previous meeting, having been published in the *Journal of Mental Science* for April, were taken as read, confirmed, and duly signed.

The PRESIDENT said that the only business arising out of the previous Council meeting was that the Council wished members to know that they had had under consideration the serious depletion of the male staffs of asylums. The Council had held a special meeting on the matter, and were at present in correspondence with the Board of Control thereon. A perusal of the *Journal* for April would show the length to which the question had been taken.

#### THE LATE MR. HINE, F.R.I.B.A.

The PRESIDENT said he was sure every member would be sorry to hear that a gentleman who had been an Honorary Member of the Association since 1898, Mr. Hine, F.R.I.B.A., the Architect, had passed away. He died in April. As was known to members, Mr. Hine designed and altered a great many public asylums, and had done a great deal in connection with that part of the work which they of the specialty deemed so important, namely, the comfortable and suitable housing of the insane. He moved, from the chair, that a vote of condolence be sent to his family.

The resolution was confirmed by members rising in their places.

#### THE LATE DR. MORRISON AND DR. O'NEILL.

The PRESIDENT also announced that a letter had been received from Mrs. Morrison, the widow of Dr. Morrison, thanking the Association for its message of condolence. A similar communication was received from Miss O'Neill.

#### PAPERS.

Dr. DAVID ORR and Major Rows, R.A.M.C., M.D.: "Experimental Toxic Lesions in the Rabbit's Brain, and their bearing on the Genesis of Acquired Idiocy and Imbecility in Man." (With lantern demonstration.)

The PRESIDENT, receiving no response to his invitation to members to discuss the contributions, said it was as he feared, namely, that such learned and advanced views on these recondite problems prevented anything being said upon them which might be termed a discussion. But he was sure that the members present would at least join with him in thanking Dr. Orr and Major Rows for having brought such extremely interesting matters before them. Personally, it was a great relief to him to hear pure medicine again, after the routine which they, administrators, were at present steeped in. He had been much interested in the narration of the case of psychic vomiting. There was at the present time, in the hospital of which he had charge, a man who appeared physically sound, to all the ordinary methods of physical examination. The surgeons had done various things for him, and finally he had been handed over to the physician. The case was, originally, one of shell shock, and the most striking stimulus which caused vomiting was the entry of a new case or convoy of cases into the ward, the vomiting being more violent if a convoy appeared than if only one case were admitted. Various expedients to reduce the vomiting had been tried, such as removing the patient to a place a little removed from the ward during the actual process of admission of the new cases,

but there was no success from that manœuvre. Nor had the use of screens any effect. Members would agree that the theses of the authors had been admirably presented, with their usual methodical precision.

The resolution of thanks was carried with acclamation.

#### THE 1916 ANNUAL MEETING.

The PRESIDENT said it was the business of this meeting to fix the date and place of the Annual Meeting for the summer. The meeting this year would not be of the usual character, in regard to either length, quality, or quantity; it would be a one-day meeting, and it was proposed to hold it in these rooms, on July 27th, which was the day before the annual representative meeting of the British Medical Association, so that members attending both functions would be inconvenienced. The purpose of the meeting would be mainly to transact business. Papers would be welcomed, but there would be no social side to the meeting.

The following further correspondence has taken place between the Board of Control, and the Secretary of the Association :

CITY OF LONDON MENTAL HOSPITAL,  
NEAR DARTFORD, KENT.

May 17th, 1916.

#### *Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland.*

SIR,—At a meeting of the Council of this Association held on May 16th, the letter received from the Board of Control dated April 4th, 1916, was considered, and I was directed to thank the Board for their courtesy in so promptly replying to the letter from the Association dated March 26th, 1916.

I was further directed to state that the Council were fully cognisant of the fact that the artisan and other staff did not form the subject of recommendations by the Board of Control. The Tribunals, unfettered by recommendations, and on the consideration of each case on its merits, have generally exempted a sufficient number of men in divisions 3, 4, 5 and 6 to carry on efficiently the work of the departments in which they are employed. It is only in the staff of male attendants that depletion in the numbers has been so excessive as to seriously threaten the main purpose of asylum management, *vis.*, the care and treatment of the insane. Asylum authorities and their Medical Officers have hitherto decided what staff is necessary for the proper care of the patients for whom they are responsible. The view of the Council is that no other body is really competent in the absence of local knowledge to express a valid opinion on this matter. A sound decision thereon involves a fuller knowledge of facts than can possibly be obtained by a central board from even the most elaborate tabulated particulars. This being so, a very serious situation must arise wherever Local Tribunals consider themselves limited by the recommendations of the Board, who are, necessarily, only imperfectly acquainted with the requirements of individual asylums.

A conflict of opinion, which the Council regret, has thus arisen in many instances between the Board and asylum authorities as to what men are indispensable. On their record Asylum Medical Officers and the Committees whom they advise are to be trusted to encourage, not to hinder, recruiting, and had they been left free to prove to Local Tribunals that each man applied for is indispensable the result would have been more satisfactory.

The opinion of the Board that the circumstances of the time justify "risks being faced, amenities being curtailed which would not be permissible under ordinary circumstances, and a reduction in the high standard of comfort and efficiency which has very properly characterised asylum management for so many years," is not one to which the Council of the Medico-Psychological Association can subscribe. It is feared that such an admission would make easy a relapse to the extensive resort to seclusion and mechanical and chemical restraint which prevailed in the days when attendants were few and inefficient.

While the Council recognise the generous motive which prompted the last paragraph of the Board's letter, they feel that Asylum Visiting Committees and Medical

Officers cannot and would not desire to shift to the Board of Control a responsibility which is morally and legally their own.

To save the already dangerously depleted asylums from the almost complete denudation of a skilled and physically fit staff of male attendants, the Council suggest that steps should be taken (1) to obtain total exemption for those men to whom temporary exemption has been granted, and (2) to secure that attendants who have already been rejected as being medically unfit shall not be accepted on re-examination unless they be found fit for service in the fighting forces abroad, and that in the event of their being so accepted it shall be competent for the asylum authorities to appeal to the Local Tribunals for the total exemption of such of these men as they may deem to be indispensable.

In this way only does it now seem possible to retain a remnant of reliable men as attendants, and the Council of the Medico-Psychological Association will be thankful and relieved of some anxiety if the Board of Control can see their way to support and further these proposals.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

The Secretary,  
The Board of Control,  
66, Victoria Street, Westminster,  
London, S.W.

R. H. STEEN,  
*Acting Hon. General Secretary.*

THE BOARD OF CONTROL,  
66, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.  
1st July, 1916.

SIR,—I am directed by the Board of Control to advert to your letter of the 17th May on behalf of the Council of the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland, and relating to the recommendation for exemption of Asylum Attendants from Military Service, and to reply as follows:

As foreshadowed in the Board's letter accompanying the first set of recommendations, a considerable number of attendants, for whom temporary exemption was originally recommended, have now on further recommendations been granted full conditional exemption. In the cases of many other attendants additional temporary exemption has been granted, which may be still further extended should this prove necessary.

As the Board continue to have this power to renew recommendations for exemption, they do not consider it necessary that they should take steps to procure forthwith the total conditional exemption of attendants now temporarily exempted, nor of the men now employed in asylums who have been rejected as being medically unfit, but who, it is thought, may possibly, as time goes on, be considered after further examination fit for service in one or other of the military branches, but not in the fighting forces abroad. The Board will, however, be pleased at once to consider any particular case if submitted to them by the Asylum Authority.

The arguments adduced and the opinions expressed by the Council in the earlier part of the letter have been read with some surprise, and while the Board do not propose to enter into them at length, I am to mention the following facts.

The policy of withholding from the Asylum Visiting Committees the power of final decision, as to how many and which of their male staff shall be exempted from military service, is in harmony with that in force throughout the country under the Military Service Acts, namely, that employers are not to be the final judges of their own cases.

The suggestions contained in the Council's letter that the Board of Control are without knowledge of local circumstances; that they are imperfectly acquainted with the requirements of individual asylums; and that they are dependent for their decisions upon tabulated particulars, are not in accordance with facts. I am to express the Board's surprise that such a view should emanate from the Council of the Medico-Psychological Association. The Board, as they thought the Council were aware, have ample facilities for supplementing their knowledge of particular circumstances, and they freely avail themselves thereof when necessary.

The duty which has been imposed upon the Board was not of their own seeking. That some differences of opinion would occur between the Board and some of the Visiting Committees and their Medical Superintendents was inevitable; but in most instances after personal interviews the Board's views have been accepted.

The justification, if one were needed, for invoking the assistance of the Board in the matter is the fact that, as the result of their action, a considerable number of men have been set free for the Army, admittedly not without somewhat increasing the anxieties of the Visiting Committees and their Medical Officers, but so far without untoward events.

The Council of the Association are in error in thinking (as is suggested by your letter) that the Local Tribunals have any power of exercising discretion outside the recommendations of the Board in dealing with asylum attendants as persons in a certified occupation, and, wherever it has come to the knowledge of the Board that any Tribunal has attempted to exercise any such discretion, the fact has not been allowed to pass unnoticed.

The inability of the Council to concur in the Board's opinion as to the principles of asylum management which should be followed in the present national crisis is, the Board think, to be regretted. It will be the duty of the Board, as well as of asylum authorities, firmly to exert their influence at the conclusion of the War to bring about a return to a proper standard, and in this they feel sure the co-operation of the Medico-Psychological Association may be counted upon.

I am to add that the Board of Control cannot accept the position which the Council of the Association take up, in attempting to express an opinion as regards the ability or willingness of Asylum Visiting Committees to place responsibility upon the Board in this matter. As a matter of fact, the Board are in possession of letters from a considerable number of Committees, in which the latter either invite the Board to assume such responsibility or express their satisfaction at the offer of the Board to do so.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

O. E. DICKINSON,  
*Secretary.*

The Acting Hon. General Secretary,  
Medico-Psychological Association  
of Great Britain and Ireland.

#### SOUTH-EASTERN DIVISION.

THE SPRING MEETING of the South Eastern Division was held at 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London, W., at 2.30 p.m. on Friday, April 28th, 1916. Among those present were Drs. Baird, Bower, Ralph Brown, Earls, Haynes, J. M. Murray, Norman, Stewart, Watson, and J. N. Sergeant (Hon. Sec.).

The minutes of the last meeting, having been published in the Journal, were taken as read and confirmed.

Drs. R. Armstrong-Jones, Hubert J. Norman, T. E. K. Stansfield, and W. H. B. Stoddart were elected Representative Members of the Council, and Dr. J. Noel Sergeant Hon. Divisional Secretary for the year 1916-1917. Drs. Fuller, Higson, and F. Watson were elected members of the Divisional Committee of Management.

It was decided to hold the Autumn Meeting at 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London, W., on Wednesday, October 4th, 1916.

Dr. Hubert J. Norman then read his paper on "The Cerebral Complications of Raynaud's Disease."

After a brief discussion a vote of thanks to Dr. Norman for his interesting paper was carried by acclamation.

#### SOUTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

THE SPRING MEETING of the above Division was held, by kind permission of Dr. MacBryan, at 17, Belmont, Bath, on Friday, April 28th, 1916.

The following Members were present: Drs. Bartlett, Norman Lavers, Legge, MacBryan, and Aveline, who acted as Hon. Divisional Secretary.

Dr. MacBryan was voted to the Chair.

Letters of apology for non-attendance were received from Drs. Eager, Macdonald, and Soutar.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.