

The Hon. Secretary was directed to write to the Chief Secretary acknowledging the receipt of his letter, and stating that the Irish Division was glad to hear that the first vacancy upon the Council was to be filled by a representative of the medical or nursing staffs of the asylums.

Questions in connection with the failure of the Government to give the asylum service any representation upon the General Public Health Council of Ireland were discussed.

Dr. Lawless sought the opinion of the members as regards the position of the staff in his asylum, the newly appointed Board having refused to pay the staff salaries owing to some temporary deadlock. Dr. Lawless received the advice of the members.

Subsequently the members visited the Villa Colony, the workshops and other features of interest in connection with the Institution.

Dr. Lawless having been called to the Chair, a cordial vote of thanks to Dr. Graham for his kindness and hospitality and for the very interesting day he had given to the members was proposed by Dr. Nolan, seconded by Dr. Donelan, and passed with acclamation.

The following letter has been circulated (*vide* Report of Quarterly Meeting, p. 66):

MEDICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND.

11, CHANDOS STREET,
CAVENDISH SQUARE,
April 2nd, 1920.

DEAR SIR,

The Council of the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland is most anxious that the scope and usefulness of the Association shall be extended, so that it keeps fully abreast of modern developments, and expresses the aims and aspirations of younger members. At the present time new clinics are springing up all over the country under the Ministry of Pensions, and it is believed that it will not be long before the Ministry of Health will provide early treatment for civilians suffering from mental and nervous disorders. This new departure was urged by the Medico-Psychological Association in 1914 and again in 1918, and we believe the Association can and should assist in carrying out this reform successfully.

The activities of the Association were necessarily curtailed by the war, but its members continued to render striking service to medicine during this time in divers fields of work, and now that a new era is at hand, the Council trusts that the Association may once again fulfil its proper function in promoting renewed interest in psychological medicine.

It is of the first importance that all the young men freshly returned from service under war conditions, especially those who have been engaged in research work, or in the treatment of nervous and mental disorders, should become members of the Association, as it is to them we must look for inspiration and progress. Our membership should include all engaged in psychiatry, not merely those interested in the welfare of the insane, but all physicians devoting their energies to the study and treatment of nervous and mental disorders.

We believe the Association can render signal service to the community in facilitating the interchange of ideas, in stimulating research, and in publishing in its journal reports of success and of failure in treatment.

The object of the letter is to ask all our members to encourage anyone they know to be interested in psychiatry, whether engaged in hospitals, clinics, private institutions, or pension boards, to apply for membership. An appeal of this kind can, however, hardly be attended with success unless it is found to be worth while to join the Association.

The following facts may be mentioned:

(1) The Medico-Psychological Association has a membership extending throughout the whole of Great Britain and Ireland.

(2) Through its Standing Committee it has done, and is still doing, most valuable work. The Parliamentary Committee watches all new legislation. The Educational Committee successfully stimulated University Authorities to establish special diplomas in Psychological Medicine. It controls the Examinations for the Nursing Certificate, which has been of such striking value in improving the training and status of mental nurses.

(3) Special Committees are frequently set apart to initiate new developments, and the Association has a successful record of work carried out in this way.

(4) The *Journal of Mental Science* takes a high place in the literature of Psychological Medicine. Under new conditions it will again grow in size and importance. Besides publishing original articles it contains an excellent abstract of current literature. No one interested in the subject can afford to ignore the *Journal of Mental Science*, whilst its pages have not rarely first brought to the notice of the public a new worker in psychiatry who subsequently has become distinguished.

But we believe the chief value of the Association lies in the facilities it provides for the interchange of ideas and the discussion of difficulties and problems. Further, there is a manifest gain from the personal intercourse at the meetings of members united by a common bond of interest. The Association is a democratic body, innovations calculated to enhance its usefulness are welcomed, and in the new order of things that has commenced the signatories to this letter believe that the members generally will gladly support new developments likely to advance the objects of the Association.

Yours very truly,

(Signed)

BEDFORD PIERCE, *President.*

JAMES CHAMBERS, *Hon. Treasurer.*

REGINALD WORTH, *Hon. Secretary.*

P.S.—Members are elected at the General and Branch Meetings of the Association. Forms of application for membership can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Dr. R. Worth, Springfield Mental Hospital, Tooting, London, S.W. 17, and should be returned to him a month before the meeting at which election is desired, so that the names may appear in the Agenda.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH: FIRST ANNUAL REPORT (1919-20).

LUNACY AND MENTAL DEFICIENCY (TRANSFER OF POWER ORDER), 1920.⁽¹⁾

It was always intended that the Ministry of Health should become the Department responsible for the care and treatment of lunatics, but the Home Secretary's powers could not be transferred in their entirety, as they included powers in relation to criminal lunatics which could not be dissociated from the general administration of criminal law. Section 3 (2) (b) of the Ministry of Health Act, 1919, accordingly provided for the transfer by Order in Council to the Ministry of all or any of the powers and duties of the Home Secretary under the enactments relating to lunacy and mental deficiency. A draft Order in Council was prepared in consultation with the Home Office and laid on the table of both Houses in the autumn of 1919. But certain minor amendments proved to be necessary, and a fresh Order had to be laid at the beginning of the present Session, with the result that the actual transfer of powers did not take effect until May 17th, 1920. This Order in Council marks an important step in the process of centralising all health administration in a single department, and the Minister of Health is now responsible to Parliament for the administration of the Board of Control. No change is made in the constitution or procedure of the Board, but the effect of the Order is to allow of the treatment of mental diseases being co-ordinated more closely with the treatment of other forms of disease than would have been possible while the responsibility for the administration of the Lunacy and Mental Deficiency Acts rested with the Home Secretary.

⁽¹⁾ Statutory Rules and Orders, 1920, No. 809. [Price 1*d.* net.]