

Commissioner), Dr. Nicolson (Lord Chancellor's Visitor, President Medico-Psychological Association), the Earl and Countess of Arran, Lord Henly, Lady Wm. Lennox, Sir Stuart Knill, Bart., LL.D. (Ex-Lord Mayor of London), Sir Wm. Broadbent, Bart., M.D., Members of the London County Council, Members of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, Infirmary Medical Superintendents, Asylum Medical Superintendents, the Rev. Henry Hawkins (Chaplain of the London County Asylum, Colney Hatch), Miss Emily Janes (Secretary, National Union of Women Workers.)

"Sir Benjamin Richardson in his address to the London meeting pointed out the chief objects of the Association:—1. To improve generally the status of asylum nurses and attendants. 2. To secure the sympathy and co-operation of all those interested in institutional work and efforts. 3. To provide a 'Home of Rest and Nursing' for those engaged in asylum work—no such Home being in existence.

"He went on to show how much asylum attendants had to bear, and what appalling duties often became their share of work in the human family; what a tax there was upon their energies, and how brief a period of existence, cheered by very little diversity or recreation, belonged to their lives. That was one point—to gain the sympathy of the public. It was for the interest of the insane that asylum attendants should have the highest position compatible with the work.

"In speaking of the 'Home of Rest' Sir Benjamin remarked that the institution is to be maintained by those for whose benefit it is called into existence. The need of repose and change is especially strong in those vocations which, like that of the asylum attendants, involve a constant strain on the nerves; and a permanent 'break down' will, in many cases, be averted if the 'Association of Asylum Workers' is able to carry out the plan of keeping up a place where tired workers among the insane may rest and recuperate.

"It is hoped that the 'Home of Rest' will be ready for the reception of asylum workers in the summer of 1896. It is proposed to rent and furnish a house or houses on the South Coast.

"There is reason to believe that this project will receive sympathetic consideration at the hands of the City Corporations. It is not anticipated that there will be any difficulty in maintaining the 'Home' after it has been established, the number of workers engaged in asylums being large enough to make it self-supporting.

"It is proposed to draw up and issue as occasion requires, a leaflet—'Asylum News'—setting forth the constitution of the Association, mode of election, tenure of office, with lists of members, notices, and other matters of common interest.

"The expenses attendant on the working of the Association will not be great; the subscription of ordinary members is therefore fixed at the nominal sum of 1s.

"The last census gives some 20,000 or more persons employed as male and female attendants in asylums. Assuming that one-fourth only are enrolled as members of the Association, this will give an annual income of £250.

"The Honorary Secretary (Dr. Walmsley, Metropolitan District Asylum, Dartford, Kent) requests that this matter may be brought to the knowledge of the staff of each asylum, and that the names of those desiring to join may be communicated to him."

CORRESPONDENCE.

Re the Lancashire Asylums Board's Pension Scheme.

FROM LANCASTRIAN.

Few will be found to congratulate the Lancashire Asylums Board on their recently formulated pension scheme.

It is to be hoped that the scheme is but a tentative one, as in its present form it is, in most respects, extremely imperfect.

Possibilities there are, truly, but certainties none. The earnest, faithful asylum official has been led to expect, after a period of from 20 to 30 years of difficult, often dangerous, and comparatively ill-paid service, a definite pension according to his service and record. It is well known that the promise of this

pension was taken into account when the various salaries and value of the emoluments were fixed.

Now, forsooth, he *may* obtain, irrespective of his record of good and long service, between 55 and 60 years of age, a pension (*of at least one-third of his actual salary*, or at most of two-thirds of his salary and emoluments), but the actual amount of which depends upon the caprice or temper of the awarding body which may then be in office.

Even apart from these wide limits the scheme is too elastic, every provision being so arranged as to be possibly set aside or to be modified indefinitely. The minimum age at which a pension may be ordinarily granted is fixed by the Lunacy Act of 1890 at 50 years, yet this is overridden and other five years added in this scheme, making the minimum age 55 years. The age for compulsory retirement proposed in this scheme is 60 years. Few attendants on the insane are fit for active duty after 55 years, as long service in an asylum has, without doubt, a markedly deteriorating effect both mentally and physically.

One could name several counties, some of far less extent and importance than Lancashire, where definite and equitable pension schemes have been adopted, and which have given general satisfaction.

Besides Lancashire, the following counties have adopted pension schemes during the last few months:—

Wills County Asylum.—Only those in continuous contact with patients are eligible for pensions. Minimum age and service is 50 and 15 years respectively. The scale adopted is one-fiftieth of salary and value of emoluments for every year of service up to 20; for each succeeding year up to 25 an addition of two-fiftieths to the above and a corresponding addition for further years of service up to a maximum of two-thirds of annual salary and emoluments. No age has been fixed for compulsory retirement.

Devon County Asylum.—The same restriction as to persons eligible exists. The minimum age and service is 50 and 15 years. The allowances made are not more than one-fortieth nor less than the one-fiftieth of salary and net value of the emoluments for every year served, the minimum being fifteen-fiftieths and maximum twenty-six-fortieths or twenty-six-fiftieths or fraction between these latter points at the discretion of the Committee.

Derby County Asylum.—Rule as to eligibility similar to the above. "A service of 15 years shall entitle an official of 50 years of age to a pension, but no pension shall exceed two-thirds of pay and emoluments at date of retirement." The following standing scale is adopted: One-fiftieth of pay and emoluments per annum for every year's service, with a minimum age of 50 years and a minimum and maximum of service respectively of 15 and 26 or 34 years. Under special circumstances the pension may be one-fortieth, with a maximum of twenty-six-fortieths, but that as to the one-fiftieth scale, persons eligible may claim it as of right. Resignation shall be optional at the age of 50, but compulsory at the age of 55.

Cornwall Lunatic Asylum.—No restrictions as to eligibility. (1) "A service of 15 years shall entitle any officer 50 years of age to a pension." (2) The scheme provides one-fortieth of pay and emoluments for every year's service, with a minimum of age of 50 years and a minimum and maximum of service respectively of 15 and 26 years. No age has been fixed for compulsory retirement.

All the above schemes have provisions for granting pensions earlier in cases of confirmed sickness or disability from injury received in the actual performance of duty.

DR. LOCKHART ROBERTSON'S RETIREMENT.

At a meeting of the Board of the Lord Chancellor's Visitors in Lunacy, held at the Royal Courts of Justice on the 14th January last, the following resolution was passed:—"Resolved that the Board express their regret at the retirement of Dr. Lockhart Robertson owing to impaired health, and further beg to express their appreciation of his distinguished and useful services during a period of 26 years."