

A general discussion took place on matters at present affecting asylum administration, and a scheme of reduced working hours for the nursing staff in asylums was recommended.

The SECRETARY pointed out that a committee, drawn from recognised medical bodies in Scotland, had been appointed for the purpose of considering the proposals under discussion for the establishment of a Ministry of Health, and that he considered that the Scottish Division of the Association had strong claims to be represented on such a committee. After some discussion it was unanimously agreed that the Secretary should communicate with the Secretary of the committee requesting that the Division should be represented, and Lieut.-Col. Keay was nominated as representative.

It was also agreed that a small committee, composed of Lieut.-Col. Keay, Dr. G. M. Robertson and Dr. Campbell should be appointed to act as a Watching Committee *re* the Ministry of Health Bill.

A vote of thanks to the President for presiding concluded the business of the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The following communication from Sir H. Bryan Donkin has been forwarded to the Editors for publication :

It is greatly to be regretted that my article on the " Factors of Criminal Actions " was published in the *Journal of Mental Science* only a few days after the lamented death of Dr. Charles Goring. This article consisted mainly in a reply to Dr. Goring's criticisms of a paper by me which he published in the *Journal* for April, 1918. My reply was written in the summer of 1918, and the proof was corrected by me many months before the article was printed off for the April number of this year, some time previously to Dr. Goring's death on May 5th.

But for this unavoidable concurrence of dates my article would have been published later, with an expression of my personal sorrow for the loss of Dr. Goring and my regret that no further elucidation of the controversy between us could now be made.

H. BRYAN DONKIN.

June 12th, 1919.

PRISON REFORM.

THE POLICY OF THE HOWARD ASSOCIATION.

IN a statement of policy, just issued, the Howard Association, which recently celebrated its jubilee, says that the two main reasons for maintaining a penal system are the protection of the community and the reformation of the offender; and because society cannot obtain real protection unless the offender either be permanently segregated or permanently reclaimed, it follows that the chief business of our penal methods is to secure the reformation of offenders. To this end the Association urges that prison governors and their subordinates shall be chosen as possessing special aptitude for reclaiming men and women, and that a certain amount of freedom to experiment shall be permitted. The Association instances the striking results recently obtained in American prisons, notably at Sing Sing, New York, and in British prisons advocates abolition of the " Silence Rule," which is seldom observed, and breeds deceit in prisoners and warders alike; the shortening to a very brief term of the period of separate confinement; more free intercourse from judicious persons from outside; extension of the functions now exercised by the paid prison Chaplain to persons of all denominations, paid or unpaid, having the necessary gifts and calling; adoption of the Indeterminate Sentence, ensuring that offenders shall be released when they are fit to be released, and the adoption of the Parole System, that they may receive guidance during the early days of liberty. An extension of the Probation System is advocated, together with the appointment of more and better-trained and better-paid Probation Officers. The Association shows that the easy method of making prison the alternative to payment of a fine bears much more heavily on the poor than the rich, and urges