

## Part IV.—Notes and News.

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

#### QUARTERLY MEETING.

THE Quarterly Meeting of the Association was held at No. 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London, on Tuesday, May 21st, 1912, Dr. William R. Dawson, President, in the Chair.

*The following members were present:* Drs. T. Stewart Adair, Charles Aldridge, H. T. S. Aveline, Harvey Baird, J. L. Baskin, Fletcher Beach, David Blair, C. H. Bond, David Bower, A. Helen Boyle, John F. Briscoe, R. B. Campbell, J. Carswell, James Chambers, R. H. Cole, M. A. Collins, H. Corner, Thos. Drapes, W. Norwood East, J. F. Heise Elleston, Edward Gane, Stanley A. Gill, T. Duncan Greenlees, H. E. Hayes, J. N. Higginson, R. D. Hotchkiss, David Hunter, E. M. Johnstone, Gerald Johnston, Robert Jones, Walter S. Kay, Wolseley Lewis, John R. Lord, William H. C. Macartney, H. C. MacBryan, J. H. Macdonald, R. W. Macdonald, H. J. Mackenzie, Alf. Miller, C. S. Morrison, H. Hayes Newington, H. J. Norman, J. O'Mara, L. R. Oswald, J. G. Porter Phillips, Bedford Pierce, George M. Robertson, R. Percy Smith, T. Waddelow Smith, J. G. Soutar, J. B. Spence, T. E. Knowles Stansfield, R. Stewart, J. D. Thomas, T. Seymour Tuke, Fred. Watson, D. Yellowlees.

*Visitors:* A. Fox, W. A. Hattie (Halifax, Canada).

Regrets at inability to be present were received from Sir T. S. Clouston, Drs. Bolton, Easterbrook, Keay, Leeper, Mercier, Middlemass, Stoddart, Thompson, Urquhart, and Outterson Wood.

*Present at the previous Council Meeting:* The President (Dr. W. R. Dawson) in the Chair, Drs. Adair, Blair, Bower, Campbell, Collins, Drapes, Hotchkiss, Hunter, Lewis, McDonald, McKenzie, Miller, Hayes Newington, Phillips, Robertson, Soutar, Spence.

The minutes of the last meeting, having already been printed and circulated in the Journal, were taken as read and duly confirmed.

#### OBITUARY.

THE PRESIDENT said that before the meeting proceeded any further a sad duty devolved upon him; namely, to mention two former members of the Association who had passed away since the last meeting. The first of these was Sir Richard Brayn, who was well known as a Home Office expert in lunacy, and who succeeded Dr. Nicolson as Superintendent of Broadmoor. He was an old member of the Association, having joined it in the year 1881; and although he did not take a very active part in the work of it, he was frequently present at the meetings. He was sure it would be the wish of members to instruct the General Secretary to convey the condolences of the Association to the members of Sir Richard Brayn's family.

This was agreed to by the members standing in silence.

The other death was one which touched the Irish members more nearly. It was that of Dr. Cullinan, who for some years past had been Deputy-Superintendent of Richmond Asylum, which meant that he was practically Superintendent of the large branch asylum at Portrane, within the County of Dublin. He was an extremely capable officer, and a man who was looked up to by his colleagues. His death took place almost suddenly. The President said he was sure that it would be the wish of the meeting that a similar message to that concerning Sir Richard Brayn should be sent to Mrs. Cullinan.

The resolution was passed in the same manner as the previous one.

## BILL FOR DEALING WITH THE FEEBLE-MINDED.

The PRESIDENT said a resolution had been sent from the Council with reference to the Bill, which was read for the first time in the House of Commons on the 17th inst., for the purpose of dealing with the feeble-minded. The resolution ran: "That the Medico-Psychological Association is strongly of opinion that the authority which will have to administer the new Feeble-Minded Persons Control Act should be constituted at once in anticipation of any amalgamation such as is contemplated in Sect. 62; and that such body, in the first instance, should consist of the Commissioners in Lunacy, with necessary additions, this principle being in strict conformity with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-Minded, and being already provided for in the case of Scotland by clause 67 (1) of the Bill." The Bill, as probably most members would be aware, proposed to constitute a new authority to look after the feeble-minded and the defectives. The term "defective" was taken to include an enormous number of different classes of mental defect; and some of those different classes were already dealt with in the asylums. The number was so enormous and the scope of the proposed Bill was so wide that it was evident that the appointment of a new Commission, consisting of officials who had had no experience in the administration of asylums or the care of those mentally afflicted, would be a grave mistake. And it seemed to the Council to be most important that the body which knew more about the subject than any other body in the Kingdom should be the one appointed to carry out the recommendations of the new Act, with, of course, a considerable accession of strength to its numbers. He therefore proposed that the resolution he had read, and which was recommended to the general meeting by the Council, should be passed.

Dr. HAYES NEWINGTON seconded the resolution, and for the information of the meeting he read the sections of the Act concerned in the matter. The constitution of the central authority to administer the Act was found in section 2: "For the purposes aforesaid, His Majesty, on the recommendation of the Secretary of State," etc. The object of the resolution proposed by the President was to press for the appointment of the Commissioners absolutely from the first, as the basis of the controlling authority. The Council thought that some expert knowledge must be not only useful, but absolutely requisite to bring into being this new Act, because the medical side of the Act was almost as important as the financial. One knew that there would be very great difficulties in the matter of administration, finding the money, and so on, but when all that was said and done, the principal difficulty in administering the Act for the benefit of the nation would be from the medical side, in the way of determining who should come under its beneficent operation. It was thought that it would be a serious mistake if, under this section, the original Commission should consist of comparatively inexperienced persons; and then later on, when all the mischief which might be done had arisen, for the Commissioners in Lunacy to be added to that body. The Commissioners should be the body, and others added as might be necessary. In support of that one found in Section 67, Sub-section 1, the following words: "Sections 1 and 2 shall not apply, and in lieu thereof the general Board in Lunacy for Scotland, hereinafter referred to as the Board, shall be charged with general superintendence of matters connected with the supervision and control of persons, etc." It was thought that what was good for Scotland might possibly be good for England also, and whether it was good for Scotland or not, England should have it. He considered that the resolution followed closely the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded. It was well known that that body was a very weighty body, and pronounced a weighty judgment, which judgment had been respected by all people. And the Council thought that, if for no other reason, the Association ought to protest against such an important recommendation of that Commission being superseded by this Act, which was confessedly only an Act which was brought in in a form to avoid or get rid of the opposition of various bureaucratic bodies. The Bill was not that which was hoped for by psychiatrists, although it was a good Bill. He said that because the subject had been the shuttlecock between the various Government offices, the Local Government Board and so on, and they did not think such considerations should allow of the lunacy aspect of the question being put on one side. And he was glad to see that the *Times*, in its leader of the previous day,

asked the pointed question why there should be two bodies when one body, *vis.*, the Commissioners in Lunacy, could do the work admirably. Glancing through the Bill rapidly—he had a copy only that morning—he felt sure that it must be altered, as it could not be worked in its present form, because the supervision of various classes had been given to two sets of authorities. That did not appear in the Bill, but when experienced people analysed it, it would be found that in some respects the authority would be a conflicting one, and that the unfortunate members of the Association who would have to administer under the authorities would have to answer to two authorities on one matter, which was obviously wrong. He seconded the resolution, and hoped the Association would pass it.

A MEMBER asked whether the words “in the first instance” appeared in the resolution, and was answered in the affirmative. He then said he would like to propose that the words be left out.

The PRESIDENT said those words were put in because it was proposed that in the first instance the body should be a separate one, and later should be amalgamated with the controlling body. The Association wished that the Commissioners should from the first be the controlling body, and not simply be amalgamated with the controlling body later on.

Dr. BEDFORD PIERCE asked whether it would be suitable to insert, as a kind of preamble to the resolution, words expressing welcome of the measure, such as, “while cordially welcoming this Bill.” There was at present nothing in the resolution expressing approval of the Bill by the Council, but surely, as a body, they would wish to express such approval.

Dr. HAYES NEWINGTON pointed out that the resolution was being submitted to a general meeting without having first appeared on the agenda, and that was done by special permission of the Association’s rules, which allowed such a resolution to be brought forward and voted upon with the consent of the Council. The Council had passed the resolution in its present form, and he did not think it would be in order for the general meeting to pass anything but that. Perhaps some of the members might not approve of it so heartily because they did not know what was in the Bill.

Dr. STANLEY GILL asked whether the standing orders could be suspended and a vote taken on it.

The PRESIDENT ruled that that could not be done.

Dr. ROBERT JONES said he considered this a most important resolution, and one which he felt should be supported by the Association. Now was the time to do so. Psychiatrists had been waiting five years for some legislation on the subject, and he thought it would be very polite on the part of the Association to express a cordial welcome of something which had come after five years of waiting. It was known, especially to Dr. Hayes Newington, that a great many children at three years of age were brought into a lunatic asylum on a lunacy certificate. Surely those came into the category of the mentally defective. If, as Dr. Newington said, there were to be two authorities, there would practically be two authorities over the same asylum, one authority responsible for the lunacy side, and the others in the body responsible for the imbecile or the weak-minded. Considering that it was very difficult to separate some cases of imbecility from cases of insanity and moral imbecility, and that one alienist would send a case to a home for mentally defective people, and another would send it to an asylum, it was most important that the control should be under one authority, and that that authority should be the Lunacy Commissioners.

The PRESIDENT read the resolution again and it was carried unanimously.

#### ELECTION OF CANDIDATES.

The PRESIDENT appointed Dr. Campbell and Dr. Lord as scrutineers for the ballot, and the following gentlemen were duly elected.

John Allan Munro Cameron, M.B., Ch.B.Glasg., Pathologist and Assistant Physician, Lancaster County Asylum, Whittingham, Preston. (Proposed by Drs. R. W. Watson, L. R. Oswald and Henry Carre.)

Eustace Stanley Hayes Gill, M.B., Ch.B.Liverpool, Licensee, Shaftesbury House, Formby, near Liverpool. (Proposed by Drs. Stanley A. Gill, Nathan Raw and H. Hayes Newington.)