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SUPPLEMENT

JULY, 1942.

THE ROYAL MEDICO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING.

THE QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING of the Association was held at No. 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W. 1, on Thursday, February 26, 1942, with the President, Dr. Thomas C. Graves, in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last meeting held on November 26, 1941, were taken as read, and signed as a correct record.

REPORT OF COUNCIL.

The HON. GENERAL SECRETARY (Dr. W. Gordon Masefield) gave the report of Council. He said: Meetings of the Research and Clinical, Educational, Handbook and Medical Planning Committees have been held.

Despite the additional cost of publication it is hoped by the Editors that the size of the Journal will be maintained throughout the year.

The Council has great pleasure in announcing that the Rockefeller Foundation has given the Association a further grant of £300 for 1942. Prof. Golla will continue to administer this grant, which will be used to assist members to visit hospitals where special treatment is being carried out; to supply textbooks on technical procedure, and books that are unobtainable from the usual library sources. The Rockefeller Foundation expressed their pleasure that, in spite of the troubled times, the Association was not "playing Hitler's game" and neglecting psychiatric research.

The May meeting will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 19 and 20, at Preston, Lancashire.

He moved the adoption of the Report, which was seconded by the HON. TREASURER.

Dr. C. W. BOWER asked whether the question of the shortage of nurses in mental hospitals was discussed by the Council, and whether the Council had anything to report on the matter.

The PRESIDENT replied that it was discussed, but the Council had no observations to make on the matter at present.

Dr. BOWER asked if it was in order to raise the question. He felt that public mental hospitals were suffering from a shortage of nurses, and one at least that he knew of was finding the greatest difficulty in carrying on with the staff it was able to get. Like other hospitals the so-called "standstill order" had been adopted. This particular hospital was paying the recognized rates and observing the conditions of service as laid down by the Conciliation Board of the Mental Hospitals Association and the Mental Hospital Workers' Union, nevertheless they were faced in the near future with such a shortage that there would be the greatest difficulty in carrying on. Was it possible that this Association, which was primarily composed of medical superintendents running mental hospitals and probably experiencing the same difficulties, could put forward a representation either to the Board of Control or to some other appropriate body that in the very near future the situation would be untenable? If the hospital of which he had spoken was unique and every other hospital had an adequate staff there was nothing more to be said. He would like to propose that a questionnaire be sent round to the medical superintendents of all county and borough mental hospitals asking (*a*) the number of patients, male and female, at the outbreak of war, (*b*) the number of patients at the present time, and (*c*) corresponding information regarding the number of nurses. If not illuminating the result might certainly be interesting.

Dr. NEIL MCDIARMID seconded the proposal. His hospital was the Three Counties, Bedfordshire. The number of female patients was 360 the number of nurses 61; of those 15 were on

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night duty. Every avenue had been explored in the hope of getting new nurses, but with very little success. He had written explaining the position to the Board of Control. It might be they were the only hospital so placed, but if any other hospital was in the same position he would be pleased to have their support in putting forward suggestions to the Board of Control or other Government departments.

Dr. A. A. W. PETRIE suggested the number of wards should be added to the questionnaire. Where there were a number of smaller wards the staff had to be larger in proportion.

The PRESIDENT said the question was discussed at the Council meeting and the Council was given to understand that the matter was in the hands of the Board of Control, who were giving it serious consideration. Consequently the Council felt that it was clearly inadvisable to give a recommendation to the Association to take any action at present. Dr. Bower and Dr. McDiarmid had now suggested sending out a questionnaire.

Dr. BOWER said that if the questionnaire were to be sent out, it should be done as soon as possible and a time limit set for the replies to be returned and action taken immediately on the replies. The chief trouble was the slow-moving machinery of the Government.

The PRESIDENT said the question was whether the Association desired that this questionnaire be sent round to all superintendents of hospitals.

Sir HUBERT BOND asked if it was intended to refer only to women patients and their nurses, or to both sides.

Dr. BOWER replied he intended it to apply to both male and female patients.

Sir HUBERT BOND thought it was clearly necessary for him to say that this matter had received and was receiving anxious consideration by the Board of Control. They were very anxious to help the mental hospitals in their dire straits.

Dr. BOWER said that the domestic staff was conspicuous by its absence. No one at the moment had a remedy, but he felt that if an individual hospital approached the Association or the Mental Hospitals Association or the Board of Trade or Board of Control it would not get very far, but if they had the questionnaire it could do no harm and would give a certain foundation on which to go to the Board of Control, which was in some respects their lord and master and their very great friend. If the Association could go to the Board of Control and say that the number of nurses in the individual mental hospitals was so and so, and the number of patients so and so, and that the Association did not consider the number of nurses to be within the margin of safety, he thought the Board of Control would be moved to go forward with determination in tackling the Government departments concerned.

Dr. MCCOWAN said that about a month ago in Scotland there was a questionnaire on the same lines as that suggested by Dr. Bower. He thought the information could be obtained from the Board of Control in England.

The PRESIDENT said it had been proposed and seconded that a questionnaire be sent round to the medical superintendents and heads of the institutions which came within their aegis. Did the Association approve ?

On a show of hands 21 voted for and 4 against the proposal, which was carried.

Dr. BOWER, on the question of dealing with the replies, suggested it could be left to the good sense of the Association's officers.

It was agreed that the questionnaire be sent to all hospitals and institutions included in the Board of Control's list.

The Report of the Council was then adopted.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS.

It was agreed to take the list of candidates for membership *en bloc*. Dr. BOWER and Dr. MCDIARMID were appointed scrutineers, and after a ballot had been taken the following were declared elected :

BIRNIE, WILLIAM, M.B., Ch.B.Aberdeen, Assistant Medical Officer, Worcester County and City Mental Hospital, Powick, near Worcester.
Proposed by Drs. H. F. Fenton, T. C. Graves and E. P. Boyle.

GOULD, JONATHAN HORACE, B.Sc., M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Assistant Physician, Runwell Hospital, near Wickford, Essex.
Proposed by Drs. R. Ström-Olsen, S. L. Last and M. B. Brody.

MARTIN, AGNES JOYCE, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Assistant Medical Officer, The Lawn, Lincoln.
Proposed by Drs. J. F. R. Goodlad, J. S. McGregor and W. H. Shepley.

NICOLLE, GRACE HARRIET, M.A.Camb., M.B., B.S.Lond., Medical Superintendent (temporary), Bowden House ; 142, Harley Street, London, W. 1.
Proposed by Prof. F. L. Golla, Drs. E. L. Hutton and H. G. L. Haynes.

RUBINSTEIN, LOTHAR HENRY, M.D.Vienna, M.D.Florence, D.P.M., Assistant Medical Officer, Carlton Hayes Hospital, Narborough, near Leicester.
Proposed by Drs. K. K. Drury, F. J. Napier and T. Wishart Davidson.

Paper : **"Electrical Convulsant Thresholds."** By J. H. GOULD, B.Sc., M.B., B.S., Assistant Physician, Runwell Hospital, Essex. The following took part in the subsequent discussion : The PRESIDENT, and Drs. WOOD, P. K. MCCOWAN, A. PARKER, I. G. H. WILSON, F. A. PICKWORTH, J. IVISON RUSSELL, A. HELEN BOYLE, A. A. W. PETRIE, F. BACK.

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