OVERSEAS TRAINEES

A Working Party has been formed by the Education Committee of the College to study the special problems of overseas trainees in psychiatry. Dr. S. B. Mahapatra, Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry, Leeds University, is acting as its convenor, and the other members of the committee are Drs. S. Bhate, Peter Brook, C. P. Seager, Ashley Robin and L. Tarlo.

The Working Party is in the process of collecting information from a number of sources. Those who are interested in the problem and would like to have their views known, should contact Dr. Mahapatra, Department of Psychiatry, 15 Hyde Terrace, Leeds 2. (Tel.: 0532-451431.)

PROGRAMMES AND MEETINGS COMMITTEE

The Programmes and Meetings Committee invites members of the College to submit papers on miscellaneous topics for presentation at the Annual Meeting, which is to be held in London on 8, 9 and 10 July 1975. Depending on the number offered, the Committee is prepared to make arrangements for parallel sessions to enable as many papers as possible to be read. I shall be grateful if you will kindly let me know if you have a paper which you would like to present at the July Meeting.

C. M. B. PARE.

AT THE FAYRE

By BRIAN BARRACLOUGH
Graylingwell Hospital, Chichester

'Said Simple Simon to the pieman
Let me taste your ware'

Last November the new Charing Cross Hospital at Fulham was the scene of a 'Medical Careers Fair'—the purpose being to provide undergraduate medical students with facts and informed opinion about the specialties open to them. Our College was represented, and we went along on the second day to provide some opinion.

Decked out with the stands of the competing interests the hall closely resembled a trade fair. Round the external wall were placed the pharmaceutical industry, community medicine, general practice, anaesthetics, the three Armed Services, missionary medicine, geriatrics, venereology, general medicine, radiology and obstetrics; and occupying the centre were pathology, surgery, committee and higher education, the B.M.A. career services and lastly our own College. Each stand provided a display, some literature, and an expert or two who sat or stood and waited hopefully for tomorrow's specialists to arrive and ask vital questions. In the intervals, sometimes quite long ones, between such questionings, stand-holders inspected rival material and chatted-up rivals. In this way we learned, for instance, that there were in fact no prospects in R.A.F. medicine, so successful was the cadet scheme whereby students who have taken first M.B. are paid £2,000 a year until graduation. Is this successful scheme an entirely reasonable use of taxpayers' money, we thought? What would people say if the College tried the same tactic, borrowing the money from the D.H.S.S.?

The College's stand was of the smallest possible unit, while pathology had six units strung out covered with colour photography, and the Service stands were spread across one end of the hall and very eye-catching. However, the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons displays were on the same scale as our own, so we did not need to feel jealous or paranoid, and anyway our literature was better than theirs. Still, perhaps next time round a better balance might be achieved between the display area allocated to

https://doi.org/10.1192/S000712507530545X Published online by Cambridge University Press

each specialty and its relative importance. Specialties which are likely to attract similar kinds of students ought to be alongside each other. Psychiatry could with advantage have been placed next to general medicine. The anaesthetists were the only ones with the daring to mention the unmentionable: at one bottom corner of their four-unit display stood a prosperous-looking, well-dressed man, against a background of new car and well-to-do suburb, at his feet the memorable words 'private practice can be rewarding'!

So much for the layout; what of the happenings? Well, the Establishment was in evidence on the first day. An opening speech by Sir John Richardson, President of the G.M.C., set a standard, the P.R.C.P. was noticed on duty, and our own stand was staffed for a period by the Dean of the Institute of Psychiatry. The students came, as students always have, in dribs and drabs, arriving late and leaving early, but to summarize something useful from all the discussions with visitors to the College stand would be impossible. I can only give my own biased impressions from perhaps a dozen conversations strung out over the day. A common question was where to go for training, whether the Maudsley Hospital, Edinburgh or a mental hospital. How is that to be answered? It was pleasing that over-concern about the division in psychiatry between the medical and psychological approaches was spoken of only occasionally; but perhaps this only reflected a profound lack of knowledge about our subject, together with prejudice of the lay kind, such as that patients never get better, that treatment is of no value, and that the whole business is too boring for the serious student. I thought the most impressive difference lay between those who had spent an elective in a mental hospital, who were well informed and balanced, and those who had not. This observation reinforces my own past impressions of the great value for students of short periods of work in a mental hospital. Further steps ought to be taken to see that all students should have an experience of this kind.

How successful was the fair? I thought it only moderately so because not enough students attended, and a large proportion of those were from Charing Cross. Perhaps better advertising might ensure a greater turnout, but moving the fair from school to school will probably be more effective. Essentially, the idea is first-rate, because it encourages students to think about the next phase of their education and provides some information on which their decisions can be based. If it comes to your area—as is likely because it will go on tour—I recommend a visit—it may make your professional feet itchy.

The College's stand was prepared at very short notice, and I think that great credit should be given to Jane Boyce of the College office, who took the main part in getting it properly organized. John Wyeth and Brother, who have been good friends of the College on other occasions, provided the display and the special bindings for the College's booklet *Your Future in Psychiatry*.

REPORTS AND PAMPHLETS

Social Work Support for the Health Service: Report of the Working Party. H.M.S.O., pp. 68.

A working party set up by the Secretary of State to advise on the detailed arrangements for the provision of social work for the Health Service has recently published its report. The Report appeared without publicity, indeed without even a press release, for it was published a few days before the General Election. What follows here is not so much a review as a personal note by a psychiatrist who was a member of the working party.

The report comes as the latest of the recent steps in changing the relationship between health and social services, of which the first was 'Seebohm'. Next came the decision to leave the social services outside the reorganized N.H.S. (except in Northern Ireland, where a single authority administers both). Since the main purpose of reorganization was to unify, this disjunction between the health and social (and other local authority) services now became very conspicuous, and the Secretary of State in his Reorganization White Paper announced his intention to set up a 'Collaboration Working Party' to study ways of bridging the divide. Among the recommendations* of that Working Party, later embodied in the Act, were the imposition of a 'duty' on health and local authorities to 'collaborate'; they were given power to make available goods and services to each other across the board; 'Joint Consultative Committees' were proposed, to which the plans and problems of each would be presented for debate and co-ordination (though these committees have no

* A Report from the Working Party on Collaboration Between the N.H.S. and Local Government on the Activities to the end of 1972. H.M.S.O. 1973, pp. 85.

https://doi.org/10.1192/S000712507530545X Published online by Cambridge University Press