sound financial policy and public sentiment, and entails a grievous injustice upon a highly responsible and important class of public servants.

Your memorialists are conscious of the difficulties which stand in the way of effecting any statutory change such as is here suggested, but they feel confident that if their views have your Lordship's sympathy and support these difficulties will not prove to be insuperable. The addition or alteration of a few words in the existing statute would secure all that is now craved.

Trusting that your Lordship may find it possible to give a kindly consideration to this statement as made on behalf of a body which is peculiarly entitled to speak from knowledge and experience, I am, etc.

ASYLUM WORKERS' ASSOCIATION.

The Annual Report for 1902 shows that for the twelve months ending the 31st December, 1902, the membership comprised 119 Life Members, 119 Associates, and 4664 Ordinary Members, making a total of 4902, as compared with 4116 on the roll of 1901.

The Executive Committee point out that, on the strong recommendation of the sub-Committee on "Medals," they have been compelled to increase the minimum length of service for competitors for gold medals to thirty-five years instead of thirty as originally proposed, and for silver medals to thirty years instead of twenty-five.

This change has proved necessary in consequence of the unexpectedly large number of entries at the lower periods of service.

In accordance with a suggestion thrown out by Sir James Crichton Browne in his address at the annual meeting, a Reading Union has been established for the members, under the supervision of a sub-committee, who have drawn up a code of rules which it is hoped may be the means of placing the "Union" on a firm and permanent basis.

The "Homes of Rest" fund has aided seventeen applicants during the year, and the whole report shows that the Association is vigorous and flourishing.

LUNACY ADMINISTRATION IN VICTORIA.

Reference has frequently been made in these columns to the maladministration of the Lunacy Department in Victoria, chiefly owing to the division of authority and political interference. Thirty years ago a commission of inquiry recommended that the asylum staffs should be placed on a different footing from the other civil servants. Twenty years ago a similar recommendation was made by a Royal Commission, and every board of inquiry since has repeated the advice. Nothing has been done, however, and recently matters have culminated in a most complicated "asylum scandal," as the newspapers term it, and monstrous instances of political defiance of official experts. In April last one of the medical officers at Kew Asylum, whose name has been most mysteriously withheld, suddenly absented himself without leave and was found in a private hospital. His incapacity for his responsible position had been for some time apparent to his superior officers. He was granted three months' leave with the understanding that he would resign at the end of that time. When that time came, however, the Chief Secretary (the Minister at the political head of the Department) ordered him back to duty. The Inspector-General (Mr. J. V. McCreery) protested, and the Chief Secretary then suggested that the officer in question should be examined by a board of medical men. The inspector agreed to this, but the officer objected to the *personnel* of the suggested board, and the Chief Secretary finally asked Dr. Jamieson and Dr. Joske to report as to whether the officer was fit for duty. These two gentlemen are paid official visitors to asylums; it appears, however, that they were not asked to report in their official capacity, but to send in a

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