Hospital, Regional Security Unit, or local psychiatric hospital). The College accepts that in some cases it would be appropriate from all points of view for a Court to be able to remand a patient to hospital, but wishes to emphasize that the majority of psychiatric hospitals do not have the facilities, and therefore can neither offer secure accommodation nor accept responsibility for the patient's detention. The provision of Regional Security Units is essential for these recommendations to be implemented.

(c) *Section 65*

The College agrees (para 11.18) that there should be no alteration to the present provisions of Section 65. It is agreed that it should be a statutory duty of the Responsible Medical Officer to submit an annual report to the Home Secretary on restricted patients. More frequent reports (e.g. every six months, as recommended above for Section 26) would impose too heavy a burden on Special Hospitals.

In regard to admissions to hospital from the Courts, particularly those on Sections 60 or 65 or on the proposed 'interim hospital orders', it is suggested that one of the signatories to the Order should be the doctor into whose care the patient is to be placed. The College agrees that this should be the practice wherever possible, but it is not practicable in all cases and hence should not be made statutory. It is suggested that a doctor with knowledge of the available facilities could, by local consultation and agreement, make the necessary arrangements on his colleagues' behalf; this would be a matter for administrative action rather than for legislation.

(d) *Place of safety*

The Butler Committee made recommendations regarding the recall in emergency of a patient conditionally discharged under the provisions of Section 66(b) when it might be that the original hospital could not take him immediately. The College agrees that the local psychiatric hospital should be asked to take care of a patient, in such circumstances of emergency, until the hospital from which he was conditionally discharged can effect his transfer. Such an arrangement is clearly in the interests of both the patient and the public and is in fact current practice.

(e) *Withholding of items in the interests of security*

In paras 10.26–10.28 the powers of staff to take reasonable measures to prevent a patient from keeping in his possession articles of potential danger are discussed. The College endorses the recommendations within these paragraphs and the clear legal advice that is given. As regards the withholding of mail and postal packets, as laid down in Sections 36 and 134(1) of the present Act, the College accepts that this power is little used except in the Special Hospitals, but agrees that the authority for doing so, if necessary, should not be removed from the Act; it is agreed also that there should be a requirement to inform the patient if his correspondence is being examined.

PROTECTION OF PATIENTS' PROPERTY

An anomalous situation might develop in connection with the present satisfactory functioning of Part VIII of the Act should anything resembling a 'closed' definition of Mental Disorder be adopted. Such a narrow definition would preclude the Court of Protection in certain circumstances from appointing a Receiver to look after the affairs of a patient who was incapable of managing these himself but who did not require detention in hospital, e.g. in cases of brain damage. It would be regrettable if such patients were denied the services available under Part VIII.

THE COLLEGE RECORDS

Early in February a questionnaire with a covering letter from the President, Registrar and Secretary was sent to all members for the purpose of establishing our new (computerized) system of records. The Officers and staff of the College now wish to thank all those members who have completed and returned this form. Those who have not yet done so are earnestly requested to give the College speedy help in this matter. Members in this country will be well aware of the traumatic effects of a certain notorious 'Reorganization'; with our members' assistance we can hope to make our own reorganization less so than that Other One.

https://doi.org/10.1192/S0007125077300628 Published online by Cambridge University Press