IRISH DIVISION.

THE SUMMER QUARTERLY MEETING of the Irish Division was held at the District Mental Hospital, Carlow, by the kind invitation of Dr. T. A. Greene, Medical Superintendent, on Saturday, July 18, 1936.

In the forenoon and afternoon the members were kindly conducted over the hospital and grounds, and also over the Annexe at Kelvin Grove by Dr. Greene and the staff.

The members and guests were hospitably entertained to luncheon, and, at the conclusion of the luncheon, Capt. S. MINCH, T.D., Chairman of the Committee of Management, in a gracious speech, warmly welcomed the members to Carlow Mental Hospital.

Dr. MARTIN and Dr. DEANE replied.

Nineteen members and the following guests were present: Drs. L. Dunne (U.S.A.), Dr. L. Doyle and Dr. S. McHugh.

Dr. J. C. Martin was in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read, approved and signed by the Chairman.

The following nominated candidate was, after ballot, declared an elected member of the Association:

O'SULLIVAN, DANIEL JOSEPH, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O.(N.U.I.), Assistant Medical Officer, Grangegorman Mental Hospital, Dublin.

Proposed by Drs. J. O'Conor Donelan, S. Blake and J. Fitzgerald.

Dr. MORAN, Secretary of the Research Sub-Committee, presented a report embodying the views arrived at by the Sub-Committee at a recent meeting. This report described in detail the Sub-Committee's views on the proposed Research Centre and its organization and staffing, and it also dealt with suggested improvements in the medical and nursing personnel of the district mental hospitals.

The report was discussed at length and, on the suggestion of Dr. Greene and Dr. Smith, was amended to include more specifically the provincial and private mental hospitals in any scheme of research.

The report thus emended was adopted, and the Sub-Committee was requested to continue their efforts to have the claims of mental disease recognized in some scheme of research.

The Autumn Meeting was fixed for Saturday, November 7th, at the Royal College of Physicians, Dublin.

Dr. HONAN then brought to the notice of the meeting the fact that a doctor in the Irish Free State was apparently ineligible to become a member of the International Society for the Study of Epilepsy.

The Secretary was requested to obtain further details for discussion at the next meeting.

Dr. J. V. GLASS, Assistant Medical Officer, Mental Hospital, Carlow, then read a very interesting communication on **"The Use of Nembutal in Mental Hospital Practice"**. Dr. Glass described in detail a series of cases in which nembutal was administered.

The cases were divided into four groups:

(1) Where the drug was given in single doses to combat simple insomnia.

(2) Where the drug was given in single doses to control excitement or restlessness.

(3) Where it was given in single doses to facilitate minor surgical procedures.

(4) Where the dosage was repeated for a considerable period, with the object of curing or permanently relieving the patient.

In Group 1 it was concluded that for insomnia nembutal administration offered a very satisfactory treatment, with the advantages of easy administration, sleep

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rapid in onset and of good duration, and with an absence of unpleasant or dangerous sequelæ; only one patient complained of drowsiness the next day.

In Group 2 there were 15 patients, classified as follows: Melancholia (agitated) 3, mania 7, epileptics 2, schizophrenics 2, and 1 paraphrenic case. Of these 11 responded well to nembutal administration; the results in another were very variable, and with the remaining 3 the drug failed to achieve the desired effect. On the whole the results were sufficiently encouraging to warrant the trial of nembutal where control of excitement is required.

In the third group (3 patients) it proved a very effective help in those instances where a general anæsthetic was hardly indicated, but where some alleviation of pain or distress was necessary to gain the patients' co-operation, or at least to overcome their active resistance.

In Group 4 there were 14 cases, and to these the drug was administered repeatedly for periods varying from one week to two months or longer. The dose given was that which was sufficient to produce a marked sedative effect during the day with sleep at night, and varied with the type of patient and the degree of excitement present. The largest doses were required in the acutely maniacal cases, while satisfactory results were obtained with much smaller doses in melancholia. The general conclusion reached in this group is that the drug is of considerable assistance in controlling many of these cases, and that even in chronic cases improvement can be maintained. It was gratifying to see the improvement in three chronic agitated melancholics, who were still, after three and four months, remaining reasonably well on a small maintenance dose, in one case gr. 1½ at night.

In addition to this effect of control and improvement the drug was of benefit in accelerating the recovery-rate in some cases.

With regard to the dangers of administration of barbiturates in large and repeated doses over extended periods, no evidence of ketosis or other dangerous complication was observed. This was probably due to the moderate amounts used, and indicates that in these doses nembutal is a fairly safe drug to use. Some of our cases did undoubtedly react very deeply to smaller doses than others, but there did not occur any of those alarming results which might be due to an idiosyncrasy.

The types which seem to derive most benefit are recent manic-depressives, some of the milder schizophrenics, and also the acute confusional or delirious cases.

The CHAIRMAN congratulated Dr. Glass on the very interesting clinical material he had brought before the meeting. The paper was then fully discussed by the members present.

Dr. LYONS recorded two cases with symptoms of intoxication after moderately large doses.

Dr. MCCARTHY enumerated a number of cases in which he had found the drug most useful.

Dr. SMITH, Dr. L. DUNNE and Dr. GREENE also contributed to the discussion, following which Dr. GLASS replied.

The CHAIRMAN then proposed a cordial vote of thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Greene for their kind hospitality. This was carried unanimously.

Subsequently the members were kindly entertained to tea by Mrs. Greene.

NOTICES BY THE HONORARY LIBRARIAN.

The Library is open to members between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Books are issued to borrowers between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., and between 2.30 and 4.30 p.m.; Saturdays, between 10 a.m. and 12 noon.

The Hon. Librarian will endeavour to obtain, as far as possible, any books on psychiatry and allied subjects required by members.

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