THE
BRITISH JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY
(THE JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE)
[*Published by authority of the Royal College of Psychiatrists*]

SUPPLEMENT, OCTOBER 1971

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS

THE COLLEGE IN ACTION

This note about the activities resulting from the foundation of the Royal College on June 16th 1971 was necessarily prepared early in August; it may therefore in some respects have been overtaken by events before it appears in print. However, it deals with basic work of such importance that the record of it should be kept.

At the Quarterly Meeting of the R.M.P.A. in Edinburgh in May, the news was received that the Order in Council for the preparation of the Supplemental Charter had been signed by the Queen on April 30th. The Council of the R.M.P.A. immediately gave the highest priority to the objectives of organizing the examination for admission to the Membership of the College and to arranging the elections for the new President and the first elected Council of the College.

The Court of Electors actually met on Foundation Day itself, June 16th, and initiated action which has now clarified into a programme. The first examination for Part I will be held on Wednesday 24th November 1971, the closing date for entries being September 1st 1971. No doubt many candidates will apply for exemption from Part I in accordance with the Regulations, so the number of entries for this part may not at first be large. If there are sufficient, however, the examination will be held at the three centres of London, Birmingham and Edinburgh. Part II will follow at the same three centres in February 1972, the written part being on February 3rd and the clinical and oral parts during the week beginning February 21st. Those who are exempted from all parts except the oral will be required to attend for that in London. The final date for entry for Part II will be November 30th 1971, *but if exemption is requested from a part or parts of Part II, entries must be submitted by October 31st 1971.*

The Court of Electors also decided that further examinations would be held for Part I in October 1972 and April 1973, and for Part II in November 1972 and May 1973. It was also agreed that applications for exemption from Part I (in accordance with the Regulations) would be entertained in regard to all three of the above examinations. Those exempted would be regarded as having passed Part I and would therefore not be required to resit unless they failed to obtain Part II within 5 years of the date of the granting of exemption. The Court of Electors also decided that applications for exemption from a part or parts of Part II would be entertained for all three examinations, *and that the most liberal policy in granting exemptions should be followed*, subject only to the need to maintain proper standards.

Further details of the examinations and conditions of exemptions are given below.

Parallel to the above discussions about details and necessary practical measures, consideration was also given to the nature of the examination itself, and of the manner in which it might develop. There is clearly much sympathy and support for the idea that the College should set up a working party to review modern methods of continuous assessment and to take a close look at efficient alternatives to examinations of the traditional type, and this is being done.

The Council met on June 25th, and on this historic occasion made the first nominations for the office of President under the Bye-laws of the Royal College. The Council also put forward the names of a number of candidates for submission to the electorate as possible elected members of Council in accordance with the new Bye-laws. Otherwise the meeting was concerned with confirming the plans for the examination and the elections, authorizing the Emergency Committee of Council to act as necessary during the summer months and appointing Convenors to make arrangements for the election of members of Council by the Regional Divisions. The Secretaries of the existing Sections were given the equivalent task for the new Specialist Sections. Council made it quite clear that every Fellow and Member of the College should have the opportunity to nominate and vote for

https://doi.org/10.1192/S0007125071307962 Published online by Cambridge University Press

candidates for election as representatives on Council of both Regional Divisions and Specialist Sections (provided, of course, that they were members of one of the latter immediately prior to the Foundation date). By the time of going to press, the extra staff to administer the examinations had been engaged, accommodation to house them had been found and a meeting of Convenors had agreed the general principles to be applied in holding the elections.

Prior to the Foundation date a great deal of work had been done by the Working Party authorized to accredit psychiatric hospitals and units for the purpose of professional training. After Foundation this continued at a somewhat faster rate, with particular emphasis on the attempt to require approximately the same standards for accreditation in all parts of the United Kingdom. In the course of this work, authority was given by the Court of Electors to the Working Party to grant accreditation to training centres overseas if any applied for it and could meet the requirements of the College. The respective Regional Divisions of the College continued the work of accreditation in Scotland and Ireland, thereby carrying forward the work already done by the Scottish and Irish Divisions of the R.M.P.A.

In the course of July 1971 the Court of Electors set up sub-committees to deal as expeditiously as possible with appeals from those who considered that they should have been granted Foundation Membership, and also from those with claims to Foundation Fellowship. A third sub-committee was charged with the duty of considering the names of those proposed and seconded for Fellowship (not Foundation Fellowship) in accordance with Section IV of the Bye-laws. The Court appreciated that many distinguished psychiatrists were disqualified for Foundation Fellowship under Section 8 of the Appendix to the Bye-laws, but would rightly be elected under Section IV very soon after foundation. It is hoped that all Foundation Fellows will exercise their privilege and right to propose or second distinguished Foundation Members for the Fellowship.

Much spadework has therefore been done during the relatively short period since the foundation of the College, in continuation of the efforts made by the R.M.P.A. in preparation for the College, including such massive exercises as designing the examination, preparing a bank of multiple choice questions, preparing the list of Foundation Fellows and Members, and virtually redesigning the record-keeping system of the Association. The time and energy spent on all these activities will be an immense contribution to the future work of the Royal College.

A. B. MONRO, *Acting Registrar*

https://doi.org/10.1192/S0007125071307962 Published online by Cambridge University Press