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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confidential report for which they were specially paid. There is a third official visitor, Dr. J. W. Springthorpe, but it appears the officer to be examined objected to him. Dr. Jamieson and Dr. Joske reported that the officer had suffered from a nervous break-down brought about by indulgence in alcohol, chloral, and other drugs, but that he had now recovered and might be returned to duty in a less responsible position. The Chief Secretary then, in spite of the inspector's further protests, gave a written direction that the officer was to be placed on duty as senior medical officer at Yarra Bend—the other large metropolitan asylum—and in just as responsible a position as at Kew. At this stage the inspector (Mr. McCreery) became ill and went on leave, and Mr. W. Beattie Smith became acting inspector. Dr. Springthorpe, hearing of the circumstances, determined to exercise the powers invested in him as official visitor by the Lunacy Act, and to institute an inquiry. The Act empowered him to compel the attendance of witnesses and to examine them on oath. At the inquiry he summoned Dr. Jamieson and Dr. Joske to give evidence. They protested, and insisted on taking their seats as members of the board of visitors, and asking questions of the witnesses. They both declined to give evidence. As the result of a prolonged inquiry Dr. Springthorpe found that the officer was placed on duty by the direct order of the Chief Secretary against the strong protests of the inspector, the acting inspector, and the acting superintendent of Yarra Bend Asylum. No such officer should under any circumstances be in medical charge of patients such as the insane, and the one position that should be absolutely closed to such a man was that of medical officer in an asylum. In the course of his inquiry Dr. Springthorpe applied to the Chief Secretary for a copy of the report by Dr. Jamieson and Dr. Joske, and was informed by that gentleman, "I have made full inquiries into, and finally dealt with, the matter," and the request was refused. At this stage the papers dealing with the case came before Mr. Smith officially in his capacity of acting inspector. Just before going on sick leave Mr. McCreery had intended to lay a charge against the officer, but had not done so. Mr. Smith felt that it would be futile to lay a charge, as the evidence upon which the charge was to be laid had already been placed before the Minister, and the latter had, to use his own words, "finally dealt with the matter," and was not likely to stultify himself by sending the case on to the Public Service Commissioner, and it was at his option to do so or not. Mr. Smith accordingly wrote a memorandum asking the Minister *to reconsider* the evidence or to consider his (Mr. Smith's) retirement, as he felt that it was impossible to insure proper administration if the medical officer referred to should remain on duty. It should be stated that Mr. Smith has been twenty years in the service, is not entitled to pension or compensation, and in the ordinary course of promotion by seniority would in a few years have reached the highest position in his department. He is regarded by the whole profession as the ablest man in the lunacy service, a most capable administrator, a strict disciplinarian, and a thorough expert in insanity. He is also the clinical lecturer on the subject at the university. The Chief Secretary replied that, as Mr. Smith failed to grasp the legal position in respect to laying a charge and wished the Minister to adopt an improper course of procedure, he must accept his resignation. The press and the profession are unanimous in protesting against the Minister's action, but there the matter rests at present, and Mr. Smith is dismissed and the officer retained.—From the *Lancet*, October 18th, 1902.

The state of affairs at the metropolitan asylums at Melbourne remains *sub judice*. The Minister informed Dr. W. Beattie Smith that the executive council had accepted his (Dr. Smith's) resignation, and Dr. Smith replied that the official correspondence showed that while he sought to have determined the question of whether the service should be properly conducted or whether the terms of his retirement should be considered he had not actually tendered his resignation. "At the same time," he said, "great as is my interest in the special work to which I have devoted nearly the whole of my professional life, I have no desire to press my services on the State nor to hold office without the confidence and support which are essential to the proper fulfilment of its duties." The executive council appointed Dr. J. A. O'Brien, the Government medical officer, as acting inspector-general of insane in place of Dr. Smith. Dr. O'Brien immediately suspended Dr.

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Stuart Macbirnie, "the medical officer," for alleged misconduct, and drew up a series of charges against him, according to the provisions of the Public Service Act. The Public Service Commission then appointed a board with a police magistrate as chairman to investigate the charges. The board has held several meetings, at which Dr. Macbirnie has been represented by counsel. Very much the same evidence has been given as at the inquiry held by Dr. J. W. Springthorpe. Dr. Macbirnie's counsel at the outset accused the chairman of the board of bias, and stated that there was conspiracy on the part of Mr. McCreery, Dr. Smith, Dr. Mullen, and others to put Dr. Macbirnie out of the service. The charges against Dr. Macbirnie were to the effect that on April 21st last he was under the influence of liquor and unfit for duty; that he had created a disturbance in the precincts of the asylum; that the use of alcohol or drugs, or both, by him had necessitated prolonged leave of absence; that he had absented himself from duty contrary to the request of the superintendent on April 23rd last; and that his conduct was subversive of discipline.—From the *Lancet*, December 6th, 1902.

Dr. Stuart Macbirnie has, we are informed, since resigned.

NOTICES BY THE REGISTRAR.

Examination for the Nursing Certificate.

Seven hundred and sixty-six candidates applied for admission to the May examination for this certificate. Of this number 174 failed to satisfy the examiners, fifteen withdrew, and the following were successful:

England.

Bucks County.—Lily Mary Thorp, Annie Goss, Lily May Welford. Charles Watson, Albert Edward Collins.

Cumberland and Westmorland.—Maggie Mackie, Mary Ellen Currie. Walter Part, George Howe, Leonard Aynsley, James Reid.

Derby County.—Hannah King. Thomas Devaney, Arthur Litchfield.

Devon County.—Annie Mary Harford, Edith May Bright, Edith C. Crouch, Fanny Fry. Joseph Foxall, James Charles Teague.

Durham County.—Kate Adelaide Smyth, Elizabeth Alma Carter.

Essex County.—Annie Carr, Emily Elizabeth Miller, Florence Simonds, Winifred T. Williams.

Kent County, Barming Heath.—Mercy Scutt, Clara McAlister, Kathleen Naomi Hussey, Margaret Miller. Ralph Joseph Humphrey.

Kent County, Chartham Downs.—Florence Brown. John Glanville Kellow.

Lancaster County, Rainhill.—Alice Hollerton, Florence Peach, Agnes Annie Peace, Carrie Busby, Emily Margaret Alderson, Ellen Pascol, Florence Hastings, Margaret Jane Williams, Florence Mary Baldrey, Edith Lilly Johns. Herbert Deakin, Ellis Suttin, William Thomas Saunders, William Henry Thomas, Walter Davis, George Richardson, John Richard Howden, Arthur Edwin Herbert, George Wilkes, James Humphreys, John Joseph Lewington, Harry Helliwell, Walter Lewindon, Arthur Page, Samuel Marriott.

London County, Banstead.—Frances Alice Crabb, Edith Maud Nutheen, Eva Harris, Laura Higton, Alice Mary Hoskins, Edith Maria Osborne, Agnes Lawrence Waterman, Katie Bracey, Ada Jeffrey. Allan Pring, George Lawrence, Evan Jarvis, Arthur Ernest Smith, Joseph John Massara, James Jordan, Tom Christian, Richard James Hyder, William Roby George.

London County, Bexley.—Ethel Grace Allen, Margaret Coleman, Elizabeth Crompton, Ethel May Mumby, Rachel Gage, Mary Agnes Carrigan, Caroline Elizabeth Ford, Edith Widdop, Caroline Nixon, Ethel Beatrice Fuller, Elizabeth McQuade, Florence Louisa Joscelyne. Thomas Sharp Treweeke, William James Millard, Thomas William Stainsby, Edmund Baker, Charles William Lodge, Harry Dyson, Herbert Stanley Berry, Sydney Allen, William Charles Jose, Edmund Stanley Burch, Ernest Henry Valentine, Edwin John Hill, William

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