

Committee of each mental hospital, the high state of efficiency is largely due to the vigilance of the Commissioners of the Board of Control in seeing that the law is obeyed.

The Commissioners in Lunacy form a Board of Control consisting of not more than fifteen Commissioners and six women inspectors. Of twelve Commissioners three are women.

The Commissioners are required to report annually to the Lord Chancellor as to the condition of the institutions for lunatics and other places visited by them, either public, private or criminal, to see that the law has been carried out and examine the management of same, also to examine the construction of the building, the regularity of admission and discharges, whether church services are held, diet, and the number of classes the patients attend for occupational therapy and amusements, etc. They must make full enquiries into the care of the patients, and lay copies of their reports before Parliament.

The Lord Chancellor of England, as judge in lunacy, has supreme authority in all questions relating to the insane. The visits paid by the Commissioners are at least once a year to every asylum, one Commissioner being a medical practitioner and one a barrister.

Every licensed house within the jurisdiction of the Commissioners is visited six times a year, four times by not less than two Commissioners, of whom one is a barrister and the other a medical practitioner, and twice by one or more of the Commissioners. Every licensed house not within the jurisdiction of the Commissioners is visited not less than twice annually, by not less than two Commissioners.

In Scotland it differs, inasmuch as there is a General Board of Control (1914) consisting of Commissioners, legal and medical, which exercises its functions through the District Board of Control, which, in turn, regulates the maintenance of mental patients in their areas. Six Commissioners are unpaid, one Medical Commissioner and four deputy Commissioners are paid.

There are a Master and Assistant Master, who are barristers appointed to hold inquisitions, and to appoint Committees of the Person of the Estate. There is also a Registrar, as well as three extra Chancery Visitors, one of whom is a barrister and two medical experts for Chancery lunatics.

There are three distinct types of mental hospital, the County and Borough asylums, the registered hospitals and the metropolitan and provincial licensed houses.

In England, further elaborate safeguards against improper detention by the Lunacy Act of 1890 were provided. No person of unsound mind in this country can now be detained, nor can the management of his property pass into the hands of another, except by due process of the law. The property of an insane person is looked after by a committee; the committee of the person and the committee of the property are not necessarily the same.

If an insane person has less than £200, any judge of the county courts may upon application from the welfare officer, authorise him to deal with the property if no relative is willing to undertake the management of it. The welfare Officer may take possession, sell and realise the real and personal property of the lunatic, and exercise all the powers which could be exercised by the legal personal representative of the insane person.

Private patients can be admitted to a private mental hospital on an urgency order, consisting of one medical certificate and a statement of particulars by the nearest relative should the patient be violent.

After admission, another medical certificate and a reception order on petition signed by the judicial authority, if he is quite satisfied as to the alleged insanity, are necessary. The

petitioner must be at least 21 years of age, and must undertake to visit the patient at least once in every six months. These orders must be complied with within seven days.

Before certification, each medical man must examine the patient separately, privately and at different times. The medical examiner must in no way be related to the alleged insane person, neither must he have any financial interest in the mental hospital in which he intends to put his patient, nor may the two medical men be related to each other. The two medical certificates must be separate sheets.

If the patient is not admitted on an urgency order, a reception order on petition from the nearest relative is required. Two separate medical certificates, the reception order from the Judicial Authority and the statement of particulars are completed within seven days prior to admission.

The Judicial Authority is either a County Court Judge, a Justice of the Peace, or a Stipendiary Magistrate, and after the order is signed it must be executed within a week.

A patient admitted into hospital before having seen a Justice has the right to see one unless the Medical Officer of the hospital certifies to the Board of Control within 24 hours of the patient's reception.

Rate-aided patients cannot be detained or received other than in a Public Hospital, except upon the order of a Justice of the Peace, who need not, however, be a Judicial Authority under the Act. This order, which is called a summary reception order, must be supported by one medical certificate and the particulars of age, duration of illness, etc., are filled in on the same form by the welfare officer.

On recovery, a certified patient will be discharged by the hospital's visiting committee, which is set up annually and appointed by the various local authorities (it consists of not less than seven members); also on the recommendation of the Medical Officer of the hospital, and sometimes on a month's trial; or the patient can be removed by relatives if so desired, on their own responsibility, should he not be actively suicidal or homicidal.

The committee have the power to transfer a certified patient to another hospital or to board him out by contract to another hospital.

A private patient is discharged by the petitioner or by the person who made the last payment, or by order of the Board of Control.

Leave of absence on trial may be allowed to private as well as rate-aided patients without rendering the reception order upon which they are detained invalid; permission is not usually granted for travel beyond England and Wales.

An insane person may be detained by any of the following methods:—

1. On an urgency order, known as a seven-day order, which must be signed by a relative or an interested person and accompanied by one medical certificate. The Judicial Authority does not intervene in this order; if the person is to be detained longer, certification must be made during this time.
2. On a petition by relatives, reception order and one medical certificate.
3. On the information of a constable that a lunatic, not necessarily a pauper, is not under proper care and control, or is cruelly treated or neglected by relatives, etc., who acquaints the Judicial Authority, who then proceeds in the usual way.
4. On the information from a constable that a person deemed to be a lunatic is wandering at large, and one medical certificate.
5. Two commissioners in lunacy may, with one medical certificate, send a lunatic to a mental hospital.
6. On the order of a parish officer with one medical certificate.
7. Order for detention in cases where a wealthy person is wasting his estate.

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