

and the fearful monotony in some asylums that is so trying. The staffs are often not even allowed to speak to each other during the 14, 16, or 18 hours of inside work, except at meals; they are not allowed to sit down. There was one nurse I know who sat down after 38 hours of duty, and was reported." That was at a private asylum, not dealt with under the Bill at present, but he hoped it would be by amendment. Being constantly with lunatics the attendants were always liable to assault; he had known them liable to be spat in the mouth without being able in any way to retaliate. They were liable in some wards to have a full chamber pot thrown at them, to have human excrement thrown at them, to all sorts of disagreeables like that. The night attendants have to eat their food in the wards, and one assistant he knew was every night during a week interrupted during his meal to have to change a bed.

"Attendants were not allowed to smoke, even under the most disagreeable circumstances—and a ward always smelt extremely disagreeably—they were reprimanded or dismissed without any appeal to the committees. The work was extremely trying, even for 60 hours a week. "The witness added: "I venture to say that if the doctors had to work in the wards for 12 months before they got their positions, the conditions would be materially altered; and if you gentlemen had to work in an asylum for a few months before sitting on this Committee you would think the Bill not drastic enough, but too mild."

Questioned as to definite cases of extreme hours, the witness said that at Carmarthen the attendants' hours were 96 a week, the nurses' 104 to 110, including meal times.

Questioned as to whether there was any way in which the 60 hours per week could be arranged, except by a third shift, the witness replied in the affirmative. He was himself under the impression that it would be necessary until he discussed it with some of the attendants. For that reason he wished to bring some of them to discuss the matter with the committee.

The Chairman having remarked that it had been represented to the Committee that 70 hours would be a feasible arrangement, and would mean a much less extra cost, the witness agreed the cost would be less, but added: "I really do not see why that should be such a very particular thing. They do not always count the extra cost among the higher officials when they send a Superintendent for nine months' holiday at £100 a month, when he has passed the age at which he ought to be a Superintendent. The economy always comes in with the workers who do the disagreeable part of the work. If economy was studied more among the higher officers I think it would be more just. The attendants have the disagreeable work to do. It is loathsome work, as I can say from daily experience."

Questioned by Mr. Craig as to the foundation of the Union, the witness replied that he was instrumental in getting it formed, and sacrificed his position as Chaplain to do so. Asked as to the way in which the Asylum Workers' Association fell short, he replied that he thought they "did not

consider or consult the workers. It was more a Superintendents' Association, and a very useful one as far as it went." Interrogated further as to his use of the expression "loathsome," as applied to the work in asylums, he replied that he used it deliberately. He would like to use a stronger word, and would do so if his questioner would furnish him with one. In reference to the Superintendents, he knew some who were fair minded, the impression left on his mind in regard to the majority led him to the conclusion that they were not. When a person was in such absolute authority as a Superintendent he thought it was bad for human nature. He should not himself care to have the responsibility.

Replying to Mr. Higham, the witness said that in a great many cases the men who were dismissed had no appeal whatever. It depended to a large extent on the Superintendent. They had to approach the Committee through the Superintendent.

Questioned by Mr. Dickinson as to his experience in asylums, the witness said that he was at the County Asylum, at Hellingly, for under a year, and at Lancaster for over four years. He got three hours' notice to leave Lancaster on the 18th February.

Questioned by Mr. Cotton as to his statement that it would be instant dismissal for any one joining his society, the witness replied: "A great many have been threatened with it—with regard to one asylum they have this in their rules, 'Any discussion or other proceeding with a view to, or tending to, or in the nature of a combination among the attendants or artisans, for any object connected with their duties or position in the asylum, unless with the cognizance and sanction of the Medical Superintendents, is strictly prohibited; and every attendant or artisan joining therein will be liable to dismissal or other punishment according to the degree of his offence.' One can hardly imagine such a rule in the twentieth century." The witness added, in reply to a further question, that the same rule was in operation in other institutions.

Questioned as to dismissals by the Medical Superintendent, the witness said it was a power which was exercised every week. The Superintendent had to report to the Visiting Committee, but the man might have gone three weeks, and left the country. He supposed the Committee would have the opportunity of revising the decision if they desired, but they did not generally revise a *fait accompli*. A remark of the Chairman on this point is worthy of note, and applies not only to asylum workers but to all persons entitled to pensions. Mr. Charles Roberts said: "Of course, the question with regard to the right of appeal is to some extent altered by the institution of a pension, because a man loses not merely his employment, but the pensionable rights to which he has contributed." That is a point which will certainly come up in regard to the dismissal of hospital probationers, in the event of the National Insurance Bill becoming law.

In regard to a paper handed in by Mr. Bankart, respecting the hours on duty in certain asylums, with footnotes appended thereto in eight cases, a

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