

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

THE MENTAL DEFICIENCY ACTS.

The Minister of Health, in exercise of his powers under the Mental Deficiency Acts, 1913 and 1927, has now issued the Regulations made under the Acts. (Statutory Rules and Orders, 1935. No. 524), price 1s. 4d. net, published by His Majesty's Stationery Office.

We note under the heading "General Provisions as to Management of Institutions and Certified Houses" the following regulations:—

(1) Mechanical means of bodily restraint shall not be applied to any patient in an institution or certified house unless the restraint is necessary for the purposes of surgical or medical treatment, or to prevent the patient from injuring himself or others.

(2) In every case where such restraint is applied a medical certificate shall be obtained, as soon as may be, describing the mechanical means used, and stating the grounds upon which the restraint was employed.

(3) The certificate shall be signed by the superintendent of the institution or certified house if he is a medical practitioner, and if he is not by the medical officer thereof.

In no case shall corporal punishment be administered to any patient.

The right of patients to communicate direct with the Lord Chancellor, the Minister of Health and other persons enumerated is safeguarded in the following clauses:—

The superintendent of an institution or certified house shall forward unopened all letters written by any patient and addressed—

(a) to the Lord Chancellor or to any Judge in Lunacy;

(b) to the Minister of Health;

(c) to the Board or any Commissioner;

(d) to the person who placed him in the institution or certified house or on whose petition an order for his admission was made;

(e) to the Chancery Visitors or to any Chancery Visitor or to any other visitors or visitor; or

(f) in the case of a certified institution to the committee of management or to any member of such committee.

(2) The superintendent may also at his discretion forward to its address any other letter written by a patient.

EFFECT OF SARCASM ON CHILDREN—WORSE THAN CANE.

The harmful emotional effect of sarcasm on school children, as compared with the effect of caning, was stressed by Dr. H. Crichton Miller, Honorary Physician of the Institute of Medical Psychology, when addressing the Scottish Association of Mental Welfare.

"It is sometimes supposed that great injury is done to the emotional development of pupils by corporal punishment," he said, "but I would say, from my experience, much more harm is done by the sarcastic or sneering master than by the cane."

At the same time, no section of the community had shown a keener interest in modern views of mental hygiene than had school teachers as a body.

With regard to the clergy, whereas the whole spirit of modern psychology was in favour of facing facts, the minister of religion tended to proffer exhortation, and to turn away from the essential conflict.

A healthy community, Dr. Crichton Miller declared, might be described as one where the mental hospitals were nearly empty, where crime was enormously reduced, and where suicides were rare. In this country the rate of suicide was rising.

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

The Board of Directors of the International Council of Nurses has been in session at Geneva from July 10th to July 12th, and has accomplished a great amount of useful business.

The work of the Headquarters Organisation Committee has now been accomplished and the Committee dissolved.

It is very satisfactory to realise that the financial arrangements have been placed in order, and the various Reports of Committees received.

Consultation took place concerning the Congress of the International Council of Nurses to be held in London in 1937, and suggestions were made for the Programme.

The Board of Directors were entertained to tea at the Headquarters of the International Red Cross Society at the Villa Moynier, and were most gracefully welcomed by Mlle. Odier.

The meetings of the Board of Directors terminated after giving consideration to financial arrangements for the forthcoming Meeting of the Grand Council in 1937 and the Congress.

THE NURSES' ORGANISATIONS.

THE LEAGUE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL NURSES.

The Summer General Meeting of the League took place on Saturday, June 29th, at the Nurses' Home, at which there was a large attendance, 118 members being present.

The President, Miss Dey, R.R.C., was in the chair. The occasion was especially marked by the suggestion put from the chair that telegrams of congratulation should be sent to both H.M. the King and H.M. the Queen on this year of their Silver Jubilee, with expressions of the loyalty and great thankfulness of all the members, and to these telegrams most gracious replies were received before the social gathering which followed had dispersed.

Regrets of absence were received from many members and the President coupled her remarks with very particular reference to Miss Simms, retiring Vice-President of the League, who during her three years of office had so assiduously fulfilled the many calls on her time, and rendered valuable help in taking the Chair at Executive Committees during her own unavoidable absence owing to illness in the Spring.

On the nomination of the Executive Committee, Miss E. Campbell was unanimously elected Vice-President.

Two absent members, Mrs. Wates and Miss Pemberton, A.R.R.C., sent lovely flowers, which were seen to beautiful advantage in the decoration of the Great Hall.

After votes of thanks had been acclaimed for the retiring four members of the Executive Committee, and the eight members who had kindly allowed their names to stand for election, the names of the successful candidates were announced, and received a warm welcome. They were: Mrs. D. N. Thacker (Sister Tutor, St. Bartholomew's Hospital); Miss M. H. Hart (Staff Nurse, St. Bartholomew's Hospital); Miss H. F. Saunders (Matron, Southend General Hospital); Miss K. Gray (Sister, Royal Waterloo Hospital).

Members learned with gratification of the action of the Governors and Almoners of the Hospital in naming a bed in Lawrence Ward in memory of the late Miss Elizabeth Hay Borthwick, who had for many years before her retirement, been Sister of the Ward, and in her will generously remembered the Hospital by expressing her wish to endow a bed.

After the business of the Meeting was concluded, Mrs.

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