

times for hospital patients. The Secretary (Mr. Thornhill Rexby) then read the annual report, from which it appeared that, during 1899, 222 cases had been before the council, the largest annual number ever dealt with. Cases had been assisted, as in the past, by being boarded out in cottages in the country, by grants of money, and by finding occupation. The investigations involved had been of an onerous character. The failures had been comparatively few. Boards of guardians had availed themselves largely of the help of the Association, and in some few cases they had subscribed to its funds. The total amount of subscriptions, donations, and contributions for maintenance was £549 8s. 1d., a falling-off from the previous year, when they amounted to £652. In moving the adoption of the report, Dr. G. H. Savage remarked on the difference between hospital and asylum patients, and the usefulness of such a society to bridge the gulf (too often exaggerated by popular prejudice) between "alienism" and the ordinary conditions of social life. The Association had done valuable work in two directions—in confirming health, and in preventing relapse. The resolution was seconded by the Rev. Dr. Springett (Vicar of Brixton), who bore personal testimony to the admirable character of the agencies employed by the Association, and having been supported by the Rev. W. St. Hill Bourne and by Dr. Shuttleworth, was carried unanimously. Dr. Percy Smith moved, and Mr. Deputy White seconded, the reappointment of the council and officers of the Association, and the meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chairman, moved by the Rev. Henry Hawkins, and seconded by Dr. Rayner. The offices of the Association are at Church House, Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W.

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#### HABITUAL DRUNKENNESS.

The Inebriates Act of 1899 was passed just before the close of the session to remedy a defect of the Act of the previous year. But, although it has been remedied in regard to the expenses of prosecution, complaints are made by magistrates that it is practically a dead letter, and the Home Secretary has admitted that the accommodation provided is insufficient.

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#### NEW SOUTH WALES BILL.

The New South Wales Bill, introduced by the Hon. Dr. J. M. Creed, passed the Legislature Council, and has been presented to the Legislature Assembly. The main provisions show an advance upon what has been done in this country. Under this Bill it is lawful for a judge or magistrate or the master in lunacy, and after the evidence of a medical practitioner and on inspection, to make an order as to the control of an inebriate.

On the application of—

(a) An inebriate or any person authorised in writing on that behalf by an inebriate while sober;

(b) The husband, or wife, or a parent, or a brother, sister, son, or daughter of full age, or a partner in business of an inebriate; or

(c) a member of the police force of or above the rank of sub-inspector acting on the request of a duly qualified medical practitioner in professional attendance on the inebriate, or on the request of a relative of the inebriate, or at the instance of a justice of the peace—

to order that the inebriate be placed under private or public treatment for a period not exceeding twenty-eight days; or be placed in a licensed institution for such period not exceeding twelve months, as may be mentioned in the order; or that the inebriate be placed for any period not exceeding twelve months, to be mentioned in the order, under the care and charge of an attendant or attendants to be named in the order, and who shall be under the control of the judge, master in lunacy, or magistrate making the order. . . .

Where an inebriate has thrice within the preceding twelve months been convicted for an offence of which drunkenness is a necessary ingredient, it shall be lawful for any Court of Petty Sessions to order that the inebriate be placed for such period of not less than six or more than twelve months, as may be mentioned in the order, in any institution which may be established by the Government for

the reception, control, and treatment of inebriates so convicted; and on the order of a Judge of the Supreme Court, or of a District Court Judge, or of the Master in Lunacy, such period may from time to time be extended for further periods not exceeding twelve months each.

Power is given to place these inebriates under immediate medical treatment in any convenient hospital, gaol, or private house, and to direct that the expense of the care, charge, and maintenance of the inebriate be paid out of any property of the inebriate, and to fix the amounts to be so paid, and the amounts so fixed may be recovered in any court of competent jurisdiction.

These directions may be given on orders varied, renewed, or rescinded, as those making the order may think fit.

A notable feature in the Bill is that the attendant shall be authorised to prevent the supply of intoxicants to any inebriate under his charge. Further, any such attendant who neglects to comply with any such direction shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £5.

#### LANCASHIRE INEBRIATES ACTS BOARD BILL.

Sir J. T. Hibbert presided over an important conference of representatives of county and non-county boroughs held in Preston, on 29th January, for the purpose of considering a Bill for the establishment of a board for carrying out the provisions of the Inebriates Act in Lancashire.

In opening the proceedings, the Chairman said he experienced great regret that some time had elapsed in dealing with this subject. They were all acquainted with the difficulties of carrying out the plans which had been put forward for having a combination of the authorities of the county and non-county boroughs, and possibly the delay which had unavoidably arisen might in the end place them in a position to do more good—and that very likely with equal speed—than if they had been left to themselves under the present law, fighting the various central authorities in London in the effort to overcome the difficulties of their position. It would be remembered that at the last meeting resolutions had been adopted in regard to the course of procedure. He trusted that they would find it a successful endeavour to carry out the objects they had in view. He regretted to say that one county borough (Oldham) had declined to join in the movement. He trusted that if the Bill to constitute an Inebriates Acts Board for the County Palatine of Lancaster went through the House successfully—and he did not anticipate opposition from any person or authority; indeed, he hoped the measure would receive the support of the Home Secretary—it would be placed on the Statute Book before many months had passed. Granted that they were successful, it had been suggested that the first meeting of the board to be constituted under the Act should be held in November, but he looked forward to a gathering being held not later than August.

After discussion upon several clauses of the Bill, the following resolution was adopted:—"That this conference approves of the Bill as directed to be amended, and that the County Council proceed to the promotion of the Bill in Parliament." On the suggestion of the Town Clerk of Manchester it was decided to summon the conference after the Bill had left the House of Commons, in order that there might be a further discussion of its clauses if necessary.

The representation of the various authorities interested will, as provided by the Bill, be as follows:—Barrow, Bootle, Burnley, Bury, Rochdale, St. Helens, Stockport, and Wigan, one each; Blackburn, Bolton, Preston, and Salford, two; Liverpool, five; and Manchester, four.

The Bill says the Board will or may require to borrow £50,000 for the purposes of the Bill. It is provided that the term "entire county" shall mean the geographical county of Lancaster, and "county" the administrative county. There shall be in and for the entire county an Inebriates Acts Board, consisting of eighteen representatives of the county and twenty-five representatives of the contributory boroughs, and the Board shall be a body corporate. The eighteen representatives of the county are to be elected at the County Council's quarterly meeting in November, and representatives of contributory boroughs (who may or