

of a special class after two months' experience in a class approved by the Department.

The Committee makes careful recommendations in regard to school hours, time-tables, subjects of instruction, elementary manual instruction, physical exercises and games.

Corporal punishment the Committee dismisses with the brief comment that it requires great care in this class of children.

Special classes, the Report considers, would almost certainly be required in towns of over 20,000, and would not be necessary in those under 10,000, and prefers the concentration of two or three classes, where practicable, to isolated classes.

The constitution of school authorities, the structure, &c., of schools, their inspection and returns to the Educational Department, are all provided for, as well as the assistance to be derived from voluntary agencies.

The "*conveyance or guidance*" to the special classes in cases where it is needed, and the "*boarding out*" near special classes of children whose homes are not within reach of them, involve questions of expenditure in which additional powers are recommended.

"*Physically defective*" children, who cannot benefit by the ordinary schools, are recommended by the Report for admission to the special class, while those who are unable to attend any class are regarded as affording a fair field for voluntary assistance. The "blind and deaf" feeble-minded should have special arrangements made, the Committee think, in institutions for these classes. Epileptic children of normal intellect are recommended to be left in ordinary schools, whose teachers should have some general instructions in regard to them; the "feeble-minded" epileptic should attend the special class, whilst severe epilepsy should be treated in homes provided for that purpose, in regard to which full details are given.

The Report concludes with a sketch of the legislation required to carry out the various recommendations, and insists on the importance of their becoming law at the earliest possible date.

THE BOARDING OUT OF HARMLESS LUNATICS.

A Conference was held at Larbert, the 17th February last, in connection with the question of boarding out of harmless lunatics, the subject having been brought to the front by the District Lunacy Board with the object, if possible, of rendering further additions to the asylum unnecessary at the present time. Major Dobbie, Chairman of the Stirling Lunacy Board, presided. Representatives were present from each of the counties and burghs in the Stirling Lunacy District, and also representatives from nearly all the parishes in the district—about fifty in number.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, referred to the fact that since the asylum had come under the control of the County Councils a very large sum of money had been expended in extending the buildings, the sum borrowed up to the present being close upon £74,000. The extraordinary rise in the number of annual admissions was again making it necessary to consider the question of additional accommodation.

Dr. MACPHERSON stated that although the increase in the numbers of the insane in the district had within recent years attracted a good deal of attention, yet the increase had been steadily going on all along, and had only now reached such proportions as to make it necessary to deal with it in as practical a manner as possible. While this increase was in one sense regrettable, in quite another sense it might be regarded as representing an increased amount of prosperity within the four counties which formed the district, as the actual increase of insanity depended entirely upon an increasing population, and consequently upon increase in financial and industrial prosperity.

The proper functions of an asylum, he considered, were to treat new and recent cases of insanity with a view to their recovery, or to the alleviation of their malady, to nurse and care for the weak and helpless insane, and, while rendering their existence as endurable as possible, to confine those persons who, through no fault of their own, were obnoxious to their fellow-men, and unfit to live in their society; and that the chronic, harmless, and inoffensive lunatic was therefore out of place in the costly and complicated organisation of a modern asylum, because he did not require asylum treatment, because it was in his case an unnecessary extravagance, and because he would be happier under other and more natural conditions of life.

Scotland, he said, stood in the very first rank of civilised nations so far as the care and the treatment of the insane were concerned; its asylums were among the best in the world; the public attitude towards the insane was one of solicitude and almost unbounded generosity, and the administration of the lunacy system was characterised by a minute attention to detail and great discrimination in the classifying of the patients. There were in Scotland on the 1st of January, 1897, 12,221 pauper lunatics, of which number 2667, or 22 per cent., were placed in private dwellings throughout the country.

Referring to the Scottish Lunacy Blue-book for 1897, Dr. Macpherson observed that the assessments for lunacy purposes on the landward parts of the counties and burghs of each district for the year ending 15th May, 1896, amounted to £58,995, and that the number of patients in district asylums at 1st January, 1897, was 4673, thus giving an expenditure per patient for land, building, and up-keep of building of £12 12s. 6d. This may be taken as representing the sum which the ratepayers have to pay annually for lodging each patient in this or any other district asylum, and this will be found to be about the average expenditure over a number of years.

Taking the average maintenance account, as it was last year in the district asylums of Scotland, at £23 3s. 8d. per patient, and adding to that the average providing account of £12 12s. 6d. per patient, each lunatic in a Scottish district asylum at present cost the country £35 14s. 2d. per annum. The great financial argument in favour of boarding out was that it cost nothing to the ratepayers for buildings, these being already provided, whereby, at the present rate for the provision of building, as had already been mentioned, each patient boarded out was an absolute saving to the ratepayers of from £12 to £13 per annum. Not only so, but the maintenance of the patients cost less in private dwellings than in asylums. The average cost in the district asylums of Scotland for the year ending 15th May, 1896, was £23 3s. 8d. per patient, of which the Imperial Government paid the proportion of £11 1s. per patient, so that the actual cost to the ratepayers was £12 2s. 8d. per patient. The average cost of boarding out for the same year was £16 12s. 11d.; but this sum was somewhat misleading, as it included imbeciles living with relatives, who only received a nominal sum for their keep, as low as 6d. per week in some cases. The real average cost of boarding out pauper lunatics with *strangers* over all Scotland was £22 per annum. Of this sum the Imperial Government last year paid the proportion of £11 1s., leaving a balance in favour of boarding out, as against asylum treatment, of £1 3s. 8d. per patient. In short, to sum up the whole financial argument upon the basis of the Scottish average already given, each patient kept in an asylum cost the country £13 16s. 2d. *more than* a patient boarded out.

With regard to the moral and social objections to the system, Dr. Macpherson thought them more sentimental and imaginary than real, his own experience leading him to consider the general condemnation of the system to be unjust, although at the same time he did not deny that it was not without blemishes, like any other human institution. He also quoted from the experience of the Inspectors of Poor for the Barony and Edinburgh parishes, who represented the care of over 500 boarded-out patients, and who averred that in their long and extensive experience no authentic case of ill-usage had ever come under their notice.

In conclusion, what was wanted was to get the parish councils in the district to admit the principle of placing chronic harmless lunatics in private dwellings. Once the principle was admitted, the ways and means of working and perfecting the system could be afterwards considered. The continued detention, moreover, in asylums of patients for whom asylum treatment was unnecessary was contrary to the spirit of the Lunacy Act (Section 17, 25 & 26 Vict., cap. 54).

A large number of the representatives present afterwards expressed their opinions on the question, the great majority of the speakers favouring the principle of boarding out.

THE CLAUSE FOR PROVIDING TEMPORARY CARE FOR INCIPIENT MENTAL DISEASE.

The joint committee of the British Medical and Medico-Psychological Associations have drafted the following clause and certificate:

DRAFT CLAUSE FOR PROVIDING TEMPORARY CARE.

(1) Where a medical practitioner certifies that a person is suffering from mental disease, but that the disease is not confirmed, and that it is expedient, with a view to his recovery, that the patient should be placed under the care of the person whose name and address are stated in the certificate, for the period also therein stated not exceeding six months, then during that period the provisions of Section 315 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, shall not apply.

(2) A medical practitioner who signs such certificate shall within three days after signing the same send a copy thereof to the Commissioners, and it shall be lawful for any Commissioner to visit the patient. The person under whose care the patient is placed shall not be the person who signs the certificate.

(3) The person who receives a patient under such certificate shall within ten days after the expiration of the period mentioned in the certificate, or if he ceases to have the care of the patient under the certificate at an earlier date, then within ten days after such earlier date send a report to the Commissioners, stating whether the patient recovered, and if not in what manner he was dealt with when the person making the report ceased to have the care of him under the certificate.

CERTIFICATE.

I [*insert full name and address*], a duly registered medical practitioner, certify that [*insert name, address, and description of the patient*] is afflicted [*state the nature of the disease*], but that the disease is not confirmed, and that I consider that it is expedient with a view to his [*or her*] recovery that he [*or she*] should be placed under the care of [*insert full name and description*] at [*insert full address of the place where the patient is to be received*] for a temporary residence for a period of [*specify a period not exceeding six months*] from the day of 18 .

Dated

Signed

RELIEVING OFFICERS AND ALLEGED LUNATICS.

THE HACKNEY CASE IN THE COURT OF APPEAL.

The case of *Harward v. the Guardians of the Hackney Union* on March 22nd came before the Court of Appeal, composed of Lords Justices A. L. Smith, Chitty, and Collins, on the application of the defendant, J. B. Frost, for judgment or new trial, on the appeal from the verdict and judgment, dated January 22nd last, at a trial before Mr. Justice Hawkins and a special jury in the Queen's Bench Division. The action was brought by Mr. Theodore Bulmer Harward, who formerly practised as a dentist, to recover damages from the Guardians of the