

carry out a full review of the services available for intervening in marital, family and relationship problems, the current training available and the deficiencies in these ser-

vices and the training arrangements for them. The College would be willing to participate in such a Working Party.

PARLIAMENTARY NEWS (to Christmas recess, 1979)

(The last 'Parliamentary News', published in the *Bulletin* for November 1979, was stated to cover the period up to the Summer recess. However, some issues of *Hansard* for this period did not become available until the late autumn, and so extracts from their contents are included in this report.)

Mentally Abnormal Offenders

Questions have continued to be asked about delays in the transfer of patients from Special Hospitals to NHS psychiatric hospitals, and on 19 June Sir George Young mentioned once more the 'problems of resources and attitudes' involved.

On 15 November it was stated that allegations of ill-treatment of patients in Broadmoor had been referred to the local police.

Figures were given on 18 July for the length of stay of patients in Broadmoor. The great majority have been in the hospital for under 10 years, but a small number have been resident for 30 years or more.

Following the May Report it was stated on 23 November that continued efforts would be made to transfer prisoners who ought to be under care in psychiatric hospitals. Although it was admitted (21 June) that psychiatric treatment within prisons was handicapped by the Prison Medical Service being under strength, it was confirmed (10 July) that it was not proposed to remove psychiatric treatment from the duties of the Service.

Mental Illness

For the first time for many years questions about mental illness have been of local interest only, e.g. the failure of a few local authorities to make any day or residential provision.

Mental Handicap

Comments on the Jay Report are being received from the many organizations concerned.

On 24 October questions were asked about the deficiencies in the provision of residential care in Scotland. The Under-Secretary in his reply emphasized that economies in public spending were not to involve adverse effects on priority groups.

Other questions were again of only local interest.

Psychiatric Services

On 26 November an Adjournment Debate was initiated by Mr G. Gardiner, the Member for Reigate, who called attention to the inadequacies of services for severely mentally infirm old people in East Surrey. He referred particularly to the situation at Netherne Hospital where staff ratio was low, partly through lack of funds and partly because recruitment was impeded by housing shortage. This meant that patients in great need had to be refused admission. In his reply, Sir George Young gave figures illustrating the magnitude of the problem (over-65s increased from 4½ m to 8 m in 30 years; over-80s expected to increase by two-thirds in next 20 years, etc.) He restated the Government's policy of community care, etc., admitting that the reality was 'rather different'. He pointed out that over the whole country nursing staff in mental illness hospitals had increased by 38 per cent in 10 years. There was no hope of more money for these services this year, but he held out a promise of better things to come.

Miscellaneous

Details were given on 5 December of grants made to voluntary organizations concerned with alcoholism (about 40 organizations); on 29 November of drug rehabilitation centres supported by the DHSS; and on 27 June of MRC grants to research projects involving agoraphobia.

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