

(a) The appointment of a paid medical director. (b) The publication of a monthly bulletin. (c) The broadcasting of mental hygiene literature. (d) The organization of popular lectures on mental hygiene. (e) The holding of special meetings of the Council to hear papers and discussions. (f) The preliminary financing of local branches. (g) The organization of research work, especially as regards the causes of mental deficiency.

Donations can be earmarked for any special purpose within the aims and objects of the Council.

We trust that during the coming year a special effort will be made to initiate more of these projects, for which we make an earnest appeal for help.

Changes in membership.—At the beginning of the year there were 188 full members and 37 associate members. During the year 39 full members and 7 associate members joined the Council.

The Council lost by resignation 5 full members and 1 associate member. Dr. Henry Head was obliged to resign from all Committees on account of ill-health.

The Council, in common with all bodies interested in the mental health of the community, and especially in the cause, prevention and treatment of mental disorder and defect, learned of the death with deep regret of Sir F. W. Mott, who was one of its most valuable members. He was most regular in his attendance at the meetings of the Committee and of Sub-Committee No. 1. The loss of his sage counsel, from vast experience and intimate knowledge of the subjects embraced by the aims and objects of the Council, will be keenly felt.

SOUTHBOROUGH, *Chairman.*

JOHN R. LORD, *Hon. Secretary.*

[Full copies of the Report, which contains several important appendices, can be obtained on application to the Secretary to the Council, Room 118, Windsor House, Victoria Street, Westminster.]

THE BOARD OF CONTROL (ENGLAND AND WALES).

In "Occasional Notes" we have commented on the retirement of Dr. Branthwaite, a Commissioner of the Board of Control, and some interest has centred on the matter of the selection of a successor in view of the findings of the Royal Commission and the evidence tendered before it by the Association on the re-constitution of the Board. By error the General Press, in announcing the appointment of Dr. R. Cunningham-Brown, *C.B.E.*, as succeeding to Dr. Branthwaite, omitted to mention that his appointment was of a temporary nature.

We understand that the Board, in any new legislation, will endeavour to insert a provision whereby a Commissioner, if appointed from the medical service of a local authority, shall carry with him his pension rights under the local authority—in other words that when he comes to retire, his whole public service will be aggregative for pension purposes.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE DISCUSSION ON PSYCHO-ANALYSIS REVIEWED BY SIR BRYAN DONKIN.

To the Editors of the JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE.

SIRS,—Having studied, in the Journal for October, 1926, the report of the discussion on "Psycho-Analysis and its Developments," which took place at the London meeting of the Association in July, I take advantage of your kind permission to make some comments thereon; and further to venture a suggestion of the possible utility of supplementing the discussion in some future pages of the Journal. I believe that this debate, organized by the President of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, stands alone as the first in this country which has been started with the sole object of attaining a fair and thorough consideration

of this subject in its various aspects and from all sides ; and I am sure, having heard it, that it was carried out, both as to matter and manner, in the spirit that led the President to plan it.

I make the following remarks merely as "*obiter dicta*" on the main points which have struck me in my study of the report ; not by any means as a consecutive or adequate criticism on its subject-matter.

(1) I noted throughout the opening speech of Dr. Potts that while giving an account of the Freudian and other methods of what is now generally understood as "psycho-analysis" or the "new psychology," and pointing out how greatly some of these methods differ *inter se*, he assumes the notion of "the unconscious" or the "unconscious mind" as common to all of them ; and assumes it as a postulate requiring neither defence nor explanation. In describing these various methods, and stating his own preference of the views and practice of Jung, he makes no attempt to argue on the fundamental principles which lie at the root of the new practice of "psycho-analysis." The position thus taken by the opener had, probably, a great influence on the course of the debate, the main trend of which bore on the psycho-analytic practice as a new and dominant form of *psychotherapy*, *i.e.*, the treatment of mental disorders ; and became to a great extent an exchange of different opinions on the value of its variant methods. At the end of his remarks Dr. Potts says : "Analysis is both a form of therapy and the basis of a philosophy. The two do not necessarily go together. It is sometimes erroneously stated that analysis entails the special investigation indicated and the acceptance of the theory. As a form of therapy the only question is whether analysis works." Whether the majority of psycho-analysts endorse this statement or not, it justifies at least my remarks on several of the speeches which followed that by Dr. Potts.

Ever since I first studied the doctrines set forth by Freud and others, and the practice resulting therefrom, it has seemed clear to me that the psycho-analytic idea of "the unconscious" is nothing but a pure assumption based on several other assumptions similarly postulated, the chief of which is the asserted validity of the Freudian "interpretation of dreams." Without the verification of either of these assumptions neither of these hypotheses can stand.

Dr. A. Wohlgemuth, D.Sc., speaking early in the debate, addressed himself to questioning the fundamentals of the Freudian hypotheses, and dealt mainly with Freud's method of penetrating the unconscious by his method of dream-interpretation. In the course of a necessarily brief paper Dr. Wohlgemuth set forth clearly his criticisms on the five points adduced by Freud in proof of his own hypothesis as to the nature and origin of dreams. These criticisms were more fully detailed in Wohlgemuth's *Examination of Psycho-Analysis*, published in 1923, but have not as yet been countered or even fully and fairly considered in any important publication in Great Britain. Neither was there any attempt to reply directly to anything said by Dr. Wohlgemuth in the course of the discussion under notice.

It is not, of course, within the scope of my comments to dwell longer on the fundamental points at issue in a duly comprehensive discussion of psycho-analysis. The following quotation, however, from Dr. Joseph Breuer, made by Dr. Wohlgemuth in vol. v, Part 2, 1925, of the *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, may serve to illustrate much that might be said further on Freud's and others' conceptions of "the unconscious" : "All too easily one gets into the habit of thought of assuming behind a substantive a substance ; of gradually understanding by 'consciousness' an 'entity.' If thus one has become used to employing local relations metaphorically, as, *e.g.*, 'subconscious,' an idea, as one goes on, will naturally develop in which the metaphor has been forgotten and is easily manipulated as a material thing. Then mythology is complete." (From Breuer and Freud, "*Studien über Hysterie*").

(2) The general drift of the widely comprehensive pronouncements in the speech by Dr. Hamblin-Smith implies the arraignment and condemnation of all scientific method in the investigation of what are known as mental phenomena, and contains a very strong though uncritical and indefinitely expressed endorsement of Freud's opinion of his own "discovery"—which term apparently indicates the "dream-interpretation."

The speech of Dr. Mapother showed clearly his scepticism concerning both the theory and practice of Freudianism, and I think there were several among the

audience who wished that he had been a little more discursive. Dr. Crichton-Miller, who disagreed with him, warmly defended the importance of the "unconscious" factor, while leaving very doubtful his attitude towards psycho-analysis generally. But Prof. G. M. Robertson "spoke out loud and bold" when he said that he regarded Freud "as one of the greatest psychologists and discoverers in the realm of knowledge who had ever lived." He added, however, a little later his agreement with Dr. Mapother that not one method of investigation alone should be adopted in psycho-therapy. Every method, he said, should be adopted.

In the course of the speech by Dr. T. A. Ross, which was the last of the actual debate, several criticisms of much value were made on the Freudian teaching. Dr. Ross used the word "psycho-analysis" in a sense which differed much from that usually attributed to it now by those who either advocate or oppose the new psycho-analytic doctrines. "Neither Freud, nor anyone else," he said, "should be allowed to say that he alone had the method of psycho-analysis. . . . What was wanted more than anything else was that somebody should be psycho-analysed who had never read a word on the subject, and by somebody who had not himself been psycho-analysed." And, later, he declared that the Freudian analysis was "largely history-taking; that history-taking was not an analysis; that analysis was made by the analyst, not by the patient; and that one ought to be frank about that." I venture to state my own opinion that this speech by Dr. Ross was one of the most important in the whole discussion.

In the absence from the discussion of much direct criticism of those who deny the validity of the basis of Freud's hypotheses, some speakers confined themselves to reiterating the contention that no one could reasonably argue about the teaching of "psycho-analysis" without practising it and being themselves psycho-analysed. This position implies the necessity of an initial tendency towards or an actual formation of a will to believe, and also the introduction of "suggestion," at the outset of the inquiry. It is, I believe, admitted by psycho-analysts generally that a preliminary conviction or even a bias in favour of a conclusion adverse to the value of the procedure in question would render the experiments nugatory. At any rate this position involves a preconceived belief in a given result of an experiment not made, and ignores the very grammar of scientific investigation.

With reference to remarks made by some speakers on the reasons why, in their opinion, some adverse critics of Freudianism urge their objections, *e.g.*, moral, religious, or philosophical, or indeed merely sentimental, such as disgust, fear of practical results, or other "complexes," there is scarcely need of serious discussion. Doubtless several combatants on both sides of this much-contested subject have often quite failed to observe the plain difference that exists between the question of the soundness of a theory (especially when it has relation to medical treatment) and that of the practical issues to which it may lead. In my judgment these two questions can and ought to be kept apart, especially in this particular instance where the practice of psycho-analysts deals mainly with a large and widely-comprehensive group of patients, who may be treated successfully or unsuccessfully by countless different methods at the hands of almost any kind of medical practitioners or of unprofessional persons. I, therefore, deem it just as unworthy of serious debate on the hypotheses upon which the Freudian psycho-analysis is founded that an advocate for them should urge, as some do, as a counter-argument, that scientific opposition to them involves the question of the relation between body and mind, as it would be for a psychologist who adheres to the scientific method of inquiry to question the soundness of the Freudian hypotheses on the ground of the moral and physical harm and other dangers which may result from their application in practice.

May it not be possible that some further calm and logical consideration of certain points, raised but not cleared up in the discussion of last year, might result in the letting in of more light upon this still-vexed subject?

I am, Sirs,

Yours obediently,

H. BRYAN DONKIN.

December, 1926.