REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BILLS COMMITTEE.

MANY subjects of great interest and importance to the medical profession have occupied the attention of the Parliamentary Bills Committee during the past year. Among them have been the question of army medical reform, an amendment to the Lunacy Acts, the Obstetric Nurses Bill, the Public Health (Scotland) Bill, the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, the Contagious Diseases Act, the Infant Life Protection Act, and such matters as the sick pauper children, shellfish and disease, the superannuation of public vaccinators, the Vaccination Report, the sale of carbolic acid, and many others. Some of these questions have been dealt with very fully, special reports having been made by subcommittees and others appointed to make inquiries concerning them.

THE APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN.

The first matter which came before the Committee was the appointment of a Chairman. Mr. ERNEST HART stated at the first meeting that, in accordance with the expressed wish of the Committee, he had during the recess acted temporarily as Chairman, in order that the public business of the Association might not suffer; but he was desirous that the question of the appointment of a successor should be considered.

After some discussion it was stated that no one seemed willing to assume the onerous duties of the office, and it was proposed by Mr. GEORGE EASTES, and seconded by Dr. C. HOLMAN, and unanimously resolved:

That Mr. Hart be asked to continue to act as Chairman until other arrangements can be made.

AMENDMENT OF THE LUNACY ACTS.

The following resolution, passed in the Section of Psychology at the annual meeting in Carlisle, was brought up by the CHAIRMAN.

That the Psychological Section recommends that the Council of the British Medical Association should consider the desirability of obtaining for England and Wales some provisions for the temporary care of incipient and non-confirmed insanity similar to that which exists in the Scottish Lunacy Law.

He reported that a memorandum (which appeared in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, 1896, vol. ii. p. 1382) had been drawn up dealing with the whole question, and after some consideration it was resolved:

That a Subcommittee be formed to consider this memorandum, consisting of Dr. Urquhart, Dr. Douglas, Mr. Eastes, Dr. Cleveland, Dr. Shuttleworth, and Dr. Mickle, to confer with the Medico-Psychological Society, and report to the next meeting.

The subject came up again for discussion at the Spring meeting, when the following report was adopted:

At a conference held on Friday, March 5th, 1897, between the Subcommittee of the Parliamentary Bills Committee of the British Medical Association and the Special Committee of the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain it was conjointly recommended that in order to provide more efficient treatment of the incipient and non-confirmed insane, the lunacy law in England and Wales should be amended on the general lines of the Scotch Lunacy Act, Section XLI, 21 Vict., Cap. 71, with certain modifications hereafter to be considered.

Dr. DOUGLAS moved:

That the report of the Subcommittee be approved and adopted, and the recommendations contained therein carried into effect.

The resolution was seconded by Dr. SHUTTLEWORTH and carried. The Subcommittee have since had an interview with the Commissioners in Lunacy after which they again met and directed that a series of suggestions, which had been drawn up, should be submitted to a parliamentary draftsman who should prepare a clause to be presented to the Lord Chancellor. This is now being done, and there is a strong feeling in the profession that if such a provision for early certification be incorporated in the English Acts a great reform will take place in the early treatment of mental cases.

ARMY MEDICAL REFORMS.

The subject of Army Medical reforms has received a large amount of consideration at the hands of the Committee.

At the Autumn meeting the CHAIRMAN reported that a Subcommittee on Army Medical Reform had been appointed at

the last meeting of the Committee, and that Dr. Gordon had prepared an elaborate and able memorandum on the matter.

After some discussion it was proposed by the PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL, seconded by Dr. OGILVIE GRANT, and resolved:

That the report of the Subcommittee be received, printed, and circulated amongst the members of this Committee.

Whereupon it was proposed by Dr. GORDON, seconded by Mr. VICTOR HORSLEY, and resolved:

That a special meeting of the Parliamentary Bills Committee be held early in December to further consider the question.

This report is printed in full in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, 1897, vol. i, p. 732, *et seq.*

Dr. GORDON reported he had been in communication with various medical officers of high rank, and some of the suggestions which he had received he proposed to embody in the report.

After some discussion it was proposed by Dr. GORDON, seconded by Dr. PHILLIPS-CONN, and resolved:

That a copy of the memorandum be communicated to Lord Lansdowne, and that arrangements be made that it should be placed in his hands by a small but influential deputation privately, if he (Lord Lansdowne) would be willing to receive it.

It was further resolved:

That the arrangements for presentation be left in the hands of the Chairman and Dr. Gordon.

The CHAIRMAN proposed the following resolution, which was carried unanimously:

That the Parliamentary Bills Committee wishes to express its thanks to Dr. Gordon for the great trouble he has taken in drawing up the report on the army medical reform.

At the meeting held in March Dr. GORDON reported that he had forwarded the report of the Subcommittee mentioned above to Lord Lansdowne. The War Office had acknowledged the communication, and had subsequently written for six extra copies of the report, so there was no doubt that it had met with careful consideration. From statements made in the House of Commons it was apparent that while some of the things which had been asked for had been granted, others on which the Subcommittee had laid most stress had been negatived. Dr. Farquharson had ascertained, by question in the House, that the real number of vacancies was in excess of the number announced; and Sir Walter Foster had in the same way elicited the fact that the War Office had actually lowered the standard of entrance examination.

After discussion, it was proposed by Dr. GORDON, seconded by Mr. GALTON, and resolved:

That the report of the Subcommittee be approved and adopted, and the recommendations contained therein carried into effect.

[The Subcommittee recommended that the report and appendix should be sent to the medical schools, together with a circular letter requesting the deans to bring it under the notice of those contemplating entering the Army Medical Service; that the report be published in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL; that copies of the amended report should also be sent to the editor of each London and provincial paper for his information and comment; that thanks be tendered to Dr. Farquharson for his speech on the Army Estimates, and to Sir Walter Foster for his question in the House; and that the Secretary of State for War be requested to receive a deputation on the subject of the Army Medical Service.]

At the meeting in April the CHAIRMAN reported the further steps that had been taken to raise public interest in the matter, which had resulted in leading articles appearing in many of the leading London and provincial papers, strongly supporting the views of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN also submitted a comparison of claims submitted to the War Office in 1893, and since granted in whole or in part, which ran as follows:

1. *Formation of a Corps.*—This was recommended on lines similar to those of the Royal Engineers, Army Service Corps, etc., by the consolidation of the Medical Staff and the Medical Staff Corps, a fusion already existing in the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps and the Militia Medical Staff Corps; the present scale of pay and allowances to remain. Note: Not carried out.

2. *Foreign Service.*—To restore old periods, five in India and

healthy colonies, three in unhealthy colonies. Note: Granted as regards India, but the four years apparently retained in the former three-years' station.

3. *Titles*.—Existing titles declared to be cumbrous and awkward, especially that of brigade-surgeon-lieutenant-colonel. Recommended that the latter title be abolished, and all placed under that of surgeon-lieutenant-colonel, but the first fifty on the list to be headed in brackets "brigade-surgeons," as recommended also by the Camperdown Commission. Further that the word "and" be inserted between the word surgeon and the military affix, as surgeon and lieutenant, etc. Note: Not granted. Mr. Brodrick lately stated in the House of Commons that Lord Lansdowne did not consider revision of titles "desirable."

4. *Retirement Regulations*.—Three years in a rank before retirement considered too long; one or two suggested in the spirit of the Camperdown Commission, which spoke only of "a certain time." Note: Not granted.

5. *Extension of Service of Surgeon-Major-Generals*.—Recommended that such should be very exceptional, and the officer granted it seconded. The frequent moves of principal medical officers declared very harassing and prejudicial to the service. Note: There have been fewer extensions of late, but no seconding. Officers of the rank have lately been guaranteed a certain fixity in a station, three years usually.

6. *Detailing Medical Officers for Service in Particular Presidencies*.—System of merely ordering medical officers to "India" declared to be a grievous hardship, borne by no others, and intensely unpopular. Note: It has been altered under the new Army Corps organisation in India; medical officers now know broadly where they are going.

7. *Officers of Medical Staff compelled to take Charge of Native Troops without Extra Pay*.—This was a proposal of Surgeon-Major-General Rice with the Government of India. Note: Has been dropped.

8. *Extension of Warrant of 1879 to India in its Financial Aspects*.—Note: Lately done, but on a very inadequate scale; increases given only to medical officers under the rank of surgeon-majors and to brigade-surgeons. Junior medical still receive less pay in India than junior veterinary officers. No charge pay given.

9. *Study Time*.—Note: This is promised, but seems impossible with an attenuated establishment.

10. *Exchanging*.—Declared to be needlessly hampered with restrictions. Note: Understood to be simplified and restrictions relaxed.

After an interval of three months, Mr. Campbell Bannerman replied in a letter to the Chairman of the Parliamentary Bills Committee, dated August 26th, 1893, practically declining to entertain any of the proposals submitted to him; but postponing decision on points 6 and 7, an answer at the time characterised as not merely displaying a *non possumus*, but a *non volumus* as well.

Since then, points 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 have been either fully or partially conceded; while points 1, 3, and 4 remain unfulfilled; the two first embracing the essential parts of army medical reform, as being those relating to the army status of medical officers. The Committee recommend that members of the Association should keep medical students informed of the difficulties and disadvantages of the Army Medical Service under existing conditions, and that the Association continue to bring before Government the grievances which still exist.

THE OBSTETRIC NURSES BILL.

This Bill has been considered at several meetings. The Subcommittee appointed to consider this Bill and the Medical Acts Amendment Bill, consisting of Dr. A. G. Bateman, Dr. R. W. Batten, Mr. George Brown, Dr. J. Spottiswoode Cameron, Mr. E. H. Galton, F.R.C.S., Mr. Ernest Hart, D.C.L., Mr. Victor Horsley, F.R.S., Mr. Evan Ty-mawr Jones, Dr. C. H. Milburn, Dr. A. B. Ritchie, Dr. G. E. Shuttleworth, Dr. R. Somerville, Dr. S. Woodcock, was reappointed at the meeting held in October, 1896, and at the meeting held in March it was not prepared to report, but was empowered to take any action which might be required.

At the meeting held in April Mr. Galton reported that the Subcommittee had gone very carefully into all the suggestions

made by the Branches, which they had as far as possible incorporated in the Bill (see page 158).

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

At the meeting in March, 1897, the Bill introduced by Mr. Kearley, and read for the first time on January 27th, came up for discussion. A memorandum on the subject (which appeared in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, 1897, vol. i., p. 729), was considered, and after some discussion it was resolved:

That the Parliamentary Bills Committee support the Bill as at present before the House of Commons: and that a Subcommittee, consisting of Dr. Cameron, Mr. Galton, Mr. George Brown, and the Chairman, be appointed to watch the progress of the Bill through the House.

At the meeting in April the matter was further considered.

THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS.

At the meeting in March the following resolution from the Council of the Metropolitan Counties Branch was considered:

The Council of the Metropolitan Counties Branch begs to urge upon the Parliamentary Bills Committee the desirability of taking into consideration the results of the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, as recently reported in the daily press, and to take such active steps they may deem necessary to remedy the evil.

A memorandum was also submitted on Venereal Diseases among White Troops in India. The document, which appeared in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, 1897, vol. i., page 730, entered fully into the condition of affairs at present existing, and into the regulations necessary to prevent a continuance of the growing evils complained of. The results of the present system were summarised as follows:

1. Prostitution greater than ever.
2. Virulence of disease much increased.
3. Direct inefficiency alarming, indirect, incalculable.
4. Taint spread at home by returned time-expired men.
5. Soldiers' morals not elevated by fear of venereal diseases.
6. Moral gain absolutely nil.
7. Physical suffering wantonly aggravated.

It was proposed by Mr. George Eastes, seconded by Mr. E. H. Galton, and resolved:

That the Parliamentary Bills Committee put itself in communication with the private Committee recently formed, to consider the question of the Contagious Diseases Acts, to ascertain in what way the Committee can help.

At the meeting in April the Chairman reported that he had been in communication with the Army Health Protection Association, India, and was co-operating with them.

SHELLFISH AND DISEASE DISSEMINATION.

At the meeting in March a memorandum which had been prepared for the use of the Committee on Oysters and other Shellfish and Typhoid Fever was considered. This memorandum, which is printed in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, 1897, vol. i., page 731, enters fully into the question, and ends with the following suggestions:

(1) That the Local Government Boards, being the central health authorities, should have power to inspect all oyster layings and to prevent the sale of oysters from such as may be found to be liable to pollution until such time as improvements shall have been effected which would prevent the possibility of sewage pollution.

(2) That all oyster layings, shops, stalls, or other places where oysters are sold to the public should be subject to provisions similar to those contained in Section IV (the Milk Clause) of the Infectious Diseases Prevention Act, 1890.

(3) With regard to foreign oysters, it is suggested that all such oysters should be deemed to be directly imported foreign oysters unless they have been laid for thirty days at least on approved layings in this country, and all purveyors of oysters should be required to declare whence their supplies are derived, with a penalty for false declaration.

(4) Any regulations for the control and inspection of oyster layings, shops, etc., or for the control of the import trade, should apply to the whole of the United Kingdom.

It was proposed by Dr. Cameron, seconded by Mr. Verrall and resolved:

That a recommendation to the effect contained in the Memorandum be forwarded from this Committee to the Local Government Board.

SICK PAUPER CHILDREN.

At the meeting in April the Chairman reported that in response to a deputation the President of the Local Government Board had appointed a very strong Committee on the Aggregation of Children in Pauper Schools, who, after careful investigation, extending over eighteen months, had reported in precisely the sense of the resolution of the Parliamentary Bills Committee—that is, that barrack schools ought, as far as possible, to be abolished and replaced by boarding out, and that there should be special arrangements for the children suffering from illness. Mr. Chaplin had only adopted that part of the report which related to sick children, and he proposed, in the first instance, to appoint a special Board to deal with the sick children, which did not go to the root of the evil, and will do little to remove the great evils which arise out of the existing system. A special Association had been formed, under the presidency of Lord Peel, to carry out the whole of the objects as asked for. He had drafted a statement which recapitulated their demands and stated reasons. The Chairman was authorised to circulate it among members of Parliament, and to submit it to the Government.

Among the other subjects claiming the attention of the Committee were the Vaccination Report, the Tenure of Office of Scottish Poor-law Medical Officers, the Poor-law Officers Superannuation (Ireland) Bill, the Public Health (Scotland) Bill, the Infant Life Protection Act, the Sale of Carbolic Acid, the case of Surgeon-Major Fowler, and the Superannuation of Public Vaccinators. All these subjects have been carefully dealt with by the Chairman in Parliament and elsewhere: many of them at the cost of much labour, and the more important of the proceedings taken have been published from time to time.

ERNEST HART, Chairman.

REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC GRANTS
COMMITTEE.

THE Scientific Grants Committee have to report that during the past year, 1896-7, the sum of £399 10s. has been granted in aid of scientific research, and £450 for three scientific scholars; the following are particulars of the grants made:—

	£	s.	d.
ABRAHAM, BERTRAM L., M.B., 14, Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, W.—For experiments having for their object the investigation of the nervous mechanism of gastric secretion, and the influence upon it of drugs and the products of digestion	15	0	0
BALLANCE, CHARLES A., M.B., and SHATTOCK, SAMUEL G., Esq., 106, Harley Street, W.—For carrying on an investigation into cancer	20	0	0
BARRATT, J. O. W., M.D., B.S., F.R.C.S., 26, Upper Wimpole Street, W.—For experiments on the excretion of water and carbonic acid gas by the skin in health and under pathological conditions, and also the influence of temperature of surrounding air	20	0	0
BRODIE, T. GRIGOR, M.D., Lindfield, Uxbridge Road, Surbiton.—For continuation of work upon muscle extensibility and irritability	10	0	0
BRUNTON, T. LAUDER, M.D., F.R.S., and TUNNICLIFFE, F. W., M.D., St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C.—1. For an investigation of the different effects on the heart and vessels of various preparations and other so-called cardiac tonics. 2. For a research on the exact physiological effect on the circulation of baths and other forms of cutaneous stimulation and of muscular movements	15	0	0
BUNCH, J. LE MARE, M.D., B.S., 6, Gordon Place, Gordon Square, W.C.—Towards expenses of material and apparatus to be incurred in investigating the innervation of the intestine and the effect of drugs thereon	10	0	0
EYRE, JOHN, M.D., 14, Trinity Square, S.E.—For an investigation on the organisms present in the secretions found in the normal conjunctival fornices, fully testing their pathogenicity by means of inoculation, experiments, etc.	10	0	0
GOODBODY, F. WOODCOCK, M.D., 35, Bedford Court Mansions, Bloomsbury Street, W.C.—For continuing a research on the seat of formation of uric acid	30	0	0
GRÜNBAUM, ALBERT S., M.A., M.B., University College, Liverpool.—1. To determine between the agglutinative and immunising action of human serum (described by Gruber and Durham for animals) with especial reference to enteric fever and its use in the diagnosis thereof. 2. The relation between peristalsis and peritonitis; is the former primarily increased, and if so, for how long?	10	0	0
HALLIBURTON, W. D., M.D., F.R.S., 9, Ridgmount Gardens, Gower Street, W.C.—For work in various chemico-physiological directions: 1. Precipitability of carbohydrates by neutral salts. 2. Influence of ferments on the disappearance of rigor mortis	40	0	0

HUTCHISON, ROBERT, M.D., Toynbee Hall, Commercial Road, E.—For an investigation into the chemistry of the thyroid gland and the character of its constituent	5	0	0
JONES, H. S. WANSBROUGH, M.B., Poplar Cottage, Harrow.—For a research on the physiological action of the injection of diphtheria toxins and antitoxins	10	0	0
KANTHACK, A. A., M.D., Pathological Laboratory, New Museums, Cambridge.—To continue some experiments on tetanus	10	0	0
LAZARUS-BARLOW, WALTER S., M.D., Pathological Laboratory, New Museums, Cambridge.—In aid of researches upon the pathology of oedema and the action of the diphtheria toxin on the heart	15	0	0
LEEDHAM-GREEN, CHARLES, M.D., 9, Newhall Street, Birmingham.—For a research into the relative value of various agents used in the disinfection of the skin, consisting briefly of a series of bacteriological experiments made upon the hands of the surgeon after they have been treated in various ways with a view of rendering them aseptic	5	0	0
MARSHALL, C. R., M.B., and TAYLOR, J. J., Esq., Pharmacological Laboratory, Downing College, Cambridge.—For a research into the manner of absorption of drugs, more especially of mercurial compounds. The method proposed to be adopted is first to determine the compounds formed <i>in vitro</i> ; afterwards those formed in the alimentary canal; finally by means of cannulae in the thoracic and excretory ducts the compounds formed during or after absorption	10	0	0
PAKES, W. C. C., M.R.C.S., 14, Trinity Square, S.E.—For the continuation of the study of the life-history of the bac. typhi abdom. in the presence of other organisms, and the elaboration of a new method of obtaining this organism when in conjunction with other organisms	10	0	0
PATON, D. NOEL, M.D., 33, George Square, Edinburgh.—Towards the expense of a research on the influence of severe muscular exertion on the metabolism	10	0	0
PEMBREY, M. S., M.D., Physiological Laboratory, Charing Cross Hospital, W.C.—For expenses incurred in a research especially as regards the regulation of temperature in fever, both in the case of man and animals	10	0	0
ROWLAND, SYDNEY, Esq., Fairlawn, Totteridge.—1. For an investigation into the possible effect of the x rays in differentiating certain histological elements, and by means of a fluorescent screen to obtain microphotographs of the various microscopic structure and constituent parts of the animal body. 2. For the purchase of Crookes's tubes and the preparation of certain large crystals of potassium, platino-cyanide, and the purchase of pentadecylparatolylketone and other fluorescent materials. (Recommended by Professor Michael Foster.)	15	0	0
SHAW, CECIL, E., M.D., 14, College Square, E., Belfast.—To defray expenses of an experimental investigation into the etiology of sympathetic ophthalmia	14	0	0
SHERINGTON, C. S., M.D., F.R.S., 16, Grove Park, Liverpool.—For an inquiry into the physiology of the innervation of pelvic viscera	15	0	0
STEPHENS, J. W. W., M.B., Pathological Laboratory, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C.—1. For continuing a research on the pathogenic properties of the bacteria coli commune. 2. The relation of the so-called pseudo-diphtheria bacillus to other forms of diphtheria bacillus	10	0	0
STOCKMAN, RALPH, M.D., F.R.S.E., 12, Hope Street, Edinburgh.—1. To carry out a research on the iron metabolism in man. 2. The exact causes of anaemia in Bright's disease. 3. On the amount of iron in certain foods	20	0	0
STODDART, W. H. B., M.B., Bethlem Royal Hospital, S.E.—For continuing a research to find out what muscles are supplied on the same side of the body by the fibres of the direct pyramidal tract	16	10	0
SURVEYOR, N. F., M.D., 145, Queen's Road, Bombay.—For continuing an investigation into the action of opium and its alkaloids	14	0	0
WALKER, NORMAN, M.D., 7, Manor Place, Edinburgh.—1. For determining some doubtful points in connection with the fungi of ringworm. 2. The histology of the syphilides	10	0	0
WELLS, S. RUSSELL, M.D., 24, Somerset Street, Portman Square, W.—1. For carrying on a series of investigations on the presence or absence of bactericidal substances in normal animal organs, such as spleen, etc. 2. For continuing a research by studying the post-mortem changes in the nerves of animals	10	0	0
WHITE, ARTHUR, Esq., London County Lunatic Asylum, Claybury, Woodford Bridge, Essex.—For an inquiry into the nature of the granules found in the corpuscles of pus and into their micro-chemical reactions, etc.	5	0	0
WILKINSON, GEORGE, M.B., 109, Park Road, Liverpool.—For continuing a research on leucocytes, especially to study the action of other drugs, phosphorus, etc.	5	0	0

Total ... 399 10 0

The following sums have been returned as unused:—

	£	s.	d.
Dr. B. L. Abrahams	...	...	6 0 0
Dr. A. S. Grünbaum	...	...	2 2 2
Dr. H. S. Wansbrough Jones	...	...	2 10 0
Dr. W. L. Lazarus-Barlow	...	...	8 2 2
Dr. C. R. Marshall	...	...	5 4 1
Dr. Noel Paton	...	...	1 15 0
Dr. Ralph Stockman	...	...	2 5 0
Dr. W. H. B. Stoddart	...	...	15 0 0
Dr. N. F. Surveyor	...	...	14 0 0
Dr. S. R. Wells	...	...	10 0 0
Total	...	...	66 18 5