

outlined by the sub-committee of the Medico-Psychological Association, are, in brief, as follows: "The provision of clinics—the so-called psychiatric clinics—in large centres of population, and especially in connection with the general hospitals and where schools of medicine exist; the extension of the system of voluntary admission (which now obtains in respect of licensed houses and registered hospitals for the insane), so that patients whether of the private or rate aided class may place themselves for treatment in county borough mental hospitals; or further provision for the private patient class, so that with the approval of the Board of Control, such may be received without certification (buit with the cognizance of the central authority) into homes privately owned or supported wholly or partly by voluntarily contributions, and also into existing public and private hospitals (licensed houses); also received, with the sanction of the board, as single patients, without certification, provided that a medical practitioner gives a written recommendation, stating that suitable treatment can be obtained in the proposed house.

"Of the above proposals, that concerned with the establishment of clinics in psychiatry—with in-patient and out-patient departments—as integral parts of the general hospital system is the most important; and in the operation of these clinics lies our main hope of avoiding the never-ending extensions to existing asylums."

#### MEANS ALREADY AT HAND.

Several clinics of this nature were already in existence before the War and have done excellent work in the direction of treatment, teaching and research. Indirectly the War has been instrumental in establishing others; but they have been insufficient to cope with its added burden. Incidentally, the war has served to make it clear, even to the most unscientific observer, that mental disorder is not entirely due to inherent defect or to "weakness of will"—and one cannot over emphasize the importance of the public attitude in this matter. During the war, moreover, soldiers were received and treated in mental hospitals without orders or certificates for at least nine months before being sent to an asylum. This procedure had such tremendous advantages as to demonstrate incontrovertibly the desirability of applying a similar system to civil life.

Though the reforms outlined have been repeatedly urged and presumably recognized by the government there is no tangible evidence that any step has been taken to put them into practice. Truly, as the *Times* leader states, "a point has been reached where legislation falls behind scientific understanding." Legislation always will fall behind; but we may at least expect of our legislators to keep in sight.

We would add one note of warning: "Scientific understanding"