

and in the case of those who are not idiots or imbeciles a certificate must be signed, after inquiry, by a 'judicial authority' as defined by section 19 of the Act. It may be set in motion by a petition at the instance of any relative or friend of the 'defective' or by an officer of the local authority (that is, the county or borough council); and precautions are taken to guard against an order being obtained upon insufficient evidence or for some sinister object. Very often mental infirmity comes to light in the course of criminal proceedings, in which case the Judge himself may take action; he may direct an inquiry, or he may make such order as the judicial authority under the Act would have made. The working of one section in this connection will need to be carefully watched 'where it appears to the police authority that any person charged with an offence is a defective, they shall communicate with the local authority, and it shall be the duty of the police authority to bring before the Court such evidence as to his mental condition as may be available.'

The governing body or central authority is a Board of Control consisting of not more than 15 members, invested with large powers as to the supervision, protection, and control of 'defectives'; as to the administration by local authorities of their functions; and also as to certifying and inspecting institutions and homes for 'defectives.' Upon the county and borough councils (assisted by the local education authority) devolve the duty of ascertaining what persons within their areas are 'defective,' and providing suitable accommodation for them. Practically the local administration will be in the hands of 'the committee for the care of the defective,' composed partly of members of the council, but strengthened by outsiders having special knowledge and experience of 'defectives.'

We have said nothing as to the important changes effected by the new Act in the criminal law relating to 'defectives.' It is enough here to say that for the first time from Wednesday last effect is given to the principle that persons who cannot take a part in the struggle of life, whether they have or have not property, whether they have or have not committed crime, are to be protected by the State against themselves and others. For the first