

factorily with the manifold problems of psychiatry. Moreover, assistants generally take their cue from the superintendent, and if the superintendent be not specially trained for his work and take no active interest in it, his subordinates will almost inevitably lapse into routine. Nor can we blame them much that such should be the case. With no example set them, no prospect of advancement to cheer and encourage them to put forth their best efforts, what else could we expect?

Were the "spoils system" confined to the appointment of the heads of asylums the resulting ills would be lessened. Unfortunately it is not. Every medical office connected with our asylums, from the highest to the lowest, is regarded as "political pap" to be administered where it will do most good for the dominant party. Governments are unable or unwilling to grasp the fact that the scientific study of psychiatry consists primarily in the study of mental phenomena, and that this can only be done to advantage by men specially trained for such study. As a result, well-developed seniors, who have been failures in life, are often given the junior places that should be awarded only to young men who have shown interest in, and capacity for original research. This is manifestly unfair both to the inmates of our asylums and the superintendents thereof. "Responsibility and authority must go hand in hand" is a time-honored axiom, but the system of Governmental appointment of assistants furnishes the anomaly of superintendents, held responsible for the successful management of their hospitals, and yet deprived of the authority to appoint the officers upon whom such success in great measure depends. Surely a superintendent should be best capable of judging of the fitness and competency of his assistants, and it comports with common sense that he will, if only through self-interest, endeavor to procure the best he can find.

A vigorous editorial, "Insanity and Politics," recently published in the *Montreal Medical Journal*, deals so searchingly with the ills of political patronage in our asylum service that I may be pardoned if I quote a portion of it:

"Most persons will admit, unless they are incapacitated by congenital perversions, or political prejudice, that a hospital for the insane exists—pun or no pun—for the purpose of extending hospitality to the insane, and not to the protegees of a political party. In short, it is mental not political