

The Child Guidance Council and the Commonwealth Fund.

In the July, 1926, issue of the Magazine reference was made to the new movement now represented by the Child Guidance Council. There has been considerable progress since that date. Negotiations, following the visit of Miss Scoville, the Executive Assistant of the Commonwealth Fund, have been proceeding throughout the year, and some account of the present position will doubtless be of interest.

The Child Guidance Council is a body representing the chief associations which have, directly or indirectly, to do with the maladjusted child, and counts among its members medical men, psychologists, justices and social workers who have a special interest in the whole problem. Among the Associations represented are the Central Association for Mental Welfare, the Charity Organisation Society, the Institute of Hospital Almoners, the Magistrates' Association, and the National Council for Mental Hygiene.

The immediate work of the Council will be educational. Interest in, and understanding of, the Child Guidance Clinic Movement needs to be stimulated in this country, and it is intended, by means of literature, lectures, and propaganda among teachers, social workers, magistrates, etc., to familiarise the public with the fact, already proved by the efforts of the Commonwealth Fund in America and by individual work in small clinics in this country, that much may be done in the early stages of maladjustment to prevent a child slipping into the ways of the delinquent.

The Child Guidance Clinics, established through the Commonwealth Fund of America, are especially notable for the carefully organised social work which is an integral part of the handling of each individual case, and it is on this special aspect of the work that the Council will concentrate.

In order that a first-hand acquaintance of the Clinics may be available for people in England, the Commonwealth Fund has most generously invited certain persons to visit the States for periods extending up to three months. The following persons are therefore visiting the States during the course of the next twelvemonths:—Miss Eckhard, Dr. Fairfield, Dr. Bernard Hart, Miss Morton, Professor Spearman, Miss Salmon, Miss St. Clair Townsend and myself. It is hoped that someone especially concerned with the administration of justice in Juvenile Courts and one of the officials of the Board of Education and of the Home Office and of the Ministry of Health, may be able to accept the Commonwealth Fund's invitation.

The Commonwealth Fund has further granted fellowships for one year's special training to five experienced social workers. These social workers, Miss Butler, Miss Craggs, Miss Horder, Miss Hunnybun and Miss Robinson, are all engaged in social work which brings them frequently into touch with problems where the special methods employed at Child Guidance Clinics will be of great value to them.

The Child Guidance Council is hopeful that, after some months of preliminary work, the ground may be ready for the establishment of such clinics in various parts of the country. The Commonwealth Fund is prepared to finance such a Child Guidance Clinic in London by the autumn of 1928 if satisfactory arrangements can be made with the University of London and the London County Council, whereby such a Clinic may be accepted as a school clinic for children and a Training Centre for social workers specially interested in the maladjusted child.

Many of those responsible for Clinics in this country have felt for some time the need for social work when dealing with the maladjusted child or adult, and the Child Guidance Council are anxious to encourage the further use of social workers

in this connection. They have, therefore, appointed Miss St. Clair Townsend, who has for some years been engaged as Almoner and Social Worker at the Clinic in connection with the Royal Bethlem Hospital and at the Department for Nervous and Mental Diseases at Guy's Hospital, to devote her time to the furtherance of similar work elsewhere. Miss Townsend is visiting America in the autumn to study the organising of social work in the Child Guidance Clinics.

The Council recently decided to appoint an Organising Secretary. A Special Committee, and later the Council itself, interviewed many applicants, and Mrs. Beach, Organising Secretary of the Central Association for Mental Welfare, was finally invited to apply for the position, to which she was subsequently appointed. The Central Association for Mental Welfare had lent the part-time services of Mrs. Beach to the Child Guidance Council, so that she was familiar with the general aims of the Council and with the whole negotiations between the Council and the Commonwealth Fund.

The Child Guidance Council will shortly be publishing a leaflet setting forth its aims, which will be obtainable from the offices of the Council, 24, Buckingham Palace Road. The Council have secured two rooms which the C.A.M.W. were about to let in their office building.

I intend to cross to America about the middle of September and shall be absent for about two months. I am taking the opportunity of seeing some of the large residential homes for mental defectives in U.S.A. and of studying some of the interesting individual-teaching methods in several normal schools, which may be of special value to Supervisors in Occupation Centres and Teachers in Special Schools and Dull and Backward Classes.

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News and Notes.

Mental Deficiency Bill.

As we go to press, there seems to be a reasonable prospect that the Mental Deficiency Bill, presented by Mr. Crompton Wood, will become law this Session. It has been considered by Standing Committee A, and has been ordered to be reported to the House. It must not be forgotten that the Government Bill last autumn reached this stage, but had then to be withdrawn owing to opposition. The new Bill, however, has met some of the criticisms raised against the previous Bill, and there has been time to dispel certain suspicions that appeared ill-founded, so that there seems ground for hope that the Bill, as amended, will be acceptable to the House.

We hope, in our October issue, to be able to give a summary of the important changes which will be effected by the Bill as finally accepted.

Annual Report of the Board of Control.

The Section of the Annual Report of the Board of Control dealing with Mental Deficiency for the year 1925 has been the subject of an interesting Memorandum adopted by the Society of the County Medical Officers of Health, which has received considerable attention in the medical press. The Memorandum has been published in the June issue of "Public Health," has been commented on in the "Lancet" (June 18th), and critically reviewed in the "British Medical Journal" (June 4th), and has been the subject of correspondence by Dr. Tredgold and Dr. Ralph Picken ("Lancet," June 18th and 25th).