

units?

Finally, nurses say, and I agree with them, that if the lead is to be paid for nursing ordinary forensic cases should it not be paid for nursing very disturbed patients, where there is considerably more risk to the staff?

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DEAR SIR,

Dr Reeves is to be congratulated on a very detailed and cogent account of the problems likely to be caused by the proposed introduction of interim or established Regional Secure Units throughout the country. One can only congratulate him on a clear exposition of the broadly unacceptable premise on which the very misguided proposals of the Butler Committee were based.

That people who break the law because of psychiatric illness should be treated rather than punished is a thesis which would be acceptable to all of us. That this is reasonable and possible in the open-door setting of what has become an acceptable and conventional psychiatric hospital, is far less apparent. If we are to be faced with re-locking doors, re-establishing the quasi-penal attitudes of many years ago, this is clearly not something to be accepted without comment. What is even more disquieting is the tendency one sees for Courts to try to press for medical treatment of obvious psychopaths who are not merely disruptive influences within a hospital but are singularly little modified by a stay in it. Perhaps something very different from either a hospital or a prison should be available for this latter group, on the lines of establishments initiated in some overseas countries.

Be that as it may, the impact of psychopathic offenders, as well as psychotic ones compulsorily controlled in the present-day existing mental hospitals, is a potential disaster. I hope very sincerely that the College will be able to sway the Department's ill-judged decisions in this matter.

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#### PSYCHIATRY—HAS IT A FUTURE?

DEAR SIR,

May I draw the attention of your readers to a recent Open Forum organized by the Association of

Psychiatrists in Training under the above title? An enthusiastic audience of over 200, including some eminent psychiatrists, came to hear Professor Eysenck argue that much mental illness should be treated by psychologists alone, and Professor Pond described the need for professionals who can draw together the many psychosocial factors that are involved as well as the purely medical ones. Tirril Harris exhorted doctors to become more involved in the social factors that cause depression in the community, and a very lively contribution from Dr Anthony Clare called for the doctor who could treat the 'whole person' and argued against the separation of psychology from medicine suggested by Professor Eysenck.

The size of the audience and the lively discussion indicated that this is an important and popular topic. For this reason the whole proceedings were videotaped and an edited version (approximately 30 minutes long) will be available to stimulate discussion in other centres. It would be suitable for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, and details will be available on application. The proceedings will also be published in booklet form principally for members of APIT, but a limited number will also be available for wider distribution.

For details of these and any other APIT activities, interested parties should contact me.

FRANCIS CREED,  
*Chairman of APIT*

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#### A PLEA FOR PSYCHIATRIC BOOKS

DEAR SIR,

In this recently established Academic Department of Psychiatry we are trying to build up a respectable psychiatric library. We have been able to purchase some books but these have naturally been largely confined to volumes that have been recently published and that are still in print.

To supplement this we are looking for collections of older books on psychiatry. I should be very grateful if anyone who knows of any (e.g. personal libraries that are no longer required) would let me know.

R. G. PRIEST

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