

the first case against the Commission to come to the High Court. Somewhat surprisingly, the Court held that a drug called Goserelin, which provided a mode of chemical castration, was not within the regulations under Section 57. A report by a Medical Commissioner and two non-medical Commissioners, on the ground that the consent of the patient was not an informed one and that the treatment was inappropriate because of its unknown side-effects, was questioned. The judgement of the court has pointed up a list of medico-legal problems. The Commission's concern about the control of irreversible or potentially damaging treatments for those mentally incapable to give consent led to its intervention in the sterilisation case heard by the Appellant-Committee of the House of Lords in February/March (the judgement is keenly awaited).

Advisory

One of the first tasks undertaken by the Commission was the drafting of proposals for a Code of Practice. This exercise performed with great skill and zeal by the originally appointed Commissioners has had an unhappy outcome so far. The draft appeared in August 1985 – a very lengthy document that aroused

opposition, not to say hostility, from some professional quarters. Faced with a loud note of dissent, the Department of Health and Social Security decided to draft its own Code of Practice. This appeared in August 1987. The Commission's reaction was critical, partly on the grounds that its own valued work had largely been discarded and partly because the Department's draft seemed little more than a commentary on the Act and provided practitioners with little guidance on how to deal with daily problems for which the Act gave no prescription. As I write, the Department is deciding whether a revision of the 1987 Draft is sufficiently responsive to the calls for detailed guidance. It may be that the draft would not pass muster with a House of Commons whose members would look critically and bi-partisanly at what the Secretary of State had lain before them.

Apart from the saga of the draft Code of Practice, the Commission has produced a memorandum on compulsory treatment in the community, responding to the College's own paper, but so far has not fulfilled its capacity to advise Ministers on a range of problems in the mental health field. Doubtless it will, once there is an official announcement about how mental health will fit into the reformed National Health Service.

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Miscellany

News of Scottish Members

Dr Robert Hunter of the MRC Brain Metabolism Unit at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital has been awarded the McHarg Prize for 1988. The subject of his dissertation was 'Patterns of Regional Cerebral Blood Flow in Presenile Alzheimer's Disease and Korsakoff's Psychosis and their Relation to Neuropsychological Function'.

Dr Alasdair McKechnie, Physician Superintendent at Bangour Village Hospital, Broxburn, has been appointed a medical member of the Mental Welfare Commission in Scotland.

King's Fund Centre

The Centre announces the launch of a new name for what was the Long-Term and Community Care Team. They have decided that a more appropriate title is the Community Living Development Team. Its particular interest is the development of high quality services for people with long-term dis-

abilities, including people with learning difficulties, physical disabilities, and people with mental health problems. Further information can be obtained from: Community Living Development Team, King's Fund Centre, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF (telephone 01-267 6111).

Diploma in Behavioural Psychotherapy

Psychologists, psychiatrists and others with appropriate mental health work experience are invited to apply for the 13-month full-time Diploma Course starting October 1989. In addition to theoretical teaching, practical experience in behavioural psychotherapy will be gained by carrying out treatment under supervision of complex disorders with in- and out-patients. The course is directed by Dr Victor Meyer and Dr Edward S. Chesser. For further details apply to Ms Caroline Selai, Course Secretary, Department of Psychiatry, Wolfson Building, Middlesex Hospital, London W1N 8AA (telephone 01-380 9475).