

arrangements in prisons but there are areas in which the Home Office is anxious to make improvements. In particular the Home Office acknowledged that the Prison Medical Service is under strength. Efforts were being made to attract a greater number of suitably experienced and qualified doctors to the service and this was meeting with some success. The supply of consultant psychiatric services (including forensic services) is in general satisfactory. The system of joint appointments raised a number of difficulties and there were no plans for further appointments of this kind.

Peter Sutcliffe

On 27 March the Home Secretary announced that he had received recent reports which satisfied him that Mr Sutcliffe's mental condition had seriously deteriorated and that he was now suffering from a grave form of mental illness. He could now represent a serious danger to prison staff and others. Reports indicated that he required treatment which could only suitably be given in a hospital. He had therefore directed the patient's removal to Broadmoor Hospital under Section 47 of the Mental Health Act 1983 and he was removed on that day. He was satisfied that the most stringent security precautions would be taken at Broadmoor where there is considerable experience of treating dangerous patients in secure conditions. If Sutcliffe's mental health improved he might be sent back to prison to continue his sentence.

Mental illness

The Minister replied to a further question from Dr David

Owen about psychiatric morbidity. In reply he said that the RCGP report, *Prevention of Psychiatric Disorders in General Practice* (1981), stated that 'psychological problems are prominent in about a quarter of adult general practice attenders and significant psychosocial factors are present in about half of the consultations concerning children.' He said that the figures available centrally on specialist services for in-patient, out-patient and day patient care represent the total number of admissions or attendances rather than the number of people. Many people have more than one admission or attendance in a year and are therefore represented more than once in the figures. There were 184,000 admissions to mental illness hospitals and units in England during 1982 for in-patient care, of which 50,000 were first admissions, and there were 71,000 resident patients in these establishments at the end of 1982.

Overseas doctors

On 16 January Dr Owen asked a series of questions about the proportion of doctors in regions and specialties who were born outside Great Britain and Ireland. In reply the Minister said that the RHA with the largest proportion of doctors (excluding hospital practitioners, paragraph 94 appointments and locums) born outside the UK and the Republic of Ireland on 30 September 1982 was the North Western Regional Health Authority with 35.1 per cent. The next largest proportions were for Northern RHA and NW Thames RHA, each with 32.3 per cent. On the 30 September 1981, 79 per cent of senior registrars in mental handicap were foreign born.

ROBERT BLUGLASS

News Items

Professor G. C. Timbury

In the Birthday Honours List, Professor G. C. Timbury, recently Registrar of the College and formerly Physician Superintendent at Gartnavel Royal Hospital, was awarded the OBE.

The Merck, Sharp and Dohme Prize

The winner of the 1984 Merck, Sharp and Dohme Prize in Psychiatry (East Anglia) was Dr Tom Denning with an entry on 'Wilson's Disease—Psychiatric Aspects'; 2nd Prize was awarded to Dr Fenella Tallack for her entry on 'Current Approaches to Treatment in Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa'. (Both trainees are at Fulbourn Hospital, Cambridge.)

The Academic Department of Psychiatry announces that the competition has now been opened for the 1985 MSD Prize—£100. Psychiatric trainees working in the East Anglian Region

are eligible. Further information: Mrs M. A. Coburn, PGME Secretary, Fulbourn Hospital, Cambridge CB1 5EF (telephone 248074 extension 261).

Research on Child Care Issues for the DHSS

The DHSS funds good quality research proposals in fields relevant to policy and the Department's Research Liaison Group (Child Care), covering care services for children, has updated its research strategy in a recent report. Information: Miss P. Barrett, Secretary, Children's RLG (Child Care), DHSS, Alexander Fleming House, London SE1 6BY.

College Secretary

The new Secretary of the Royal College of Psychiatrists is Mrs Vanessa Cameron.