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**Danger To State Hospitals. Local Managers Criticize The Lunacy Commission.
Representatives of Seven Institutions Protest that the State Care Act as Administered Will
Injure the Usefulness of the Hospitals – Saving of Funds, They Claim, Only a Fictitious
One by Which the State Loses in the End – Dr. Shradys Attack.**

Representatives of the boards of managers of seven of the eight hospitals for the insane in this State met at the Gilsey House last night and arraigned the State Lunacy Commission in strong language for its management, or mismanagement, of the hospitals under the State Care act.

This act took effect October 1. Members of the commission claim that they saved the State \$53,000 in October by scaling down estimates, and \$17,000 in November.

The local managers said last night that this scaling down was not a saving, but simply a delay in contracting bills, which in the long run would not only increase the expense of maintaining the hospitals, but would ruin their usefulness. Unbusinesslike methods, it was said, had characterized the management of the board.

Dr. George F. Shradys, the editor of *The Medical Record*, is one of the managers of the Hudson River Asylum, at Poughkeepsie. In the current number of his paper, he attacks the management of the hospitals under the State Care act.

“Danger to State hospitals for insane,” he declares, “is a vital issue owing to the ineffective operation of the State Care act, by which the Legislature ordered the removal of pauper insane to the poorhouses of the State. It is evident that there is a growing public sentiment adverse to the methods of administration of the State Care act by the Lunacy Commission. It is alleged that not only have the pauper insane not been greatly benefited by the change, but that the whole procedure is tending to convert State hospitals into immense pauper establishments. We are forced to the conclusion that the pauper insane transferred from the county asylums will not be greatly benefited by the change and that the State hospitals, once the pride of the State, are rapidly deteriorating as curative institutions. We give this note of warning while it is yet possible to arrest the progress of the administration of the State Care act, which will involve our hitherto greatest and most useful public charities in irretrievable ruin.”

Dr. Shrady was at the meeting at the Gilsey House last night. Among the others who were there were George E. Dunham of the Utica Hospital, ex-Senator Hammond of Willard, Messrs. Rankin and Cummings of Binghamton, Charles P. McClelland of the Hudson River Hospital, Mr. McArdle of Middletown, George Hall, George F. Darrow, W.L. Proctor, Dr. P.M. Wise, and James S. Wells of the St. Lawrence Hospital at Ogdensburg.

They were in the city in response to a summons from the State Lunacy Commission, which had been called to meet at the Park Avenue Hotel to-day. After they had come to the city they received notices yesterday that, because of the illness of one member of the commission, the meeting had been postponed until Thursday. They met at the Gilsey House to compare notes on the several institutions. The session was a secret one, and lasted from a little after 8 o'clock until about midnight. Senator McClelland presided.

The management by the commission was criticized by nearly every one present. It was said that, in the first place, the law conferred upon the commission autocratic powers which were unheard of heretofore; that the commission was too arbitrary in its management of the institutions, and that if the policy in operation since October 1 was continued, it would result not only in increased expense, but, in some instances, in actual suffering on the part of the inmates of the institutions.

One of the chief grounds of complaint was that the Lunacy Commission, by refusing to make purchases in advance of the month when supplies were needed, and by delay in returning revised estimates, often caused a shortage in the available food, clothing, coal, &c., for the institutions.

Mr. Rankin of the Binghamton institution cited an instance. His board had put in its September estimate an item of 'blankets, \$440,' which the commission had disallowed. This had been included as a part of the savings made by the commission.

The same item was put in the October estimate and again disallowed. A second time it was, he said, included in the showing of economy. Again in November the same blankets had been asked for, and again disallowed. The fourth time, after there had been a saving of about \$1,300, according to the commission, the item was allowed. By that time prices had advanced, and for the blankets, which would have cost \$440 in September, the commission had ordered to be purchased at \$460.

Instead of saving, the commission's delay had increased the cost to the State.

Mr. Hammond of Willard said the local board had included in its estimate made on October 1 a supply of coal for the year. The commission had directed that only enough for one month should be purchased at that time, and had scaled \$18,000 off this estimate. This amount, Mr. Hammond said, had figured as a part of the saving for that month.

At the St. Lawrence Hospital, Ogdensburg, several instances of the same nature were said to have come within the experience of the managers. The local board had put in its estimate of supplies needed a quantity of salt at \$1.10 a barrel, delivered. This item was cut out by the commission, and the board was ordered to buy its salt in Warsaw, where it could be had at 75 cents a barrel.

The local board obeyed orders, bought its salt in Warsaw, paid freight charges, and the salt had cost \$1.35 a barrel when it reached the storerooms of the hospital.

"There was a string of similar instances of bad management," said one of the men who was at the meeting. "Every institution reported them, and the showing in the aggregate was convincing that the present administration of the law is not only damaging to the service but more expensive for the State."

Members of the local board said last night that they did not know why they had been called to meet the commission. Some said they could not wait to attend the meeting.

The members of the State Lunacy Commission are Dr. Carlos F. MacDonald of this city, Goodwin Brown of Albany, and Henry A. Reeves of Greenport, L.I.

A reporter for The New-York Times called yesterday at the Cambridge Hotel, where Dr. MacDonald lives, to ask him if the commission had any reply to make to the charges of Dr. Shradly. Dr. MacDonald was out of the city, and, it was said, would not return until to-day or to-morrow.

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