

its opinion, such a provision is one of imperative necessity for the safety of lying-in women, and they would urge that the Bill should include such a provision."

In their insistence upon this point the General Medical Council will have the cordial support of all midwives who recognise the responsibility of the work they undertake. In our opinion it is inadvisable to entrust even normal cases of midwifery to women of only three months' experience for treatment, but, if the interests of abnormal cases are not safeguarded the responsibility incurred by the promoters of the Bill is a serious one. As the three months' standard of training has been accepted, legislation must proceed on the assumption that midwives only know what they have been able to learn in this period, and this amounts to very little.

#### THE RATING OF HOSPITALS.

A LARGE and influential deputation, composed of members of the Central Hospital Council and representatives of London Hospitals, and which we are glad to see included Mrs. Garrett Anderson, M.D., and Miss Julia Cock, M.D., waited upon Mr. Chaplin last week to ask that hospitals should be exempted from local rates, and it appears to us the case presented was most reasonable. Many public institutions are at present excused from paying rates, such as churches and chapels, buildings for the promotion of science, free public libraries, Sunday schools, ragged schools, and denominational schools. Surely our great public institutions for the relief of the sick may well be placed in the same category; their claims are at least as great as those of several of the institutions enumerated above, which appeal only to certain sections of the community, while our hospitals are before all things national. It is, indeed, this very universality which forms an element of difficulty in granting the concession desired, for, it is pointed out, the London hospitals are largely used not only by Londoners, but that patients are to be found in them from all parts of the country and even the empire, and it is therefore unjust that their exemption from taxation should affect the local rates alone, and that the burden of increased rates should be borne by the local ratepayers. It cannot, however, be held that the benefits of such an institution as the Royal College of Music are purely local, and yet this is exempted from paying rates. It is worthy of note that the London Hospital is already exempted against rates in a local improvements Act, and

that all Irish Hospitals and charitable institutions are alike immune. The case for the hospitals is therefore a strong one, and it is to be regretted that a more decided answer was not received from Mr. Chaplin. It is, however, satisfactory that the President of the Local Government Board has promised to bring the matter, without delay, under the notice of the Cabinet. The relief asked for would, if granted, enable the London Hospitals to provide for not less than 4,000 additional in-patients, and this would undoubtedly relieve the rates by reducing the number of patients now admitted to Poor Law Infirmaries.

#### WHY NOT?

THE Prince of Wales, who recently visited one of the Rowton Houses, has expressed the opinion that our barracks should be built on the same principle. The suggestion is an excellent one, and comes opportunely, as new barracks are shortly to be built on a large scale. The great advantage in the Rowton House system is that each man has a room to himself, so that the relief to many private soldiers, many of whom are men of some education, from the constant publicity necessitated by the present barrack arrangements, would be extreme. The increase of comfort, and of humanizing influences thus attained, could be provided at a cost little exceeding that entailed in maintaining barracks on the present unhealthy and intolerable system. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the affection of the War Office for obsolete methods will not be permitted to override this common sense proposal, more especially is it worthy of consideration, as Lord Roberts has long held that our soldiers should be provided for on these lines. There is no doubt that if a larger standing army is to be maintained, and the best men are to enter its ranks, the conditions of service must be made more attractive.

#### POOR LAW REFORMS.

It is with great pleasure that we learn that the Local Government Board contemplates various Poor Law reforms, which must be for the good of the community at large. Chief among them is the removal of children from workhouses. The plan which seems most favoured for adoption is the scattered homes system. Then it is proposed that all imbeciles and epileptics shall be removed from workhouses, and that respectable inmates of these institutions shall not be required to mix with the vicious.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)