

them were fifteen cases of smallpox and other infectious diseases, and twenty-six cases of plague.

The Committee speak highly of the work of the nursing staff, and particularly express their appreciation of the work of Miss Mill and Miss Walters. The physician-in-charge, Lieut.-Col. Boyd, I.M.S., also speaks in the highest terms of the work of the nursing staff.

With the consent of Government there has now been instituted an annual course of Lectures in Anatomy, Physiology, and Surgery for the instruction of nurses going up for examination to qualify them as Senior Nurses. Dr. Powell, who delivered the lectures, gave a prize to the nurse who passed the highest examination, which was won by Nurse Charlotte Mullen.

A scheme for the amalgamation of the several Nursing Associations in Bombay into a General Nursing Service for the Presidency is at present receiving the consideration of Government, who have appointed a Joint Committee under the presidency of the Surgeon-General to go into the question and to report to Government the lines on which such a service, if at all practicable, could be worked, having regard to the various interests of the several Nursing Institutions concerned. The Hon. Mr. W. C. Hughes, C.I.E., the Chairman, and Mr. James P. Chrystal, the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of this Association, represent it on the Government Committee.

As was hinted in a paragraph in our last week's issue, the Borough of St. Pancras is in the van of the reform movement with regard to the prevention of infantile mortality. An elaborate, and largely statistical report has been drawn up by the Medical Officer of Health, and presented to the Public Health Committee of the St. Pancras Borough Council, from which we may draw a short summary of the movement which culminated in the Conference held this week in the Town Hall.

As early as last summer a permanent Lady-Inspector was appointed, and about a month later the services of a temporary assistant were obtained. The duties of these Lady-Inspectors, as set forth in printed slips by the Medical Officer of Health, are as follows:—

1. To receive the weekly return of births.
2. To send cards of "Advice to Mothers" at the addresses furnished by the weekly return of births.
3. To compare the weekly return of deaths with the weekly return of births, and to note in the latter the deaths of infants under one year that have occurred during the preceding week.
4. To select from the weekly return of births the most suitable cases to visit, commencing in the poorest streets.
5. In regard to the cases visited—
 - (a) To inquire into the hygienic, sanitary, and domestic circumstances of the mother and infant as set out in the inquiry form.

- (b) To impart general information to the mother, including the importance of seeking medical advice before weaning, and in case of any derangement in health of mother or infant to give such hygienic and sanitary information as may apply.

- (c) To distribute to the necessitous poor cards of introduction, at the same time noting the fact on the inquiry form—

- I. In case of derangement of health or desire to wean—to medical practitioners, hospitals, &c.

- II. In case of poverty requiring temporary assistance—to the Charity Organisation Society, or to the Guardians of the Poor, according to the nature of the case.

- III. In case of want of work by other members of the family, to the Labour Bureau

The Report shows that the most serious increase in the rate of infantile mortality is in the earliest weeks of life, that infants are dying at a younger and younger age, and this is apparently due to increased immaturity at birth, diminished viability or capacity for survival, and increased artificial feeding.

A preventive scheme was then formulated, in which the necessity for ameliorating the pre-natal, as well as the post-natal conditions was emphasised, the prospective mother being advised by the Lady-Inspectors on the care of her own health, and the importance of preparation, in regulating her diet and habits for the production of healthy offspring, and for feeding it by natural methods. The breast-feeding of infants is the second important point in the scheme, which seeks to reduce the number of hand-fed infants to the lowest possible figure. To this end it was advised that mothers, when obliged to work at a trade to eke out the family income, should take the work home, instead of working at a factory, which might necessitate the weaning of the child.

This scheme was fully set forth in detail in the resolutions adopted at the Conference this week, to which were invited members of Parliament representing the Borough, members of the County and Borough Councils of St. Pancras, medical specialists and practitioners, Midwives, monthly and general nurses, ministers of religion, district visitors, philanthropists, and others interested in social work.

The Chairman, Dr. R. M. Beaton, L.C.C., in his speech at the opening of the Conference, gave some statistics of the death-rate among infants at various towns. Even the lowest of these figures was very sad, but he showed that wherever the authorities had taken the matter in hand the death-rate had begun to decline. Sir William Broadbent and Prof. Herbert Spencer were among the speakers, and strongly advocated the appointment of women inspectors and the encouragement of the natural feeding of infants by their mothers.

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