

the maternal mortality rate. He would shortly receive the results of a prolonged expert examination which had been made into maternal mortality in various parts of the country. He would make the report public and, fortified by this survey, would be enabled to consider what further steps we could take to make motherhood still safer in this country.

HOUSING ADVANCE.

Housing advance must be one of the more important parts of health work in the New Year. The great need of the time was for suitable houses to let to the lower-paid workers of the country. These were now being built, both by private enterprise and the local authorities, at the rate of 120,000 a year. He hoped we should be able not only to maintain that rate but to increase it.

Half-a-million slum dwellers had already gone to new and better homes. We ought by the end of 1937 to be well on the way to the rehousing of 1,000,000 of our people who dwell, unfortunately, to-day in bad and disgraceful conditions.

But the New Year would, he believed, be marked particularly in our housing reforms by the effective beginning of our campaign against overcrowding. The first day of the New Year had been fixed as the appointed day for the purpose of the overcrowding provisions of the Housing Act for a large number of areas in England and Wales. Here, again, the provision of new houses would be needed. He anticipated that the rehousing by the local authorities would largely consist of two types of house, neither of which had been built in large numbers in the past—the small house for the aged couple and the large house for the big family.

IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION.

"I do not forget," Sir Kingsley Wood continued, "that the problem of nutrition is playing, and must play, an increasingly important part also in our health plans and policy. The matter of sound nourishment, what constitutes a proper diet and how we are best to apply our modern knowledge on these matters, is of great importance to the nation. Our own expert Advisory Committee are steadily going on with their work, a collection of family budgets is to be made as part of the Ministry of Labour's investigation of the cost of living, and a number of local authorities are, at the request of the Advisory Committee, also making a series of quantitative dietary surveys.

"Our milk-in-schools scheme is now in operation in schools containing 90 per cent. of the elementary school population. We are also enabled, now that the report of the Milk Reorganisation Commission is available, to consider how we can extend the scope of this scheme. Employment and wages play an important part in improving the nutrition of the nation, and it is gratifying to witness the increasing numbers of our people in work again and the increase in wages of so many industrial workers."

SUGGESTED MINISTRY OF CHILDHOOD.

At a Meeting of the Nursery Schools Association, held recently in connection with the Silver Jubilee Conference of educational associations, at University College, the institution of a Ministry or State department of Childhood was suggested—inspired, no doubt, by the Department in the French Government, over which a woman presides, and the Federal Children's Bureau of the United States.

Mr. Edward Fuller, of the Save the Children Fund, said that the present national preoccupation with child welfare afforded the occasion, and historical precedents justified constitutionally, the creation of something in the nature

of a Ministry or State department of Childhood. Arguments might be advanced for a reduction rather than an increase of the number of Ministries. His view, however, was that the time was ripe for the creation of a department of childhood, under a secretary, responsible to Parliament, charged with the duty of co-ordinating all public services and all voluntary work relevant to the welfare of children and adolescents.

Dr. Ralph Crowley, late senior medical officer, Board of Education, said there was no department, local or central, that existed to think out all the problems of the welfare of the child from birth to 18 years of age. He looked forward to the time when there would be a department at the centre always thinking of the whole child.

Professor Olive Wheeler was not in favour of the suggestion; she did not think they would get the desired co-ordination by instituting another Government department.

In further discussion, one speaker, who advocated the turning of infant schools into nursery schools, said that such a change could come only when head teachers cared a little less about their "dignity, authority and power."

THE MASSACRE OF CHILDREN ON THE ROADS.

A new campaign in the interests of safeguarding children against road accidents is to be launched by the National "Safety First" Association, and it is to be hoped that its work will not be limited to statistics. No public protest can be too strong if the lives of children are to be saved.

During the last 10 years 14,000 children have been killed and 400,000 injured on the roads of Great Britain, and a report recently submitted to the London County Council showed that one boy in 12 met with a traffic accident during his school life.

The Association has come to the conclusion that the only way to assure the safety of young children on the roads was for them to be accompanied by adults. This, of course, is impossible.

What makes this question one of mystery is—Why are parents of helpless children so lacking in combined protest against the danger of the motor fiend where their children are concerned? Mothers must unite to arouse public authorities in every district to do their duty.

THE SANITARY INSTITUTE.

THE HEALTH CONGRESS.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Dudley has consented to act as President of the Health Congress of The Royal Sanitary Institute, which is to be held at Birmingham from July 12th to 17th, 1937. He will deliver his Inaugural Address on Monday afternoon, July 12th.

The Minister of Health, the Right Hon. Sir Kingsley Wood, will address a General Session of the Congress on Tuesday.

The deliberations of the Congress will be divided among eight sections dealing with

- Preventive Medicine.
- Engineering, Architecture and Town Planning.
- Maternity, Child Welfare and School Hygiene.
- Veterinary Hygiene.
- National Health Insurance.
- Hygiene in Industry.
- Tropical Hygiene.
- Sewage Disposal.

In addition, there will be conferences of Representatives of Local Authorities, Medical Officers of Health, Engineer and Surveyors, Sanitary Inspectors, and Health Visitor

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