

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,093.

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 1909.

XLII

Editorial.

A CHILDREN'S BUREAU.

The National Child Labour Committee in New York is actively seeking the passage of a Bill during the present Congressional session to establish a Federal Children's Bureau. The idea originated with Miss Lillian D. Wald, the Head of the Nurses' Settlement, Henry Street, New York; and a similar Bill was introduced in the United States Senate several years ago but did not come to the vote, although it received the hearty endorsement of President Roosevelt and the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, as well as of many members of both Houses of Congress.

Considerable attention has recently been devoted to children's problems in the United States of America, and a White House Conference on Dependent Children served to emphasise their importance. Immediately following this, what *Charities* describes as "an unusually well-managed and effective hearing" was held in Washington before the House of Representatives Committee on Expenditures in the Interior Department on January 27th. At this gathering all the Conference leaders, representing every section of the country and all shades of opinion in dealing with children's problems were present, as were also the judges of the leading juvenile courts.

The plea is for a bureau to investigate and report upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child-life, and especially to investigate questions of infantile mortality, the birth-rate, physical degeneracy, orphanage, juvenile delinquency and juvenile courts, desertion and illegitimacy, employment, dangerous occupations, accidents and diseases of children of the industrial classes, and such other facts as have a bearing upon the health, efficiency, character and training of children.

The hearing was conducted by Mr. Herbert Parsons, who introduced the Bill into the House, and Secretary Lovejoy, of the National Child Labour Committee, which stands sponsor for the Bill.

Miss Wald gave the opening address and demonstrated the universal demand for the Bill, which is endorsed by numerous influential organisations, and said that it had been impossible to discover one dissenting voice. Miss Wald said further:—"The children's bureau would not merely collect and classify information, but it would be prepared to furnish to every community in the land information that was needed, diffuse knowledge that had come through expert study of facts valuable to the child and to the community. Many extraordinarily valuable methods have originated in America and have been seized by communities other than our own as valuable social discoveries. Other communities have had more or less haphazard legislation and there is abundant evidence of the desire to have judicial construction to harmonise and comprehend them. Nowhere in the country does the Government as such provide information concerning vitally necessary measures for the children. Evils that are unknown or that are under-estimated have the best chance for undisturbed existence and extension, and where light is most needed there is still darkness."

Many other influential speakers followed, including Mr. Edward T. Devine, Editor of *Charities*. It is believed that the House Committee, which was much impressed, will report favourably on the Bill. Children, who are a most helpless section of the community, need all the help that the law can afford, and the establishment of a department under Government control in this country specially charged with safeguarding the welfare of the nation's children could not fail to be productive of good.

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