

prove groundless) that the Act will cause valuable organisations like the Rural Midwives' Association (for the supply of midwives) and District Nursing Associations to decline, owing to subscriptions falling off. Whether an amount were allocated or not, an association would now be able to charge full fees, instead of the small subscriptions often asked.

The stipulations as regards allocation which co-operative women desire to make are (1) that any allocation made by Insurance Committees or Approved Societies shall be universal where adopted; with the converse of this, that there shall be no allocation which should entail inquiry or differentiation of classes or persons; (2) that any allocation (other than to doctor or midwife) should be only at the request of the mother or father.

If it were thought desirable to give women and men the chance of protection from one another, it would be possible to supply a form, whenever asked for, on which could be specified the kind of help desired—e.g., maternity homes, nursing, help in the home, milk, &c. The form might be taken to cases by a member of a visiting committee or sick visitors.

CERTIFIED MIDWIVES AND THE INSURANCE ACT.

In reply to several correspondents as to the position of midwives under the Insurance Act, the Insurance Commissioners have decided that: "A certified midwife engaged by various patients, who performs her duties without the supervision of a qualified medical practitioner, is not employed under a contract of service, and is not required to be insured."

MIDWIFERY IN THE MISSION FIELD.

It is announced in *Nurses Near and Far*, the organ of the Nurses' Missionary League, that money kindly given to the League to help members to gain additional training in midwifery, with a view to work in the Mission field, has now been returned by those to whom it was lent and it is available for use by any member desiring it. Anyone wishing to borrow it should write to Miss Richardson, on the subject, at 52, Lower Sloane Street, London, W.

THE AUSTRALIAN MATERNITY BILL.

The Federal House of Representatives, on the 26th inst., passed without a division the second reading of the Bill providing a maternity allowance in respect of any child born in Australia. Mothers will receive a maximum benefit of £5, which must be claimed within three months from the birth of a child.

The measure excludes aborigines and Asiatics.

MATERNITY HOSPITALS.

Dr. Thomas W. Huntington, writing in the *International Hospital Record*, says that in recent years the public has learned to place a correct estimate on the maternity hospital, and there is already a keen appreciation of its appropriateness. Slowly but surely the institution is supplanting the residential lying-in room, and for manifold reasons this tendency should be warmly encouraged by the medical profession.

Well-regulated maternity hospitals offer a maximum of comfort and safety at a minimum outlay. In point of efficiency, the affluent and the poverty-stricken are on parity. Such hospitals constitute the best possible schools for the attendant and the nurse, and in them is being reared a type of men and women who are willing to work efficiently and exclusively in this specialty.

At every stage of delivery the attendant is in full command of an adequate equipment. Emergencies may be met promptly and without embarrassment, and not infrequently a calamity is averted. Serious complications in this department of medicine possess a peculiar significance.

The maternity hospital which is worthy of the name is intolerant of loose methods, of shabby subterfuge or ill-masked pretence, and is insistent on strict observance of scientific law. With rare though conspicuous exceptions this phase of our hospital system seems not to have elicited the interest and support which it merits.

The lying-in wards of county and municipal hospitals have been much neglected, and the service rendered therein is too often indifferent, if not unsafe. Some of the so-called private hospitals which invite this character of work are of low standard and without reason or justification for their existence.

Society needs to be reminded that the highest obligation of man to woman lies in his safeguarding and protecting her during that trying period of approaching motherhood.

MATERNITY INSURANCE IN AUSTRIA.

The Austrian Protection of Motherhood Society, reports *The Standard*, is petitioning the Austrian Reichsrat through one of its members, Dr. Julius Ofner, to include a maternity insurance in the Insurance Reform Bill, which is to be brought before the House this coming session. The Reform Bill embodies a scheme for the broadening of the present invalidity, sickness, and old age insurance, but makes no mention of a maternity insurance which the society were given to understand would be embodied in this Bill. The Austrian Society, like the well-known German League, founded by Dr. Helen Stoecker, has for its ultimate aim the procurement of the State endowment of motherhood.

In France, there is a Bill before the Chamber of Deputies for the payment of £20 to every mother on the birth of her fourth child.

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