

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.

The Public Health Committee of the London County Council reported to that body on Tuesday that the Council on November 8th, 1910, on its recommendation, decided to make an order declaring ophthalmia neonatorum a notifiable infectious disease under section 55 of the Public Health (London) Act, 1891. This order was subsequently confirmed by the Local Government Board, and came into operation on March 13th, 1911.

They reminded the Council that ophthalmia neonatorum is a dangerous condition of the eyes of an infant at birth, and unless prompt measures are taken for the disinfection of the eyes, impairment of vision, or even blindness, may result. Indeed, it is estimated that, of the total number of cases of total blindness in this country, between 30 and 40 per cent. are attributable to this disease. It is, however, a preventable disease, and it was for this reason that the Midwives Act Committee first directed attention to the desirability of making the notification of it compulsory.

The Public Health Committee report that they are now informed that the Local Government Board in reply to an enquiry made by the Medical Officer of Health of Poplar, has stated that the term "ophthalmia neonatorum," for purposes of notification, is not intended to be restricted to purulent ophthalmia caused by the gonococcus in the case of newly-born infants, but is to include cases of purulent eye discharges caused by other organisms when these discharges occur during the first few days after birth.

THE YORK ROAD LYING-IN HOSPITAL.

An interesting account of the work done at the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, Lambeth, is published in the *Ladies' Field* for February 1st. Our contemporary is to be congratulated on the excellent pictures with which the article is illustrated, and which should certainly help to bring home to the public the work which is going on there.

PROPOSED MIDWIFERY SCHOOL IN WORKHOUSE WARDS.

The Wandsworth Board of Guardians have adopted a scheme embodying the establishment of a training school in midwifery for nurses in the lying-in wards at the workhouse. It is proposed, with the sanction of the Local Government Board, that eight senior probationers shall be allowed to enter on a fourth year of training, during six months of which they shall be taught midwifery, the remainder of the time being spent in the ordinary wards. No charge is to be made for the special training, but the probationers are to sign an undertaking to remain for the whole of the fourth year in the guardians' service at a salary of £18. Dr. A. E. Dodson, the medical superintendent at St. James's Infirmary, is to undertake the teaching. In con-

nection with the scheme the guardians have decided to ask the Central Midwives Board to recognise the lying-in wards at the workhouse as a training school for midwives.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MIDWIVES.

Mrs. Lawson, the President, and other officers of the National Association of Midwives, a Society always on the alert where the interests of practising midwives are concerned, have been interviewing the National Insurance Commissioners in regard to adequate representation of midwives on local bodies. The deputation was received by Miss Mona Wilson on behalf of the Commissioners.

THE MATERNITY BENEFIT.

The Billericay Guardians have decided to defer making the usual subscriptions to various parish nursing funds owing to the statement that since the maternity benefit had come into force the nurses' and doctors' charges had been largely increased. It is alleged that the charge for nurses has been increased from 7s. 6d. to 15s., and that the maternity benefit is being absorbed.

At the same time, 7s. 6d. cannot be regarded as a living wage for a skilled worker who attends a confinement and pays one or more daily visits to the patient for ten days subsequently, the first visit lasting several hours, and subsequent ones the best part of an hour. In addition considerable time is frequently spent in walking to and from the case. Men are so accustomed to see women overworked and underpaid that when they ask for reasonable remuneration when working under an Act of Parliament it appears an astonishing thing.

FREE RESTAURANTS FOR MOTHERS.

The free restaurants for nursing and expectant mothers (Cantines Maternelles), which now number seven, in Paris, have (says the "Woman's Platform" of the *Standard*) decided to form themselves into a federation in order to start a health campaign and enlarge their sphere of activity. At the present time all necessitous nursing mothers are, without any inquiries, provided with two substantial meals daily, breakfast and dinner, and the average attendance at each of the cantines varies from 50 to 80 per day. The restaurants, since their gradual development from one small room in the year 1904 to the present number, have proved of immense value in the poor quarters of Paris. As a federation the cantines will endeavour to secure the establishment of more baby clinics, subsidised by the municipality, more free restaurants, and the propagation among mothers of the simple rules of health, for themselves and their babies.

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