

That International Societies should deal only with the Joint Committee.

(2) That Maternity Benefit should be paid in every case to the mother, or to her nominee, and that the "prescribed fee" should be abolished.

(3) That Employed Contributors, whilst temporarily employed outside the United Kingdom, should not be considered to be in arrears during that period.

(4) That the Medical Benefit should be considered as a right to adequate medical attendance and treatment, and to include the provision of nursing.

(5) That that Section of the Amendment Bill imposing an income limit by which Voluntary Contributors may not receive medical benefit should be deleted.

(6) That Section 12 should be amended so as to legalise the payment in a lump sum of the benefit due to an insured person on leaving the Hospital, and authorise the Society, on the member's recommendation, to pay the same to the Hospital.

It was further resolved that the Association is of the opinion that no extra charge should be placed upon the funds of Approved Societies, but that the cost of any additions to the Act should be met from public funds.

THE MOTHER'S BENEFIT.

Amongst the new clauses proposed for inclusion in the National Insurance Act Amendment Bill is one moved by Mr. G. Locker-Lampson, to secure that Maternity Benefit should in every case be the mother's benefit, and that the payment of the money should be made to the mother or to some person nominated by her, and that the principal Act should be altered accordingly. Against the resolution it was contended by Mr. Glyn Jones that the whole of the responsibility for proper attention during confinement rested upon the husband, and the money to pay for that attention should be paid to him. There were exceptional husbands and exceptional wives who might spend the money badly.

Mr. Booth pointed out that if the husband mis-spent the money he mis-spent something which did not belong to him, but if the wife mis-spent it she was at all events mis-spending her own money.

Mr. Masterman promised to accept the Committee's decision that the benefit was the woman's benefit, and that it ought to be paid to her in some fashion. If the decision were upheld in the House, on Report, he would endeavour after consultation with the various parties in the House, to find a solution for the administrative difficulties involved.

Two nurses have each been sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a fine of £100, in Melbourne, for conspiring to defraud in connection with fictitious claims for the maternity bonus.

THE WEIGHT OF INFANTS AT BIRTH.

Dr. H. J. Hansen, of Nykobing-on-Sealand (in some investigations in the weight of new born children, published by the Anthropological Society of Copenhagen, and reported in the *Lancet*), by means of an investigation which was carried on in the district in which he practises, has been able to collect some valuable statistics with respect to the weight of newly-born infants. He enlisted the services of a number of midwives in his neighbourhood and supplied them with forms which they were requested to fill in with appropriate figures. The investigations were continued for ten years (1900-1910), and the report now published refers to the weight of 5,979 babies. The general results, as far as rural cases are concerned, show that the average weight of male infants was 3,696 grm., while that of female infants was 3,542 grm.—the weights in both cases being between 8 and 9 per cent. higher than in town babies. The author refers to the various factors which may be considered to have an influence on the weight. The age of the mother appears to exercise a definite influence; speaking generally, the older the mother the greater the weight of the infant at birth. But this law is modified by the number of previous pregnancies; for the larger the number of previous pregnancies the greater the weight of the infant—and this latter fact altogether preponderates over that of age. The age of the mother at the time of the first pregnancy is another matter with which the author deals. It seems that the age-group (30-34 years), is the optimum period for the beginning of child-bearing as judged by the criterion of the weight of the first five or six children. In the case of this age-group there is a definite decline in weight after five or six children have been born. The economic conditions obtaining in the home also influence the birth-weight; making certain corrections for the age of the mother and the number of previous pregnancies, the figures show that the children of the well-to-do classes are considerably heavier than those of the extremely poor. But this rule does not hold good after six children have been born. Making allowance for the three factors with regard to which the author made special inquiry—namely, the age of the mother, the number of previous children, and the economic conditions—the conclusion that illegitimate children are on the whole of less weight than legitimate children may be deduced from the statistics. It further appears that seasonal conditions are factors in the question; on an average babies born in the autumn are heavier than those born in the spring. In an appendix the author considers the relative numbers of males and females, and the factors which determine these differences. Among other things he finds that the younger the mothers are on beginning child-bearing the greater is the proportion of boys.

The investigation proves that midwives can be of much use to the medical profession in collecting statistics.

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