

It is desirable to watch for any promising aid in the campaign. At the same time it is well to maintain a proper sense of perspective, and not too hastily to run after every new device. The general social conditions, including public health work, constitute, with heredity, the most important factors. Results should be tested. For international comparison, it is necessary at present to rely on statistics of infant mortality, though these figures are not strictly comparable for all countries, and need to be interpreted with care. So far as they go, they indicate that the United Kingdom stands fairly well, and that progress is being made. The mortality is higher in the United Kingdom than in some countries, but is strikingly lower than in Prussia or France.

The work of infant welfare centres is intimately associated with that of midwives, who will be doing both their patients and the nation good service if they systematically put the former in touch with these centres, with the localities of which midwives should acquaint themselves. The pamphlet to which we have referred (pamphlet No 7) may be obtained from the League at the address given above, price 7d. post free.

THE TRAINING OF WOMEN AS MIDWIVES.

Among the resolutions adopted by the Infant Mortality Conference will be found one declaring

"That steps should be taken to secure the better training of women who apply for the certificate of the Central Midwives' Board."

We doubt if there is any one concerned in the training of midwives who is not of opinion that the Board would add greatly to the value of its certificate, and to the efficiency of those whom it certifies, by requiring a longer period of practical training before it admits candidates to its examination. The opinion expressed by Miss Ramsden, Matron of the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, at the recent Nursing Conference in that city, that pupils without previous training as nurses should serve an apprenticeship of a year will be endorsed by most Matrons—for the foundation principles of asepsis can scarcely be laid, so as to be carried out almost automatically, or the practice which makes perfect, by the constant performance of the same duties, under skilled supervision, be acquired in less time.

While most teachers of midwives are agreed that under present conditions of training most undesirable cramming is a necessity, it is difficult for one institution to make a stand, and increase the length of training, which is more essential than any alteration in the curriculum. The Midwives' Board, acting in the interests of education, and therefore, of the mothers concerned, could do so at once. This is an instance of the beneficial influence which may be exerted by an outside body, charged with safeguarding the educational standards of a profession, when

individual institutions do not feel justified, owing to the exigencies of their financial position in taking the initiative in lengthening the course of training.

THE INFANT MORTALITY CONFERENCE.

RESOLUTIONS.

On the last afternoon of the Infant Mortality Conference at the Caxton Hall, Westminster (Tuesday, August 5th), the Administrative and Medical Sections jointly adopted the following resolutions submitted by the Executive Committee:

That the maternity benefit be made the property of the mother both in practice and in law.

That in view of the damage liable to be wrought in growing girls by injudicious stress in education, especially during puberty and adolescence, any form of education for girls which pays insufficient attention to establishing good bodily health and development and complete fitness for maternity and the practical care of a home should be deprecated.

That in the interests of both mother and child there should be legislation for the registration of still-births.

That more complete medical certification of death is necessary, and that the medical death certificates should be forwarded to the registrars, as confidential documents under sealed cover.

That steps should be taken to secure the better training of women who apply for the certificate of the Central Midwives Board.

That infant hygiene should be given a more important place in the medical curriculum.

That the grant from the Board of Education earned by "recognized" infant welfare centres should depend in future on their efficiency, on the number of registered attendances of the mothers at consultations, classes, and talks; and on the number of home visits paid under adequate supervision.

That in view of the large percentage of still-births and infant deaths directly attributable to venereal diseases, and considering that infant blindness and other congenital defects are in many cases due to the same cause, the Governments of the countries represented at the Conference should each appoint a commission to inquire into the prevalence, the causes, the treatment, and the possibility of the prevention of those diseases.

That the Government should make explicit the powers of local authorities to make grants in aid of infant consultations and schools for mothers.

That the Milk Bill should be presented to Parliament and passed with as little delay as possible.

The Executive Committee were instructed to take whatever steps they might think desirable in order to ensure the microscopical examination of milk and tubercle bacillus by analytical methods.

The next meeting of the Conference will be held at Liverpool.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)