

the medical profession will be put to the greatest inconvenience, for it is to nursing homes and not to lying-in homes, in the usual acceptation of the term, that the obstetric physician sends his maternity cases, effecting the delivery himself, and confident that the nursing care they receive is skilful and competent. Even if the superintendent of a Nursing Home refuses, to her pecuniary loss, to receive maternity cases, that does not dispose of the question of the premature confinements which may take place at any time as a complication of any acute illness.

If such a confinement should occur in a nursing home, unlicensed for the reception of lying-in cases by the London County Council, the home is liable to be raided by the Council's officers, or should extra zealous officers even suspect that maternity cases are received they are to have the right of entry. A power not possessed, be it noted, by the police in the case of disorderly houses, for they must first obtain a warrant which is issued only upon evidence, not suspicion, before they can enter such houses.

Further—as it is proposed to enact that unless both the premises, and the persons in charge thereof, are licensed by the Council, they shall not be used for the reception of women for confinement and lying-in—it follows that some penalty must be imposed to enforce this regulation, though it is not at present defined.

If legislation relating to the control of both lying-in and nursing homes is to be acceptable to trained nurses and midwives, as well as to be effective from the point of view of public control, then the professional organisations of those skilled workers, whom it will so intimately affect, should be consulted by the London County Council.

Again, who is to judge whether premises are suitable, or suitably equipped, prior to the withdrawal of a licence? Medical, sanitary, and nursing and midwifery details have all to be taken into consideration if inspection is to be adequate, and the London County Council propose to appoint for the whole County of London a female inspector at the inadequate salary of £100 per annum, *i.e.*, £1 18s. 5½d. per week. It is evident that neither a medical woman, nor an experienced trained nurse with midwifery and sanitary qualifications, would undertake the work for this salary, and an untrained woman is not competent to supervise work requiring technical knowledge where the lives of the public are at stake.

The alternatives before a prospective mother who does not desire to be delivered at home are these:—

She may enter a licensed lying-in home, or a Poor Law institution, or an important hospital, or the house of a relative; otherwise, apparently, the door of every house in London, including all suitable lodgings and hotels, are barred against her. Presumably a woman may have a baby in her own house, as the London County Council, in its wisdom, does not appear to have framed any regulations on this point.

#### THE CONTROL OF NURSING HOMES.

In connection with legislation for the control of nursing homes, the Public Control Committee recommended to the London County Council at the same meeting:—

“That notice be given by public advertisement of the intention of the Council to consider, at its meeting on 11th November, 1913, a proposal that it shall take the necessary measures for promoting in the Session of Parliament of 1914, legislation dealing with the control of nursing homes, and establishments where massage, manicure or electric treatment is carried on, in London, and to defray, out of the county fund, the cost and expenses of promoting such legislation.”

The Committee referred to a report they presented on July 22nd, 1913, on a suggestion made by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the Council should obtain statutory authority to deal with establishments in London where massage, manicure and electric treatment were undertaken, as the police had good reason to believe that many of these places were in fact nothing more than disorderly houses. The Secretary of State for the Home Department was so impressed with the urgency of the question that he intimated his willingness to secure, if possible, amendments to the London County Council (General Powers) Bill, 1913, then before Parliament. This, however, was found to be impossible. Their recommendation was therefore not proceeded with, but it was arranged that after the summer recess they should present proposals for legislation in the session of 1914 to empower the Council either to register, or to license yearly, nursing homes, and establishments where massage, manicure, and electric treatment are carried on, and to provide for their inspection. In the course of the discussion it was resolved to exclude “recognized hospitals, defined by schedule or otherwise,” from the operation of the proposals. In moving this amendment, Mr. Parsons mentioned that wide powers were necessary because, since the Council's proposals had been made public, premises which had come under the notice of the police were being advertised as schools of instruction in foreign languages. He added that the establishments at which the present proposals were aimed might be better dealt with by the police, or by the Borough Councils which were at present charged with the duty of suppressing disorderly houses.

The Chairman of the Committee explained that the reason why it was not proposed that the police should deal with the question was that there was much stronger objection amongst the public generally to police than to Council inspection.

#### CONCLUSIONS.

That there is an urgent necessity for drastic legislation for the suppression of disorderly houses, masquerading as homes for the reception of the sick carried on by members of the skilled

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