

oesophagus, pyloric spasm, and pyloric stenosis are the most common.

Gas and colic are problems which the nurse is often called on to solve. They may be caused by too rapid feeding, overfeeding, and improper food. Among the simple remedies which may be helpful are change of position; sometimes simply putting the baby in an upright position tends to dislodge the gas. Heat applied to the abdomen and abdominal massage are often effectual. Hot water in tablespoonful doses by mouth and rectal soap suppository often help.

An infant should have a daily cleansing bath, preferably in the tub, temperature of the water 90 deg. to 95 deg. F. A mild castile soap should be used sparingly and the skin dried with a soft towel.

The mouth must receive constant attention. Before and after every nursing it should be wiped out gently with a saturated solution of boric acid on a piece of soft cotton or linen. Stomatitis, or sore mouth, is caused by dirty nipples, too hot milk (in the bottle-fed), prolonged feeding—seen especially in the bottle-fed where the child must manage the bottle—and in cases of general neglect. Pacifiers or blind nipples are a frequent source of stomatitis, causing also middle-ear disease, gas, and facial disfigurement.

THE ROYAL MATERNITY CHARITY OF LONDON.

The adjourned Annual General Meeting of the Governors of the Royal Maternity Charity was held on March 26th, at 31, Finsbury Square, Mr. R. Inigo Tasker, J.P., L.C.C., presiding, to hear and consider the opinion arrived at by the Special Committee appointed at the meeting on February 13th to thoroughly inquire as to the advisability or otherwise of granting "letters" to insured persons. Amongst the Governors present were Colonel H. H. Tasker, the Rev. Charles Clark, Mr. William Grayson, Mrs. Probyn, Dr. E. K. Houchin, and Mrs. Down and Mrs. Owens, midwives as well as Governors of the Charity.

Counsel's opinion was presented, which was adverse to any charge being made to persons receiving the Charity's letters, either directly or by payment from Approved Societies or Insurance Committees, as this would contravene the object of the charity that the assistance given should be gratuitous. Such a charge could not be properly made without application to the Charity Commissioners for leave to alter the constitution.

The Chairman announced that the result of the deliberations of the Committee was that the Charity should give gratuitous attendance to all its patients, insured or otherwise, and it was resolved, *nem. con.*, that the recommendation of the Committee be approved and adopted.

The Rev. C. Clark considered that in view of this decision the cautionary notice at present printed at the head of the letters, requesting Governors not to give the letter to anyone receiving Maternity Benefit under the National Insurance

Act, should be removed, and he accordingly moved that the words be deleted. This was carried after some discussion, and it was resolved, on the motion of Colonel Tasker, seconded by Mr. Grayson, that a covering letter should be sent out at the next distribution of letters suggesting that Governors should use their own discretion in giving letters to insured persons if they know them to be necessitous.

In connection presumably with the falling-off in the number of cases attended by the Charity in last year it was pointed out by a Governor that hundreds might be obtained if it was intimated through certain channels that the benefits of the Charity were available. Thus the postmen of London had contracted out of the Act, and their wives did not therefore receive the Maternity Benefit under the Insurance Act. Mrs. Owens said that uninsured postmen received 2s. 2d. extra, and the police also had extra pay. There were many people who were in difficulties who managed to get their insurance money paid up, and who had nothing coming in but the 30s. Maternity Benefit at the time of confinement. They were really in need, and most suitable objects for the help afforded by the Charity's gratuitous letters. On the other hand, where the husband was in full work and both husband and wife insured, the letters were not needed.

At the conclusion of the meeting tea was hospitably provided by Major Killick, the general Secretary of the Charity.

A NATIONAL MATERNITY POLICY.

A correspondent of the *Times*, in an interesting article on "Mothers of the Race," strongly advocates the adoption of a national maternity policy, and the building up of an effective administration, through a combination of the functions of the approved societies under the National Insurance Act which are concerned with the administration of money, and the local public health committees concerned with preventive measures. The writer condemns the proposition that the Board of Education should consider the partial financing of voluntary schools for mothers, which must result in increased overlapping, but considers that by placing the money administration under the public health authority, which is already dealing with maternity and infancy, an immense stimulus would be given to the preventive work, which is already growing rapidly. Public health committees have made good their claim to such administration by the decrease in the rate of infant mortality during the last years, and by the constantly enlarging sphere of their activities.

At present there are gaps in the armour of the public health authorities, the training of midwives is inadequate, the difficulty of securing medical assistance on the advice of a midwife notorious; and the lack of maternity hospitals lamentable.

THE WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD.

The scheme outlined by the Women's Co-operative Guild, to which we referred last week,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)