

### IMPERIAL EUGENICS.

Dr. C. W. Saleeby, speaking on "Imperial Eugenics" at the Royal Institution last Saturday, said there was one happy fact observable during the war: the infant mortality in 1916 for Great Britain was the lowest ever recorded. Nevertheless, there were a great many ante-natal deaths which could be prevented—something like 110,000 in the British Isles during the last decade.

There were several ways in which we could increase our population. We could save children's lives; we could help parenthood. At present we systematically flouted it and penalised it, and in effect prohibited it, both in the way of taxes and by making no provisions for it in housing. Houses were built for single people and for childless couples: in short, people were housed and not "homed."

We ought to have a policy of intra-Empire migration. Already there were about one million more women in the British Isles than men, and now and after the war there would be no fit man to spare for emigration. On the other hand, there were far more men in the Colonies than women, and we needed fit women to emigrate. It would be a good thing if some of the Colonials who were now in this country could mate with our girls and return with them to the Colonies.

### MOTHERCRAFT.

By the kindness of Lady Walstein, a drawing-room meeting was held at 12, Bruton Street, W., on March 19th to discuss the proposed scheme for a National Institute of Mothercraft.

Sir Charles Walstein presided.

Major Eden, M.D., addressed the meeting on the subject of the maternal instinct, and the absence of it. He also dealt with the individuality of the infant. He remarked that while women had shown themselves in so many occupations the equal of men, the old-fashioned occupation of motherhood had fallen rather into discredit. In dealing with the infant, it was, he said, only the unseeing eye that held all babies to be alike. Their budding individuality was very fascinating.

Miss Holford, the Hon. Secretary of the National Association for the Prevention of Infant Mortality, very lucidly described the objects of the proposed National Institute.

It was to be an educational centre where infant welfare workers would find the material to enable them to study and equip themselves for their work. It was not their object to treat sick children, but to keep healthy children well. It would comprise both ante-natal and post-natal work. They hoped to include a dental department for the mothers, infant consultations, school for mothers, a department for the ex-baby, a day nursery, and a nursery school.

Trained nurses and midwives, who, as a rule, had experience only of sick children and very young infants, could here supplement their experience.

Dr. Eric Pritchard said there had been objections

raised to this scheme by Sir J. Crichton Browne on the ground there was nothing new in it. He held that mothercraft in a scientific sense was new.

One of the most important objects of the Institute would be research work. There was no systematic research work for this purpose in the country.

It would provide a post graduate course for midwives, and it would be able to admit a limited number of students for the study of healthy infants.

### LEICESTERSHIRE MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION.

At the third annual meeting of the Leicestershire Midwives' Association, of which Miss E. Pell Smith is President, held in Leicester on March 14th, Mrs. Bond gave an instructive address on infant mortality, and Lady Beaumont proposed a resolution approving of legislation making unqualified treatment of venereal diseases a penal offence.

Miss Cauty, Superintendent County Nursing Association, read a paper criticising the proposal of the Local Government Board for the delegation by County Councils of their authority as Local Supervising Authorities of Midwives under the Midwives' Act to boroughs with 20,000 inhabitants. A resolution adverse to the proposal was unanimously carried, which it was arranged to send to the Local Government Board and to local members of Parliament.

### THE ABERDEEN MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

At the recent Annual Meeting of the Aberdeen Dispensary and Vaccine Institution, and of the Maternity Hospital, the effect of the war on the former Institution was very evident. Professor Matthew Hay said, in regard to the former, that male patients, with the exception of a few old men had practically ceased to attend, and suggested whether it might not take a definite part in the maternity and welfare work for women and children which would have to be undertaken. He noted that 54 cases of syphilis, 42 acquired, and 12 congenital were reported by Dr. Booth as having been treated in his department. On behalf of the Local Authority Professor Hay offered the Dispensary the free use of special remedies and appliances in the treatment of venereal diseases.

Professor Cash, who moved the adoption of the report of the Maternity Hospital, said that before the passing of the Midwives Act (Scotland) the mortality of mothers in Scotland was nearly half as much again as amongst mothers in England. That showed the pressing need of the application of the Act to Scotland; and he emphasised the fact that in their excellently equipped hospital they had the means of training women competent to act as midwives who would take the place of the incompetent people who had been a source of danger to the community.

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