

The Association of Approved Societies urges that it should be independent of any existing Department. It is of opinion that the following Health Services should be co-ordinated under this Ministry:—

Local Government Board.—Infectious diseases and hospitals, housing, drainage and water supply, sanitation, inspection of food and drugs, the medical care of the sick and poor, supervision of infant welfare centres, health visitors, &c., &c.

Home Office.—Lunatics and feeble-minded, inebriates, alien immigration, lead poisoning, factory inspection.

Board of Education.—The medical side of school work, supervision of schools for mothers.

Privy Council.—Control of the medical profession and of midwives.

National Insurance Commission.—Administration of medical and sanatorium benefits to insured members of the community, and to uninsured disabled soldiers.

War Office, Admiralty, India Office.—Certain services under the control of these Departments.

Board of Trade.—Immigration, Port Sanitary Authority, industrial diseases.

It is evident that there is plenty of work to hand for a Ministry of Health.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT INSTRUCTION WOULD YOU GIVE TO EXPECTANT MOTHERS ON THE SUBJECT OF BREAST-FEEDING OF THEIR INFANTS, AND HOW WOULD YOU HELP TO PREPARE THEM FOR THIS DUTY?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Martha Blanchard, Knowsley Road, St. Helens, Lancashire.

PRIZE PAPER.

If it were necessary to assure the expectant mother of the superiority of natural over artificial feeding I should make my arguments as brief and convincing as possible, and they would be:—

1. That the milk of the mother is not hers to withhold, being the provision of nature for the little one, nature having also established a very real connection between it and the digestive needs of the child.

2. That it is the least costly and least troublesome mode of feeding.

3. That breast-fed babies have a much greater power of resistance to all diseases than artificially fed infants.

4. That sucking (on a firmer and larger

object than the ordinary rubber teat) is an excellent exercise for the baby, as by it the blood supply is improved, and the development of the jaws, nose, palate, and pharynx is assisted. Incidentally, the formation of adenoids and other malformations is frequently prevented, these conditions being favoured by impaired nutrition and inactivity of the parts affected.

5. That the mother's milk (with the precaution of simple cleanliness) provides a perfectly pure and, in normal cases, plentiful supply.

6. That by the suckling of a child the blood which has been circulating in the pelvic organs is diverted to the breasts, becoming a very powerful agent in assisting the involution of the uterus, and preventing uterine congestion.

These arguments would, of course, only be used where there was no condition in the mother to contra-indicate nursing, as tuberculosis, syphilis, renal or cardiac disease, &c.

To an expectant mother I should give the following advice in relation to diet, dress, exercise, &c., as each affects her general health and so influences her milk supply.

Her diet should be as near her ordinary one as possible, carefully avoiding highly seasoned foods, excess of nitrogenous material, and alcohol. She should take a daily bath, and as much suitable exercise as her strength permits. She must avoid late hours, over-heated rooms, and violent exercise. The bowels must be thoroughly emptied daily. In most cases this can be managed by regulation of diet, which should include plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, brown bread, stewed figs and prunes. A glass of water twice daily is frequently a help in constipation. If these precautions did not suffice, I should advise her consulting a doctor. The clothing should be of a light, warm material, and should not exert pressure on hips or breast, being dependent as far as possible from the shoulders. In the later months of pregnancy the breasts should be bathed night and morning with soap and water, thoroughly dried, and the nipples gently drawn out; if necessary, a spirit lotion or emollient may be used, as indicated by the condition of the nipples. I should strongly emphasize the need for scrupulous cleanliness and thorough drying.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Dora Vine, Miss Catherine Wright, Mrs. Farthing, Miss P. Thompson.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What would you do in a case of (a) severe hæmoptysis, (b) angina pectoris, (c) fainting, respectively?

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)