

## The Midwife.

### NATIONAL BABY WEEK COUNCIL.

At a meeting of the National Baby Week Council held at Bedford College, Regent's Park, on Monday last, at which Lord Rhondda presided, those present, representing the 628 committees taking part in the recent National Baby Week, voted in favour of a resolution urging the Government to establish a Ministry of Health without delay.

Lord Rhondda said that it was only during his six months' tenure of office as President of the Local Government Board that he had realised the importance of the work for infant and maternity welfare, and he regretted vacating that office leaving the work only partially done. He had every hope, however that a Bill to establish a Ministry of Health would be introduced before long, knowing that the Prime Minister was always as good as his word.

The only opposition he had experienced was from those who claimed to represent Approved Societies, and they had now dissociated themselves from such opposition and passed a Resolution in favour of the establishment of a Ministry of Health.

At present there were half a dozen different Government Departments looking after the administration of health, which meant overlapping, friction, lack of economy, and jealousy. Directly he had proposed to introduce a short Bill dealing with maternity and child welfare he was informed by other Departments that he was infringing on their prerogatives. He knew it was possible by such a Bill to save 1,000 babies a week, yet it had been delayed by the jealousy of different Departments. Was it not a criminal thing that such a Bill should be delayed for a single day? It out-Heroded Herod.

### SCHEME FOR THE WORKING OF MATERNITY CENTRES AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRES.

By MISS S. M. MARSTERS.

*Associate Royal Sanitary Institute's; Q.V.J.I. Superintendent.*

ABRIDGED.

(Concluded from page 64.)

INFANT CONSULTATIONS.

In large country areas and boroughs it is an advantage to have several Clinics in various districts in the vicinity of the homes of the mothers.

The mothers have in many cases to take two or three children with them, and they cannot attend if the distance is too great; in boroughs one Central Clinic, and branch Clinics affiliated to the Central, North, South, East and West, may be organised. The doctor can then attend each Clinic in turn on different days of the week; also the

Superintendent and trained and voluntary workers who visit the district served by the Branch Clinic.

The babies should be weighed at each visit, and the weight noted on a card kept by the mother. The child, wrapped in a small blanket, is then taken in to the doctor, who enters the weight on a record card with his own remarks attached. These cards are kept till the child reaches school age, when they are handed over to the education authority. A special day once a month should be set apart for the attendance of children (over one year) at the centre, and a record of their progress kept, illnesses being noted, with the treatment given. In this way much can be done in recognising early ear, throat and eye troubles.

At the Medical Inspection of School Children it is found that it is in the Infants' Department that most of the "minor ailments" are discovered. If the record is kept in continuity from birth to school age, it will do much to eradicate these diseases and many others.

When home treatment is ordered by the doctor at the Clinic, the District Nursing Association in the Area should be notified, and midwives should be trained in social work, so that when expectant mothers engage midwives to attend them they should be able to instruct them in the care of themselves and their children.

The training of midwives (if they are not trained nurses) should embrace more general knowledge. A great deal of the education of the mother could be left in their hands if their own training were more adequate and general.

Crèches, or Day Nurseries, which deal largely with the children of mothers who go out to work, and take children from one month, until of school age, should be affiliated to the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre, and be inspected by the Local Supervising Authority, as they are now partly State aided.

For a Scheme to work satisfactorily in an Area, County, Borough, or District Councils must co-operate and be co-ordinated with the existing agencies in that Area, including relief agencies of all kinds. All cases needing relief of whatever kind must be brought before the Sub-Committee for investigation. Cases needing milk or dinners can be dealt with for one week by an order from the doctor at the Centre, pending enquiries being made, thus obviating the risk of a baby or mother taking harm by any delay. Dining Centres and Milk Depots should be attached to the Centre.

#### OFFICERS AND WORKERS.

Officers and workers, having the following qualifications, should be as follows:—

Doctors (men or women) with special qualifications for gynæcological work, and the rearing of infants.

Superintendents and trained workers to be certified midwives, or to be three years' certificated

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)