

authorities. Eventually it was decided that the County Councils in England and Wales, exercising powers under the Act, should establish maternity and child welfare committees, and might delegate their powers to such committees with the exception of raising a rate or borrowing money.

#### BABIES OF THE EMPIRE.

The foundation of a Babies of the Empire Society, which has its headquarters in the General Building, Aldwych, of which Lord Plunket is chairman, has for its first object "To uphold the sacredness of the body and the duty of health." It has established a Mothercraft Training Centre at 29 and 31, Trebovir Road, Earl's Court, S.W.

The number of schemes on foot at the present time for the benefit of infants, prove that the nation is of opinion that all is not well with its babies. The rearing of healthy infants is one of the first essentials for putting mothercraft on a sure foundation.

### CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES WITH REGARD TO CHILD WELFARE.

Amongst the excellent pamphlets published by the National Baby Week Council, 27, Cavendish Square, London, W. 1, is one by Dr. Harold Scurfield, D.P.H., Medical Officer of Health for Sheffield, the motto of which is "Every child a chance, and every family a home." It deals with the subject under the headings: Healthy parents, efficient mothers, reasonable income, efficient medical service, and, on the last point, says:—

#### "EFFICIENT MEDICAL SERVICE.

"The mother has not yet got an efficient medical service at her disposal for herself and her children, and the provision of this is one of the after-war problems which the citizens have to settle.

"We need a system by which there will be secured a family doctor for each family. The relations of the family doctor to the special institutions such as School Clinics, Tuberculosis Dispensaries, Maternity and Child Welfare Centres and Venereal Disease Clinics will have to be determined. The family doctor must be linked up with the consulting surgeons and physicians, and the hospitals, convalescent homes, midwives, district nurses and mothers' helps, so that his patients may have the benefits of these services in time of need. More lying-in hospitals, more children's hospitals and open-air schools are required. Especially do we need more hospitals for crippled children on the lines of Lord Mayor Treloar's Hospital at Alton.

"Besides this, arrangements must be made for dentists to look after the teeth of the children. This has been done to some extent with regard to the children of school age by School Clinics and the system will have to be extended.

"The Poor Law medical service will obviously

become involved in the changes which take place.

"Another matter urgently requiring attention is the reform of out-patient departments. These are at present swamped by cases which ought never to be sent there. Mothers who take their children to out-patient departments are frequently required to spend the whole day in the waiting-room, to the great detriment of their homes. Out-patient departments ought to be restricted to accidents, cases requiring special treatment, and those cases which are sent by a general practitioner for a consultant's opinion.

"The Maternity and Child Welfare Centre is the institution which chiefly affects babies and young children, and it will be right to say a few words on this matter. County Councils and Sanitary Authorities are now required to establish Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, and the representatives of the citizens must see that these are as efficient as possible. There should be provided advice and hospital treatment if required for expectant mothers; medical attendance under certain circumstances and hospital treatment, if required, during confinement; and advice and hospital treatment, if required, for both mother and baby after confinement, the advice to be continued, in case of the baby, up to the school entrance age. As regards hospital treatment, I believe the usual way is for the Sanitary Authority which establishes the Centre to make arrangements with the existing hospitals, but some sanitary authorities may find it advisable to establish lying-in hospitals and infant hospitals.

"At present we have medical supervision of children from birth up to the age at which they leave school, but no provision has been made for the gap between leaving school and the age of sixteen, when those who go to work come under the scheme of the Insurance Act.

"In many districts there are voluntary societies working in the interests of mothers and children, and it is very necessary that these voluntary workers should be linked up with the work of the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre. Cordial co-operation is needed, also a spirit of tolerance. Voluntary workers sometimes seem to think that an official paid by the Sanitary Authority must be soulless and void of sympathy. It is, of course, absurd to suppose that a hospital nurse when paid her salary by a voluntary hospital or the Queen Victoria District Nursing Association is sympathetic, and that the same woman, when her salary is paid by a County Council or a Sanitary Authority, must necessarily become hard of heart and lose her sympathy with the people amongst whom she works.

"Another danger is that the voluntary worker will not appreciate the difficulty in giving sound advice to mothers with regard to their infants. Each infant is a study in itself and until recently even the medical profession has not appreciated what a large amount there is to be learned about babies. Care is therefore needed lest the voluntary worker should develop into a quack doctor."