

The Midwife.

MATERNAL MORTALITY.

The question of Maternal Mortality in child-birth (one in 250) is now engaging considerable attention. It is satisfactory therefore to note, in the Presidential Address of the Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, M.P., Minister of Health, to the National Conference on Maternity and Infant Welfare held in London last year, and now published in the Report of the Proceedings, that the Minister is sanguine of an improvement in this respect before long. He said:—

"I think I must give first place in considering the various lines of progress, to the subject of maternal mortality, a subject that still continues to give us a good deal of concern because the figures of maternal mortality seem extraordinarily sticky. We have found from experience at the Ministry of Health that the notifications of puerperal fever are not as complete as they should be. It may be that puerperal fever is a very difficult disease to identify; that it is rather indefinite in its symptoms. But however that may be, we have had reason to believe that cases of puerperal fever were not being notified with any sort of completeness; that, consequently, our statistics were incomplete and misleading, and that measures which were urgently required for the prevention and treatment of puerperal fever were at least delayed. So last year I issued some new Regulations under which notification was required of all forms of puerperal pyrexia, and I accompanied these Regulations by a circular to the Local Authorities reminding them of the powers which they already possessed for dealing with women suffering in this way, powers to call in a gynaecologist, to employ the services of skilled nurses, and to provide treatment in institutions. I am glad to say that that circular has had a very good response. I have had a large number of proposals put up to me by Local Authorities for the provision of further facilities, and these proposals have now been approved in many cases. So that, although I do not expect any startling and immediate results, I shall be very disappointed if I do not see in the course of a few years a marked improvement in these figures which have troubled us for so long."

The maternal death-rate in childbirth is, nevertheless, at the present time four in a thousand, and in this connection the Chief Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health has recently pointed out that the proportion of fatalities attendant upon motherhood is four times as large as the proportion in the mining industry, where a thousand miners are killed each year out of a million or so employed, giving a proportion of one in a thousand.

It is noteworthy that at the Clapham Maternity the death-rate last year was one in 603 cases.

NATIONAL MOTHER-SAVING CAMPAIGN.

The National Mother-Saving Campaign of Queen Charlotte's Hospital, having regard to the foregoing figures, is worthy of all support.

The trustees of the late Mr. Alfred de Rothschild for charity, have allocated £10,000 to Queen Charlotte's Hospital and its National Mother-Saving Campaign. Mr. de Rothschild was for 31 years treasurer of the Hospital, and this donation follows upon many considerable sums allocated by them for the same purpose.

The Fund, including the Ministry of Health grant towards the building of the extension of the hospital now stands at £58,391.

POST-GRADUATE WEEK AT THE CLAPHAM MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

Post-Graduate Week at the Clapham Maternity Hospital, Jeffreys Road, London, S.W.9, will be held this year from May 14th-19th. This is a valuable opportunity for keeping up-to-date in midwifery work.

THE EAST-END MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

We are advised by Mr. Harry A. Page, Secretary of the East-End Mothers' Lying-in Home, 384 to 398, Commercial Road, London, E.1, that it has been decided to change the name of this Institution to the East-End Maternity Hospital, by which it will henceforth be known.

THE CITY OF LONDON MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

The Lord Mayor of London, presiding at the Annual Meeting of the City of London Maternity Hospital, founded in 1750, of which the Queen is Patron, stated that nearly 1,700 patients have been admitted. There have been over 6,000 attendances at the Ante-Natal Centre, 4,839 at the Child Welfare Centre, and 73 midwives and maternity nurses have been trained. It is difficult to resist the conviction that if the British public could be brought to realise and appreciate what this work means to the nation adequate support would be forthcoming.

The great need of the moment is better accommodation for the nursing staff, whose long hours and exacting duties entitle them at least to comfortable and cheerful rooms. To obtain this accommodation will entail the rebuilding of the present Nurses' Home at a cost of £30,000.

BABY WEEK CHALLENGE SHIELDS.

The National Baby Week Council which awards annually two Silver Shields for the most effective local Baby Week campaigns, has announced the results for 1927.

THE ASTOR CHALLENGE SHIELD, which is reserved for competition among the great towns, has been awarded to Northampton Maternity and Infant Welfare Voluntary Association. To Leicester Health and Baby Week Committee goes the honour of securing the second place, which is to be recognised by a special trophy. Certificates of merit have been awarded to the Kettering U.D.C. Ladies' Voluntary Committee for Infant Welfare; Kingston-on-Thames Infant Welfare Centre; Sunderland County Borough.

THE WILLIAM HARDY CHALLENGE SHIELD, reserved for smaller areas has been won by a remarkable campaign held in the villages of Cambridgeshire. This campaign was organised by the Cambridgeshire Federation of Women's Institutes. Langley (Worcs.), Infant Welfare Centre secured second place and has been awarded a William Hardy Banner. Certificates of Merit have been awarded to Lymington (Hants.) Maternity and Child Welfare Centre; Bungay (Suffolk) Nursing Institute; Havant and Bedhampton (Hants) Infant Welfare Centre; Little Coates (Lincs) Infant Welfare Centre; East and West Molesey (Surrey) Infant Welfare Centre.

This being the 3rd year in succession that Northampton has won the Astor Challenge Shield, the trophy now passes into the permanent keeping of the Northampton Maternity and Infant Welfare Voluntary Association.

These awards were presented on the occasion of the annual meeting of the National Baby Week Council, on Wednesday, 7th March, 1928.

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