

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

MORE RURAL TELEPHONES NEEDED.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—We, as Members of Parliament who are, or have been, intimately associated with rural areas, appeal for an immediate consideration of the problem of rural telephones. We are of opinion that the lack of telephone facilities in rural areas is a contributory cause of:—

(1) The high infantile mortality rate—in some rural areas reaching the disgraceful figure of 94 per 1,000—in areas which are cut off from speedy medical attention.

(2) The marketing difficulties which are experienced by farmers of all kinds, and which add to agricultural troubles generally. The great majority of farmers have no means of rapidly ascertaining the state of the neighbouring markets and are, therefore, forced to gamble on their sales.

(3) The comparative ineffectiveness in rural and coast areas of the essential public services, such as the police, the fire brigade, ambulance corps, district nurse and life-boat services.

(4) The lamentable drift to the towns of people who are naturally tired of the lack of urban facilities, and the consequent handicap upon business and social life.

Recent debates in Parliament supply adequate proof of the dissatisfaction felt by members of all political parties with a condition which permits the great majority of villages in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland to be isolated through lack of telephone stations, either in the form of private lines, party lines, or public call-offices.

The Post Office has, apparently, not grasped the fact that the high cost of telephone guarantees—in some cases absolutely prohibitive—coupled with the absence of effective salesmanship, has been the principal factor in retarding development in rural areas.

What is obviously needed is a completely new understanding of the problem by the Department. We must have more and cheaper rural telephones, thus securing justice for the neglected countryman, and employment for unemployed townsmen.

Yours faithfully,

IAN MACPHERSON,
ROBERT HAMILTON,
OLIVER BALDWIN,
C. RANDOLPH DUDGEON,
MEGAN LLOYD GEORGE,
GWILYM LLOYD GEORGE,
EDGAR GRANVILLE,

MILNER GRAY,
J. DUNCAN MILLAR,
FRANK OWEN,
T. B. W. RAMSAY,
JAMES SCOTT,
MCKENZIE WOOD.

House of Commons,
London, S.W.1.

[We heartily endorse the appeal of this letter, and would especially add midwives to the essential services affected prejudicially by the lack of telephone facilities in rural areas.

Much invaluable time is lost if the husband of a woman critically ill has to tramp, perhaps for miles, to summon the midwife, whereas, if a telephone message could be sent to her she could be quickly on the spot. Also in an apparently straightforward case complications may occur at the time of birth which can be easily averted if a skilled midwife is in attendance, and which may have very serious results if no doctor or midwife is present.

We hope that the influential signatories to the above letter, which we have much pleasure in printing, will succeed in convincing the Postmaster-General of the urgency of their demand.—ED.]

A DISGRACE TO THE CENTURY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—May I thank you most heartily for the publicity given through the British College of Nurses, and our official organ THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING to the condition of things disclosed in connection with our public mortuaries. It is inconceivable that such conditions should have been tolerated for so long, not only in relation to the provision, or lack of provision, of mortuaries in certain areas as described by a "Medical Coroner," but also in relation to the lack of female attendants to perform the last offices in connection with the bodies of women brought to these mortuaries.

What would be said if men were detailed in the mortuaries of our voluntary hospitals to perform similar services to the bodies of women.

Hoping that you will not cease your endeavours until present conditions have been altered.

Yours faithfully,
PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

Miss Elinor Pell Smith, Leicester, writes: "I have always been so proud to see a notice of the Leicester and Leicestershire Midwives Association appear in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, and now that I am set aside from nursing activities, the Journal means so much to me. It has been a great delight to read the Memoirs of our dear splendid Miss Mollett."

Miss Mabel D. Keaton, R.N., writes from New York: "I want you to know how much pleasure I am getting from our subscription to THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING. It is so nice to know another viewpoint besides our own. It is all doubly interesting to me, since many years before I became a nurse I remember hearing Miss Ada Senhouse, who was a graduate of Lincoln Hospital here, talk about you and the Journal. I am enclosing another subscription for 1931. Please send the Journal to the Superintendent of Nurses, Freedman's Hospital, Howard University, Washington, D.C. I am placing it in the Nurses' Library there. I am a graduate of the School and do want them to have the Journal."

[The Editor greatly appreciates these encouraging letters.]

NOTICE.

AS THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING is a monthly paper the Editor will be greatly obliged if items of news which the readers desire included are sent to her as early as possible, as they so often arrive just after the Journal has gone to press.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING AND THE "MIDWIFE" SUPPLEMENT

Is the Official Organ of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain; The British College of Nurses; The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland; The Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council, and the Registered Nurses' Association. The Official Supplement of the Royal British Nurses' Association is incorporated in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING. Apply: Manager, 39, Portland Place, London, W.1.

PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR AUGUST.

Describe the signs and symptoms which may precede eclampsia. What is the treatment in a case of threatened eclampsia, and how would you nurse a case which has developed?

We regret we are unable to award a prize for our July competition, no paper of sufficient merit having been received.

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