

## THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

### ANNUAL REPORT OF SIR GEORGE NEWMAN.

The annual report of Sir George Newman, Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health, for 1930, "On the State of the Public Health," just published by H.M. Stationery Office (price 4s. net), is an important and interesting document, and will repay careful study.

The year was exceptionally healthy, for it was the year of the lowest total death-rate and the lowest infant mortality rate yet recorded. The children born numbered 648,811, an increase of 5,138 on the previous year. The number of persons who died was 455,427, or 77,065 fewer than in 1929. The principal certified causes of death were:—Diseases of the heart and circulation, 245 per 1,000 deaths; cancer, malignant disease, 127 per 1,000 deaths; bronchitis, pneumonia, and other respiratory diseases, 114 per 1,000 deaths; diseases of the nervous system, 90 per 1,000 deaths; all forms of tuberculosis, 79 per 1,000 deaths.

The numerical order of diseases as a rule remain the same from year to year, and it is therefore to be noted that on no previous occasion has the number of deaths from cancer been in excess of those from bronchitis, pneumonia and other respiratory diseases. The number of deaths of infants under one year of age was 38,908, or approximately 9,000 less than in 1929.

On the subject of nutrition Sir George Newman records many advances as the result of better feeding.

"Yet notwithstanding these advances," the report states, "the nutrition of the people leaves much to be desired. There is still much apathy and ignorance in the choice of foods, often associated with deplorable inaptitude in cookery. Our scientific knowledge stands far ahead of our practice; and our extraordinary range of food markets, oversea and at home, combined with expeditious transport, have brought to our tables the practicability of securing a dietary beyond the dreams of our forefathers, attractive and nutritious, but we do not use it sufficiently or wisely. We continue many old bad habits in regard to meals, which we permit to become monotonous and stale, badly cooked, unappetising, untidily served. Many hungry consumers bolt their food, or wash it down with tea or beer, forgetting that such a custom is unfair to the food, the tea, the beer, and the body. Some persons no doubt are under-fed, but many are over-fed—giving their poor bodies little rest, clogging them with yet more food, and disregarding the imperative necessity to health and appetite of a thoroughly cleansed alimentary tract. It is not too much to say that our national capacity for work and output is impaired by unsatisfactory nutrition; it is not exaggeration to say that some of our commonest diseases are directly due to deficiency, or excess, of certain food constituents."

The report also calls attention to the importance of vaccination, of which the figures given furnish an outstanding illustration of its value. During the year 1930 no child up to seven years of age who had been successfully vaccinated caught smallpox. Of the unvaccinated children many hundreds did. Two vaccinated children between seven and nine years of age caught smallpox; of the unvaccinated children of the same age the corresponding number was 661.

### BLOOD TRANSFUSION SAFE.

#### More Middle-aged Donors. Bank of England's Concession to Red Cross.

A record number of calls for blood transfusion was received by the British Red Cross Society, according to its Annual Report for 1930. Very good results continue to be obtained, and out of 1,627 calls—as against 1,360 in

1929—56 per cent. were recorded as good, very good, or excellent, and 21 per cent. as satisfactory.

The strength of the London Service is now between 1,000 and 1,100, and it is interesting to note that a number of middle-aged and elderly persons are enrolling as the results of reports from younger relatives of the feeling of fitness that follows a transfusion. This, says Sir Arthur Stanley, in his Foreword to the Report, most definitely disposes of the idea that there is any danger to the donor in the transfusion of blood.

Special credit is given in the Report to the Rover Scout donors, who number 625, as against 591 members of other organisations, or unattached persons.

In view of the importance of the Service the Bank of England have granted special facilities for their members to leave work to undergo transfusion during office hours, and the Eagle, Star and British Dominions Insurance Company, Limited, have kindly offered to the Service a free policy of insurance against all ill-effects to donors in respect of claims between £100 and £500 up to half the total amount.

One hundred and fifteen hospitals, irrespective of private cases and nursing homes, made use of the Service last year, an increase of seven over 1929.

The British Red Cross Society have now instituted a bronze badge to be awarded to all members of the Service who have undergone ten or more transfusions, and 121 have already qualified for this.

### THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING, U.S.A.

The National Organisation for Public Health Nursing in the United States has announced a nation-wide campaign to increase its membership, which will start this month and end at the biennial convention in San Antonio, Texas, next April. With Mary Sewall Gardner as Chairman, a Membership Committee composed of leaders in the public health field representing various parts of the country is now being organised. State and local committees are also being organised to carry on the campaign in their territories.

In commenting on Miss Gardner's acceptance of the Chairmanship of the Membership Committee, Sophie C. Nelson, President of the NOPHN, said, in part, "I am sure no one is better equipped to lead the NOPHN through this campaign than is Mary Sewall Gardner. She realises, not only the value of the work which our organisation has done in the past, but the pressing need for extension of that work, if we are to continue to render as effective a service in the future."

In analysing local problems, Miss Nelson pointed out that many more situations exacting in their requirements must be taken into consideration than have been encountered in the past. "The increasing demands on our special committees," she continued, "which make studies of costs, staff education, statistics, mental hygiene, school and industrial nursing, etc., as well as additional requests for institutes on tuberculosis and social hygiene, have impressed upon us the importance of extension at this time. The services which our organisation makes to public health nursing cannot be measured in terms of dollars and cents or by the usual standards for measure of commercial success; nor can they be duplicated by any other agency. It is my opinion that not only should every nurse be a member, but lay persons interested in health conditions throughout the country should give their support as well."

According to the NOPHN estimates based on the 1931 census, now nearing completion, less than one-fourth of the public health nurses in the country are members of their national organisation.

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