

recognition of the child on the part of the parents. In fact, not infrequently the mother's recognition is followed by the father's, through pressure brought to bear, and sometimes even ends in marriage. Thus, it is hoped the number of unknown and illegitimate offspring may gradually become reduced.

To-day, some 7,494 centres of the National Maternity and Child Welfare Institution exist throughout Italy, including milk dispensaries, ambulatories, maternity homes, children's playgrounds, etc.

Noteworthy among them is the maternity home in Bordighera, named after Queen Margherita, that offers hospitality to expectant mothers residing out of Italy and wishing to give birth to their children in the homeland. This centre, with the aid of the Foreign Office, has brought about very significant results, for thousands of Mothers have given birth to their children on Italian soil.

Most up-to-date, also, is the institute for the Observation of Depraved Minors, the first of its kind in Italy, as well as abroad, whose doors are open to hundreds of young derelicts, whom it educates and instructs for a trade.

Action has been taken, furthermore, in favour of infant anti-tubercular prophylaxis and open-air schools and rural working centres have been founded without number.

But it were better, perhaps, to speak in terms of statistics, to get an adequate idea of the splendid work that this National Institution, now in its tenth year of life, has carried on amidst no small difficulties.

From its foundation to the present day some six million Mothers and children have received encouragement and help, at the cost of some 800,000,000 lire. Within the last years there is a noticeable decrease in infant mortality and in deaths from maternity diseases. This is due also, in no small degree, to the fact that measures have been taken to fight the ignorance of the poorer and uneducated classes by the distribution of any number of printed pamphlets, dealing with elementary hygienic notions and knowledge in the rearing of children.

While statistics may help to better understand the importance of this National Institution, nevertheless, all the tangible and intangible benefits it proffers in the wide spheres of social redemption, cannot be put into cyphers, for its labour has no limitations.

To encourage competition, this Institution grants yearly premiums in money to the healthiest and best-reared children, to the most prolific parents and to the newly wed, while large families benefit from any number of economic facilities.

Aside from their intrinsic value, these gratuities testify to the appreciation of the Regime and the nation towards all who, by love of family and personal sacrifice, contribute to the increase of the Italian people.

According to Fascist doctrines—The strength of a nation is in its numbers. Thus, while Fascism aims at quantity, it is not disjoined from quality, for great stress is laid on the latter as well.

Statistics point to the fact that in many countries there are more coffins than cradles, so that Fascism, in its demographic campaign, is not only fighting the tendency, so apparent in other lands, of dissolving the organic structure of society, but is taking a firm stand in the defence of European civilisation, which is strongly menaced by the marked decrease in birth-rates.

And the work undertaken by the Fascist Regime of building up Italy, politically, socially and educationally, would not have been complete had not Mussolini realised the necessity of giving his attention to the very source of life itself, by assisting the Mother and child in a particularly precarious period of their life.

Thus, by defending the race from its initial dangers, namely, infant mortality and maternity diseases, as well as from those not less dangerous enemies—Malthusianism

and birth-control—Mussolini is dealing with one of the greatest social problems, one which alone would rank him among the Immortals, as the great benefactor of the Italian people.

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MATERNAL MORTALITY.

The report of the meeting convened by the Maternal Mortality Committee held at the Friends' House, Euston Road, N.W.1, on November 6th, 1934, has now been published and is obtainable from the Hon. Secretary of the Committee, 13, Chester Terrace, London, S.W.1, price 1s., including postage. The report, which is of considerable interest, contains many practical suggestions. Lord Horder's contribution to these in his telegram of regret at non-attendance, was: "Am very sympathetic with your efforts to check this stubborn social evil. I suggest more attention to question of fitness of the woman to bear children and less to competence of doctor and nurse."

In the speeches made there was evidence of growing impatience with the authorities that more active steps were not taken to combat the evil of maternal mortality. One speaker went so far as to advocate taking "a lesson from the women of the Soviet Union," and a medical woman, Dr. Summerskill, advocated sending a militant deputation to the Minister of Health, composed mainly of working women. "We must," she said, "make ourselves felt just like our suffragette sisters made themselves felt. Take action."

The report of a deputation to the Minister of Health on December 11th, to which we alluded in our January issue, is also obtainable in pamphlet form, and a very interesting address by Dr. Harold Waller.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

The Midwifery Training School of Queen Charlotte's Hospital had again a very successful year in 1934. The number of pupils received was 29 who entered for the twelve months' course and 110 for the six months' course. This of course means that nearly two-thirds of the pupils had had the advantage of previous training as nurses, and thus had a groundwork of professional knowledge upon which to base their special training. The number who sat for the Central Midwives Board examination was 126, and all but two passed. The percentage of failures over the whole country was 24.3 per cent.

There is urgent need for more beds in connection with the midwifery training school where any increase in material for teaching would be of the greatest value.

The anæsthetic service, whereby every patient in the Main Hospital and Auxiliary Hospital has for some time past received an anæsthetic in labour has been extended as far as practicable to the District Out-patients.

At the present time only 75 per cent. of the applications for admission can be received, while the demand is shown to be increasing. This fact provides further proof of the Committee's contention that one of the most urgent factors in the problem of the heavy mortality among mothers is the provision of adequate facilities for their treatment at the proper time, both during pregnancy and at the time of the confinement.

The Appeal Department report that through the year large numbers of Queen Charlotte's nurses did invaluable work not only by helping in the street collections on Cradle Day, when a gratifying total of £2,219 2s. 8d. was collected, but in selling programmes at entertainments and on other occasions for collection.

The Committee record their appreciation of the services rendered by the Matron and Sisters during a busy year.

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