

The Midwife.

NEW MATERNITY PAVILION OPENED BY THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER IN EDINBURGH.

The Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, was *en fête* on April 14th, when Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester opened the new Maternity Pavilion and the Florence Nightingale Nurses' Home. The opening of the Pavilion was described as a great step forward in the campaign to make maternity safer for the women of the country.

Her Royal Highness was received at the main gates of the Infirmary by the Lord and Lady Provost, the Chairman of the Board of Managers, the Secretary of State for Scotland, together with the Medical Superintendent, the Secretary and Treasurer, and the Lady Superintendent of Nurses, Miss E. G. Small. Nurses lined the corridors through which the Duchess passed to the west entrance of the new maternity pavilion.

There the senior members of the obstetrical and gynaecological staff, together with the matron of the maternity pavilion, Miss J. P. Ferlie, were presented.

After a dedication prayer by the chaplain, Mr. Little invited Her Royal Highness to declare the pavilion open.

"This is a great step forward in the campaign to make maternity safer for the women of this country," said Mr. Little.

"It is, I venture to think, particularly appropriate that Your Royal Highness, whose family has, for many generations, been intimately associated with this city, should find an opportunity, in spite of the great demands made upon your time, to perform this ceremony.

Instruction of Medical Students and Pupil Midwives.

Mr. Little recalled the origin of the scheme of extension of the Royal Infirmary. The idea went back a good many years ago, as it was in 1926 that the Board agreed with the directors of the Edinburgh Royal Maternity and Simpson Memorial Hospital, to provide accommodation within the Infirmary grounds for maternity cases and thus bring this special branch in close association with the general work of the Royal Infirmary.

This, it had been felt, would be advantageous not only for the patients, but for the purpose of teaching medical students and instruction of pupil-midwives.

The Duchess Wishes Success.

Declaring the Maternity Hospital open the Duchess said: "I am delighted to come here to-day, and I have very great pleasure in declaring the new maternity pavilion open.

"I wish it every success, and I feel sure it will be a great benefit to the many mothers and babies who come here."

The Lord Provost proposed a vote of thanks to the Duchess.

Although this was the opening ceremony it was announced that there were already 122 patients and 92 babies in the pavilion; four babies had been born this morning, two boys and two girls, and the mothers had already decided that they will be called Henry and Alice.

When the Duchess entered the pavilion, she presented a layette to the mother of the first baby born that day, a boy.

The Nurses' Home.

The opening ceremony in the Florence Nightingale Nurses' Home took place in the spacious recreation room. The Home accommodates about 300 nurses, and provides

a real home of comfort and beauty, so that the lives of the nurses will be made as happy as possible.

After the opening ceremony the party took tea and the Duchess was shown the beautiful Home, which she greatly admired.

THE LOWEST MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE EVER RECORDED.

The Minister of Health, Mr. Walter Elliot, in the course of an address delivered at a luncheon of the Industrial Welfare Society on April 28th, said that he had just received the provisional maternal mortality figures for 1938 and that they showed a further reduction from 3.13 per 1,000 births in 1937 to 2.97 in 1938. This was the lowest figure ever recorded in this country.

Although the Government had, unfortunately, now to find abnormally large sums for defence, this, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had pointed out in his Budget Speech, did not mean any reduction in our social services. The Government's contribution to these services and to the cost of police, roads, etc., had grown by £186,000,000 since 1925 and the expenditure was proving an excellent investment. In addition to the new low record in maternal mortality we could point, during the period 1927 to 1937, to a fall in the infantile mortality rate from 79 to 56, and a fall in the tuberculosis death rate from 79 to 56.

The toll of sickness upon industry remained, however, very great. The gross total expenditure on benefits under National Health Insurance amounted in 1937 to £28,000,000. Mr. Elliot said that industry had its own part to play in dealing with this problem, and he was glad to know that many hundreds of firms to-day had appointed doctors, nurses and other trained experts to watch over the health of their staffs. He regarded this preventive work—for such it was—as of the very greatest value at the present time. He knew that enlightened employers were keen to keep abreast of every development in the scientific and medical field and he called their attention to a problem of fractures which had been the subject of an inquiry by an Inter-departmental Committee whose report was shortly expected. Encouraging progress had already been made in the provision of up-to-date facilities for the treatment and "after-care" of fracture cases, and he hoped that with the co-operation of all concerned more might yet be done.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD:

The Standing Committee recommends that the following applications of State Certified Midwives for approval as Teacher:

Margaret Davies, No. 92069, Birmingham City Maternity Home. [Second period—district].

Winifred Alice Schofield, No. 77856, Townley's Hospital, Bolton. [First period—intern].

Agnes Heaton, No. 83078, Mayday Hospital, Croydon. [First period—intern (temporary)].

That the following applications be granted under the new training and examination rules of the Board:

Bessie Fargen, No. 50641.

Ada Izatt, No. 79284.

Alice Mary Pickup, No. 79323.

Alice Steeden, No. 84305.

Doris Evelyn Thomason, No. 89753, Moorlands Infirmary, Rawtenstall. [Second period—district].

Olive Edith Bell, No. 102211, Salisbury General Infirmary. [Second period—district].

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