

The Midwife.

IMPROVEMENTS IN VITAL STATISTICS.

From the Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health covering the period 1939-1945 we learn that vital statistics were "phenomenally good" during the war.

"The birthrate, rising from 1941 onwards, reached 17.7 in 1944, the highest it has been since 1926, and the effective reproduction rate came within one per cent. of a full replacement standard, though it has fallen since. An outstanding feature has been the low mortality of children from disease. Despite the loss of some 7,000 lives at ages under 15 as a direct result of enemy action, and an increase in accidental deaths arising through war conditions, the mean annual death rates during 1940-44 were below the rates for any year prior to 1939 at every year of age from 1 to 5, and at 5 to 9 and 10 to 14."

HIGHEST BIRTHRATE SINCE 1925.

The Registrar-General's Return for the June quarter, recently published, gives more details of the births registered during the three months concerned. These, as previously announced, represented the highest birthrate (19.2 per 1,000 total population) recorded in any quarter since that of June, 1925.

The total number of births was 203,797, compared with 175,221 for the June quarter, 1945, when the birthrate was 16.5—a figure which was the average rate for the June quarter for the five years 1940-1944. Of the total, 105,283 were boys and 98,514 girls—1,069 boys to 1,000 girls, which is about the average proportion.

Births in the June quarter exceeded deaths by 89,727, the corresponding excess for the June quarter, 1945, being 64,252.

Infant mortality, provisionally corrected, was 41 per 1,000 related live births—9 per 1,000 below the average of the preceding ten June quarters. The actual number of deaths of children under one year was 7,624.

The number of illegitimate births—14,789—was, despite the increased number of births, 2,625 fewer than in the corresponding period last year.

100 BABIES A WEEK.

Croydon's Highest-Ever Birthrate.

Readers of the *Evening Standard* are informed that an average of more than 100 babies a week are being born in Croydon—the highest birthrate the town has ever known—and the public health authorities say they are "almost at their wits' end."

The town's two big maternity hospitals are full and booked up for many weeks to come, and midwives are working nearly 24 hours a day.

If the rate continues as at present, Croydon Corporation may ask for the use of maternity hospitals in adjoining towns.

CORPS OF MIDWIVES TO START BAOR "NEW BABY" SERVICE.

We learn from the *Daily Mirror* that so many new babies are expected in the areas to which wives of BAOR soldiers are being taken, that a special "district nurse" service has been organised there.

The first half-dozen qualified midwives have now been taken to Germany and are getting their clinics and small maternity wards ready for the babies.

The service is organised by the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association.

One of the first nurses to go is 35-year-old Sister Madge Bromley, of Burnley Road, Accrington (Lancs), who was demobilised less than a month ago after five years' service as a nursing sister in the Navy.

The BAOR district nurses are to cover areas often 100 miles or more from each other. Each of them is given a self-contained flat with clinic and surgery attached.

At present children who have been taken to Germany are being cared for at the clinics.

The S.S.A.F.A. is to send 25 district nurses, in all, to Germany.

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