

The Midwife.

Birmingham Premature Baby Unit.

Effective Use in Aiding Survival of Triplets.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE EFFECTIVE USE of the Premature Baby Unit at Sorrento Maternity Hospital, Moseley, Birmingham, has been afforded by the successful treatment of triplets delivered at Solihull Hospital, Warwickshire, on January 22nd, 1951, and transferred in oxygen tents to Sorrento on the same night.

The infants were the sons of Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Davis, of 55, Slater Road, Bentley Heath, Warwickshire, who have two other children, aged 9 and 7 respectively, the former being one of twins, the second having died.

To mark the occasion, Alderman A. F. Bradbeer (Chairman, Group 25 Birmingham (Selly Oak) Hospital Management Committee, which administers both hospitals), On Friday, March 30th, when one of the children was about to leave for home, presented a bank book with a deposit of £5 to each of the infants.

Weights at delivery and on March 30th were respectively : Richard, 3 lb.—5 lb. 9 ozs. ; Philip, 3 lb.—4 lb. 14 ozs. ; John, 2 lb. 7½ ozs.—4 lb. 2 ozs.

Mrs. Davis thanked Alderman Bradbeer and the Hospital Management Committee for the gift and all the staff who had served so efficiently in her case.

The Premature Baby Unit was the first to be established in this country ; it was at Sorrento Maternity Hospital that the standard text book on the subject emerged and a cot bearing the hospital's name is widely in use, 150 having been presented to Stalingrad Hospital by Mrs. Churchill's Aid to Russia Fund.

Anti-Diphtheria Campaign to be Intensified.

Parents Less Alive to Dangers.

OVER NINE MILLION CHILDREN in England and Wales have now been immunised against diphtheria in the last ten years, reducing deaths from an annual average of 2,800 to well under 100 a year and cases from 55,000 to under 2,000. But the Minister of Health (Mr. Hilary Marquand) has warned local authorities that the anti-diphtheria campaign is endangered because this immense reduction in diphtheria has probably made parents less alive to the dangers of the disease.

A drop of 27,000 immunisations in the first half of 1950 shows that continued efforts must be made if a set-back is to be avoided.

In calling for an intensified campaign this year, Mr. Marquand has set as a target the immunisation of 75 per cent. of babies before their first birthday—or more than 500,000 of them.


In 1949 children in the under-five age group immunised under local authority arrangements exceeded the "target" by 12,000. Deaths fell to the new low provisional figure of 85 and cases to 1,897. During the first half of 1950 improvement continued. Deaths provisionally totalled 32 compared with 53 for the same period of 1949 and cases 565 compared with 1,149.

Conveying to all concerned his deep appreciation for their co-operation in bringing about this remarkable decline since 1940, Mr. Marquand remarked : " Apart from the avoidance of unnecessary suffering, this has resulted in substantial savings in hospital costs and has

freed medical personnel for other work." In a foreword to a brochure to assist Councils in planning their campaigns, the Ministry's Chief Medical Officer, Sir John Charles, emphasises that : " a special effort is needed if we are not to lose ground " and that : " the great reduction in the incidence and mortality of diphtheria as a result of immunisation now makes it less easy to bring home to parents the vital importance of protecting their children than it used to be when most of them had first-hand knowledge of this disease among their own and their neighbours' children."

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