

and all those specially entrusted with the guidance and care of mother and child. The campaign embraced—

- (a.) Public lectures and demonstrations bearing on fresh air, sunlight, bathing, swimming, and other forms of stimulation and exercise; recreation (re-creation), rest, and sleep; foods and feeding; regular habits; and other matters determining health and fitness. These lectures were illustrated by means of demonstrations, lantern-slides, and moving pictures.
- (b.) Addresses to teachers and pupils in training colleges and in primary, secondary, and technical schools.
- (c.) Addresses to large meetings of business girls in the four main centres, organized by the Y.W.C.A.; and similar addresses to young men arranged by the Y.M.C.A. and other bodies.
- (d.) Saturday or Sunday evening addresses to large gatherings of men and women organized by the Workers' Educational Association and other bodies. Two short addresses were given to the Rotary Club; also an address to medical students at Otago University, given for the Chair of Public Health, and several health lectures for the Red Cross.
- (e.) Meetings for mothers and young women concerning the needs of home and family. An important feature of these meetings was the encouragement of those who attended to ask intimate questions bearing on personal health and on various matters affecting mother and child.
- (f.) Meetings of midwives for special lectures and demonstrations bearing on the pre-natal and post-natal care and the safeguarding of mother and child. At these meetings the nurses had the benefit of conferring and discussing matters with a specially qualified nurse (Miss J. B. N. Paterson) at the close of the lecture, and of arranging with her for further practical demonstrations or advice if desired.

As said in my last year's report, "One can scarcely overstate the safeguard and boon it would be to mother and child if all the midwives in the Dominion—numbering between one thousand five hundred and two thousand, registered and unregistered, to whom mothers, expectant and actual, turn for guidance and help during the most momentous and critical phases of life, could be depended upon to give uniform authoritative advice and assistance. Wrong advice has been so often tendered, and the wrong thing so often done, that no pains should be spared to heighten the sense of responsibility and raise the standard of knowledge and proficiency among all those licensed or authorized in any way by the State to undertake the special care of mother and child, before, during, and after childbirth." The relationship of this to reducing our unduly high rate of maternal mortality, and the deaths of babies occurring in the first month of life, may be seen by referring to the graphic chart included in last year's report, showing that in the Dominion two-thirds of the infants who succumb in their first year die in the course of the first month—mostly in the first ten days. The health and safety of mother and child during the puerperal period cannot be dissociated. The conditions which give rise to a high maternal mortality during the first fortnight are practically incompatible with a low infantile mortality during that time.

Apart from the completion of the health campaign, some other outstanding features of the year's work may be mentioned.

THE YEAR'S PROGRESS IN INFANT-WELFARE WORK.

The average infantile death-rate for the whole Dominion has been further reduced during the year from 4·7 per 100 births for 1921 to just under 4·2 per cent. for 1922—the lowest on record.

Consistency of treatment and organized system in following up cases, which has been established during the year between the Wellington Hospital and the Plunket Society, marks a most important step for child welfare. The following extract from an address by Dr. Wilson, the Medical Superintendent of the Hospital, speaks for itself:—

"The Plunket Society has become practically part of the work of our hospitals. Our hospitals must work hand in hand with the society. What seems to me one of the most important aspects of the work of the Plunket Society is the fact that it has established unity throughout the Dominion in regard to the feeding and care of children.

"I feel this is a matter of supreme importance for the Wellington Hospital. Our children are fed and cared for according to the Plunket system, and the Plunket Nurses are supplied with details regarding each child discharged from the Hospital, so that what is done in the institution may be consistently continued and followed up outside in the home."

Another encouraging feature of the events of the year was the inauguration of Health Week in Wellington. If this movement were taken up earnestly and actively in all large centres of population, the beneficial effect on the health of the family, especially on mother and child, would be very great.

The number of Plunket nurses subsidized by the Government has increased from sixty to seventy-one during the year. Over and above this, a further sixteen nurses have been requisitioned for mainly by branches hitherto without resident Plunket nurses, and a few as additional nurses to meet the progressive requirements of pre-existing residential centres. Besides keeping up with these demands within the Dominion, the Plunket Society has continued to train nurses applying voluntarily from Australia, or sent across by States of the Commonwealth, or by voluntary child-welfare agencies.

During the year nearly twenty thousand copies of the Department's book "The Expectant Mother, and Baby's First Month" have been issued free to nurses and married women, and to