

Dear Member,

A.I.M.S. is three years old on April 1st. We were the first in the field of the 1960's pressure groups which have arisen to question the standards of the society within which we live. A society which cares little for the individual human being but prefers to see people as groups of statistical euphemistic trends. It would seem sensible to try to do something to stop this way of thinking. In A.I.M.S. it can be nipped in the bud - at birth. Thoughtful, well organised, kind maternity care for the individual is our aim.

The most important thing in A.I.M.S. in the past few months has been the making of contact with the Ministry of Health. On December 14th a Deputation visited the Ministry's smart new rented skyscraper at Elephant and Castle, London, S.E.1. The Deputation consisted of Mrs Willington, Dr. Fox-Russell, Mrs. Garside, Mrs. Taylor (Midx.), Mrs. Byrom (Southampton) and Mrs. Whiteley (Newcastle). We were received by Mr. Bernard Braine M.P. (the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health) and five ministry spokesmen for the various aspects of the Maternity Services. The following points were taken in order:-

- 1) The question of more money to be spent on the Maternity Services.
- 2) Recruitment of more midwives.
- 3) Inadequate home help service.
- 4) Complaints of treatment in hospitals.
- 5) More research in obstetrics.
- 6) The training of doctors and midwives.
- 7) The treatment of babies in hospital.
- 8) The recent report by the N.B.T.F. on Perinatal Mortality.
- 9) The Emergency Bed Scheme in London.
- 10) Proper equipment of hospitals (premature baby incubators, obstetric flying squads, analgesics, etc.).

There was a very full discussion for over two and a half hours. On the recruitment of midwives the Ministry emphasised that the problem was retention rather than recruitment. (Hence their assertion that there is no shortage of midwives.). The Ministry is unwilling to abolish the tripartite system and there-by unify the maternity services. The plea for more research seemed to fall on deaf ears, it being pointed out that Britain produces Nobel Prize winners. The reply to the suggestion that the home help service was inadequate was that this was a matter for the Local Authorities. The Parliamentary Secretary stressed the fact that the various sections of the Health Service valued their independence and that the Ministry's role was to advise and encourage. He looked forward to the Ministry's consulting nationally with A.I.M.S. as the "consumers' association" representing mothers, but said that much of the most valuable work could be done locally with Regional Hospital Boards, Hospital Management Committees and Local Authorities. Mr. Braine gave a pledge that any case of unattended delivery would be investigated. He emphasised however that all complaints should be made immediately to the hospital authorities as otherwise in-

vestigation would be difficult. An agreed statement was issued to the press at the end of the meeting. Since then Dr. Fox-Russell and Mrs. Willington have returned for informal conversations at the Ministry.

Hospital Management Committees have sent their replies to the Ministry's request for the implementation of some of the suggestions set out in "Human Relations in Obstetrics" and these have been analysed in the "Monthly Bulletin of the Ministry of Health and the Public Health Laboratory Service, 1962, 21, 24.". Anyone interested to read the whole thing may apply to the Central Organiser, but here is the last section:--

"Ensure that the contents of the Memorandum are made known to all staff concerned with Patients and arrange for them to discuss in the light of it how any defects in their relationship with Patients can be made good."

With two exceptions the replies indicated that arrangements of various kinds had been made to bring the report to the notice of the staff and that the circulation of the report had stimulated much discussion. One teaching hospital considered the complaints came from a vociferous minority and refused to give the memorandum to the staff. On the other hand, some Hospital Management Committees found the meetings so useful that they decided to hold later discussions to review progress. One H.M.C. found that so much good had come from their discussions that they established regular quarterly meetings with the staff. (Replies were received from 221 H.M.Cs. and Boards of Governors.).

So, come on you "vociferous minority" ! We want all the information you can gather, increased membership and more organised Regional Groups. Mothers must help themselves by speaking up for the improvements that they would like to see. There is no harm in asking. Ask questions, ask other mothers, ask to see round your hospitals, ask your M.P., ask your doctor, ask yourself if what you see is as good as it might be ?

THE NEWSLETTER AND "NEW FORUM".

A.I.M.S. Executive Committee has cut the length of this newsletter as an experiment as many non-readers have complained that it was getting too long. This will of course limit the number of news items that can be included. It is hoped, if physically possible, to publish the newsletter more frequently. Meanwhile, A.I.M.S. has been offered a regular half page in "NEW FORUM" a new well-produced subscription quarterly magazine pioneered by the "Housewives Register" (2, Sefton Road, Croydon, Surrey.). To get "NEW FORUM" write to:- Joan Little, Editor, 120, Marlborough Hill, Harrow, Middx., enclosing 8/-d. for four issues per annum. Mention the A.I.M.S. Newsletter when you order and 1/-d. will come back for A.I.M.S.'s funds. Odd single copies available at 2/-d. each. If these are sold at meetings etc. A.I.M.S. and the seller will each get 3d. per copy commission. Full page on A.I.M.S. in recent issue.

VOLUNTARY HELP - HOME OR AWAY.

If you can offer or organise voluntary help to mothers either in hospital or in their homes please contact :- Mrs. S. Holderness,
13 Connaught Rd., St. Albans, Herts.

Working in with the problem may help members to put their fingers on shortcomings of the Service and enable them to offer suggestions for improvements. (There are two A.I.M.S. sitters-in schemes going now to relieve loneliness in labour.). A few hours help a week might make all the difference to a new mother who feels the lonely struggle to cope with her worries is more than she can

tackle by herself. (Try knocking on her door?). Perhaps those A.I.M.S. members who feel they can should get in and help. Non-A.I.M.S. members and some women's organisations might also feel this is worth doing. (The Mothers Union has said that they will help with sitters-in schemes.).

27.4.63. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. 27.4.63.

Please come to the A.G.M. on Saturday 27th April 1963 at 2.15 p.m. to 5.0 p.m. at Caxton Hall, Westminster. There are important issues to discuss. Make the effort! Regional Organisers will be circulated with the Agenda. We hope they have already sent in their Resolutions to the Executive Committee. (See Constitution.).

PRESS.

The address of the Press Organiser is now :-

Mrs. C. Wolfe, 58 Chamberlain Road, Highfield, Southampton, Hants.

Please send her your press cuttings promptly.

There has again been quite a lot of publicity for A.I.M.S. in the press. Our thanks to Mrs. Walton (R.O. Birmingham) for her excellent clear articles on A.I.M.S. aims on the Women's Page of the Guardian. (We would like to order a reprint of this). There was an article on the Health Services which mentioned A.I.M.S. in "Topic" in October. (Topic has since closed down!). A full page article appeared in the "Daily Worker". A piece in "Good Housekeeping"; and in "She" for February. Letters have been published all over the place including the Guardian, New Society (Thursdays 1/-d.), Family Doctor and in Local newspapers up and down the country. Articles in local papers seem to be a good way to try to form local Groups.

The Womens Group on Public Welfare mentioned A.I.M.S. at their conference at Stockport last October (When they passed a resolution about the Maternity Services backed up by surveys they had made in three areas.) and they have accepted an article for their newsletter. There was a T.V. programme on Child-birth but it was not well produced.

The National Birthday Trust Fund's report to the Press on the Perinatal Mortality Survey (1958) which is to be published in full later on this year (probably in June) caused a great flurry. A top London Obstetrician said a lot about "Kitchen Table Maternity". All the papers stated that 50 babies a week die unnecessarily in home confinements and there were letters to the Times about increasing the number of hospital maternity beds. (Cannot something be done to make home confinements safer ?

There were again reports of babies dying of cold because they were left in cold bedrooms or put out in the snow in prams. (The lack of instruction by Health Visitors, Midwives and doctors on this point seems beyond belief.

An article has been written for "New Society" and it is hoped that they will publish it in the near future.

ODD ITEMS.

The summary of conclusions and recommendations of the report of the MEDICAL SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE (Social Assay, London. 18s.net), the "Porritt Report", published in the B.M.J. for 3.11.62. makes interesting reading. They recommend radical reforms of the administration of the maternity services.

Plans are going ahead for a small piece of research into the possible advantages of the use of an OBSTETRICAL CHAIR.

Our thanks to Mrs. Weaver (St. Albans) for her efficient organisation of the A.I.M.S. CHRISTMAS CARDS and for all the hard work it took to make the £20 profit. (Any volunteers to organise next year please?)

When Newcastle Group had collected the money for the PREMATURE BABY INCUBATOR FOR CORNWALL the South West Regional Hospital Board said that there was after all an incubator at Redruth Hospital but that it was out of sight in a cupboard because the Consultant does not believe in their use. There seemed no point then in sending more coals from Newcastle but it is worrying that a whole county such as Cornwall should have not a single incubator in use. There is one of the portable kind fitted in an ambulance to bring very small babies to hospital where they are put in a babies' hot room. Newcastle Group have sent £50 to the War on Want fund instead.

The MIDWIVES ESSAY COMPETITION has had to be temporarily postponed while we continue to search for funds to provide a suitable prize. It had been hoped that a Baby Food Firm might offer to put up the prize money. When we are able to go ahead with it the subject for the essay will be "How to Recruit & Retain More Midwives".

THREE BOOKS: "Childbirth" a Penguin Handbook by W.C.W. Nixon. 2/6d., "Pennies into Pounds" how to raise money for good causes by Esme Gray Booker. 9/6d. published by Mills & Boon Ltd., "The Plea for the Silent", 12/6d. published by Christopher Johnson.

A successful PUBLIC LECTURE was held in November at the Norfolk Hotel, London. It was given by John Burrows, Lecturer University of London, on "Pressures & Pressure Groups in the Hospital World". All those who attended said they had found the lecture most interesting.

Another copy of the Bulletin of the "Parents' Centres" has arrived from NEW ZEALAND and may be borrowed on request. Two interesting quotes -

"Here in New Zealand the Parents' Centres have chosen to concentrate their efforts on the ante-natal months and the time of childbirth. This seems to us to be a vitally important time in the development of marriage, in the growing-up of the two young people involved, in the emotional needs of the mother and the mental health of the new baby. Although life never ceases to present us with opportunities for growth and new awareness, it is as though an extra chance is offered in deference to the baby on its way. It is not only the body that prepares for birth, the joints becoming more supple, the fibres more elastic but the mind and the emotions respond with a new receptivity, and pregnancy becomes a time for growth and learning."

"Discussing the use of medication, Dr. Goodrich (Senior Obstetrician-Gynaecologist at Lawrence Memorial Hospital, Connecticut) comments, "Despite all our efforts to prepare our patients for labour, I know of no one who is 100 per cent successful in terms of the goals previously described 'natural childbirth'. There are some patients whom we cannot reach for one reason or another. They will require medication in labour. Those who require it should get it, not on a routine basis but in individually prescribed types and amounts. The patient who is overtly anxious in early labour needs a different drug from one who is in pain late in the first stage. The same is true for anaesthesia; our armamentarium should include the entire gamut of agents and techniques, so that we can use the one which is most applicable in the situation.""

About HOME HELPS. An M.P.s. wife spoke on Woman's Hour recently about organising a Maternity Welfare Nursing Service. They would attend the mother in

her own home after the baby had been born in hospital. The 48 hour discharge scheme (where medical and home conditions are favourable) is with us to stay until enough maternity beds can be provided, so help at home must be assured. What do you think? Please investigate your local home help service and let me know. Are there enough home helps? Do they cost too much? Do they do the job adequately? Could they be better trained? Does the name "Home Help" put off people who might otherwise enjoy helping a new mother and her baby?

N E W S F R O M T H E R E G I O N S .

Some prospective Regional Organisers have asked for ADVICE on SETTING up a NEW A.I.M.S. GROUP. This is how the newest Group at BURY(Lancs) are going about it. They began by getting the co-operation of the local paper's editor who introduced them "gently" and then a little more insistently to his readers. They received a small but very very enthusiastic response. A meeting was held and eight members recruited (two of them fathers; one a nurse; one a nursing tutor). They went away keen to gather filled questionnaires and to raise funds. (Plans are for coffee evenings, jumble sale, wine and cheese party and a dance). "Data collecting" is the immediate goal. When armed with more members and more facts they will approach the H.M.C. via the Secretary - simultaneously writing to Matron - midwife tutors to arrange meetings. A FILM "The Psychology of Child-birth" will be shown one evening and midwives etc. invited to attend - a collection will be taken for A.I.M.S.

At SWINDON there has been much looking up of facts and searching out of statistics. An article has been written and is sponsored by the Swindon District Committee of Toc H. It will be sent to all womens organisations, mixed discussion groups and organisations concerned with the welfare of other people. A meeting will be arranged when the extent of interest has been gauged.

Mrs. Bradbury (CUMBERLAND), like many other R.Os., arranged to be shown round her local maternity hospital. They spent a most interesting 3 hours. It is well appointed and the care, judging from the written report, is above average. This is also a good way to find out how the local maternity services tick. The mothers point of view is best gauged by talking to people, collecting written opinions and as many filled-in questionnaires as possible. NEWCASTLE has a special questionnaire group. 500 questionnaires are to be sorted and divided under hospital headings; results studied and a report prepared with information divided again into headings for the convenience of the hospitals. Where criticisms were made, every effort was made to be constructive and members suggestions for improvements were included. MANCHESTER has also designed their own questionnaire. VOLUNTARY HELP GROUPS are another way to "fill the gaps" and help mothers. NEWCASTLE (their 3 page Newsletter bulging with bustling activity) are extending their help to mothers in their own homes. Their help in a hospital and sitting in during first stage of labour continues. There is a sitting-in system in SALISBURY and two in SURREY (Kingston Group). Here the Mothers Union are providing sitters and the experiment of help and sitting in with mothers in labour is being watched with hopeful caution by other hospital authorities - keep at it Kingston Group and Mrs. Taylor! The others will follow suit when they see that the scheme is beneficial to all.

CORNWALL have also published their own newsletter containing information on the future expansion of maternity services in Cornwall and a report on a further visit to the only maternity hospital in the county at Redruth, 56 beds and some inconvenient annexes. At Trewirgie Annexe mothers have to be taken in through the window as no stretcher can be got through the door. HERTS. & BEDS. GROUP have visited two hospitals - (We were very impressed with life in the City of London Hospital). Details of these visits are in their newsheet. (All these Regional News Sheets are very encouraging !). Monthly meetings are held - social and serious meetings alternately. Raffles and Bring & Buys to raise funds. £10 has been donated to St.Albans City Hospital Department. The committee of nine (44 members) feels that co-operation with those who administer the N.H.S. whenever possible in no way diminishes our ability to make criticisms and press for improvements where these are necessary.

Welcome to new R.Os. :-

Mrs. C. Friend, 96 Tranby Lane, Anlaby, Hull, Yorks.

Mrs. J. Symons, 56 Southfield Avenue, Preston, Paignton, Devon. (In place of Mrs. M. Thorburn who is moving to Winchester)

Mrs. C. Duce, 61 Robroyd Terr., Wellhouse, Golcar, Nr. Huddersfield.

Mrs. E. Thomas, 69 Green Park Road, Skircoat Grn., Halifax, Yorks.

Mrs. J.A. Blackall, 32 Dorchester Road, Ipswich, Suffolk. (Also Temp.R.O.Norfolk)

Mrs. Pole, Llandaff House, Earl Road, Penarth, Glam. (Instead of Mrs.Smallwood)

Mrs. J. Harland, 1 Queens Bay Crescent, Edinburgh 15.

Mrs. W. Hall, has moved to, Creag Dhu, Connel, Argyll, Scotland.

Welcome to Swindon, Bolton and Bury.

Mrs. Cheskin (London), Mrs.Lamb (Newcastle) & Mrs.Brown (N.Herts) have resigned.

Mrs. Bennell (Seven Oaks,Kent) is abroad. Will anyone take over please?

Mrs. Pickett (Glasgow) is in Canada. Will any one help out please?

Can any one come forward to help Mrs. Hall to get Scottish A.I.M.S. sorted out please? She says that in the NORTH of SCOTLAND a new maternity hospital is the first essential. Mrs. Hall wants to try a "new approach" to get improvements.

Please contact her about it (address above).

Help is also urgently needed in NORFOLK where things are bad. Mrs. Blackall is trying to cope at a distance from Ipswich. Her efforts to contact former members and new ones through the local paper have met with apathy. Maternity standards in SUFFOLK seem reasonably high.

Mrs. Page at PRESTON has recovered from having "another lovely baby girl in July"

and is hoping to hold a meeting. At LEEDS Mrs. Nicholson hopes to go to it with

the improving weather. Mrs.Byrom reports slow but steady progress at SOUTHAMPTON

A wonderful stream of information comes from the direction of MANCHESTER where

Mrs.Mound visits and writes with great energy and her reports are much appreciated.

Stop press from ASHFORD where the Liberals are pressing for a new Maternity Unit

(present one built 1837) because of inadequate facilities. New hospital "planned"

for 1966-67."The ants were everywhere and they live and breed in hot water ducts.

They have them well under control and are treated by spraying." Good write up in

Kent Messenger. S.E.Met. R.H.B. will visit Mat.Unit to see how they can improve it.

Your attention is drawn to the PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION (Miss L.C.North, 35-36, Eagle St.

London W.C.1. Min. Sub. is 10s.). Founder and Chairman is Mrs.Helen Hodgson. Objects

"In all fields of medicine and allied spheres, to represent and further the interests

of patients. To provide assistance and advice to patients. To acquire and disseminate

information. To promote understanding and good will between patients and all

persons engaged in medical practice and related activities."

TAIL PIECE (from Newcastle) The attitude which kills progress and we meet it

frequently: 1.) Time will change everything. 2.) All is being done that can be done.

3.) We shall need a great deal of money. 4.) It's a hard world !