

Editorial

Infant Mortality.

An infant mortality of something like 196 per thousand births in 1907, and of about 155 per thousand births in 1908, for the Province of Ontario, is something that needs immediate attention. In the first place, let us look to our figures, for there is nothing so misleading as statistics. Both these results are arrived at by taking into account all still-births as births, and also as deaths. We should have our infant mortality calculated independently of still-births altogether. Still-births should be recorded carefully and published, but published in a separate statement, and infant mortality should be calculated from the total number of births in the year (still-births not included) and the total number of deaths under one year of age during the year (still-births not included). The requisite information to enable us to do this is not given in the Report of the Registrar-General for 1907, nor in the Report for 1908. It should be.

Then we should also have a separate statement of the infant mortality of illegitimate children.

The next thing to do is to improve our registration percentage. Other civilized countries succeed in getting 90 per cent. of the births registered. Do we? No. This should be done at once. A prominent physician was heard to boast the other day that he attended at about 300 births per year and did not notify or register one of them. Surely we might do better than this. Probably the physician should be paid for this service. After all, it is not a medical function. We are not State officials—not yet. Some means ought to be found to get our births properly recorded.

The Humor of Sir Almroth.

Exception has been taken in some quarters to the second of the Lady Priestly memorial lectures of the British National Health Society, delivered recently by Sir Almroth Wright, M.D., F.R.S., on "Bacteriology and Health."

There was a widespread belief, he said, in part, that people could keep disease away by following the rules of individual hygiene. These rules were that they must eat a lot, have a certain amount of exercise, wash and have plenty of fresh air. He was persuaded they were quite wrong, particularly in regard to Turkish baths; and though he felt that such things might add to the pleasures of life, he did not think that cleanliness was to be recommended as a hygienic method.

Sir Almroth Wright is a distinguished member of the profession, having done valuable work in every branch of physiological and pathological research. It is to him that we owe our knowledge of the opsonic index.

We are inclined to think, therefore, that in his Lady Priestly Memorial lecture Sir Almroth has been joking with the laymen and perhaps having "a good tug (*a la* Osler) at the professional leg."

Inter Alia.

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Last month the Governor-General of Canada wrote a letter to the mayor of Ottawa urging an immediate warfare on house flies. He suggested that a systematic campaign should be inaugurated and called on the mayor to take the lead, believing that Ottawa, as the capital, should set an example to other cities in getting rid of the fly by removing conditions which attract it or encourage it to breed.

Earl Grey proposed the same old remedy, cleanliness, the natural enemy of disease at all times. It is not merely necessary to keep a house clean and well screened, but the premises as well. A filthy back yard can breed enough flies to bother thousands of people, and a person who screens his house and pays no atten-