

On the *relation of food to disease* suggestions were made that there was—

- (1) Overeating ;
- (2) Excess meat ;
- (3) Too many tinned foods (lack of domestic help being blamed) ;
- (4) Too much tea ;
- (5) Too much carbohydrate ;
- (6) Too little water ;
- (7) Bad cooking, particularly in boardinghouses ; and that
- (8) The public should be educated in regard to food values.

Many suggestions were made regarding possible further work ; for brevity, only a few will be cited : The diets in pregnancy in relation to toxæmias, nutritional anæmia in the first year of life, issuing of a pamphlet on food principles, and other means to better education on matters of diet.

Many offers of collaboration were received, and we hope that we may turn these to good account in future work.

In regard to the *Plunket system*, 70 per cent. of those replying are of the opinion that the Plunket system is good on the whole—that, at a time when the doctors were not alive to the importance of infant feeding, it systematized where methods had previously been haphazard and based on ignorance and “instinct.” But about the same percentage mention some fault—viz., that the babies are “fat,” “flabby,” “anæmic,” “show general malnutrition,” “good at first, but falling off later,” “delayed dentition and dental caries,” while some say that the diet as prescribed is rarely adhered to, more usually being given.

It is obvious that the comment varies to some extent with the type of Plunket Nurse in their particular district.

About 80 per cent. offer suggestions for improvement, the commonest being earlier mixed diet and more elasticity. Others occurring frequently are : Increase in solids ; increase in protein ; less dilution of the milk ; less fear of overfeeding ; replacement or modification of the emulsion ; more co-operation between the Plunket Nurse and the doctor, particularly in the field of actual disease.

The recent modifications have been approved by about 45 per cent., as compared with 10 per cent. who disapprove.

Frequently our attention is drawn to the necessity for supervising the diet and general health of the pre-school child.

Miss Wilson's activities have been the following during the year :—

- (1) Inquiries into adequate low-cost dietaries (done for the Social Science Bureau).
- (2) Classifying and summarizing the replies to the questionnaire.
- (3) Studying the percentage absorption of fat of the Plunket emulsion (Kariol). This experiment was performed on rats, which, however, are apparently capable of absorbing fats to a much greater extent than human beings. It is proposed, therefore, to repeat the investigation on babies at a later date.

Kariol was found to have a greater percentage of fat in the upper than in the middle or lower layers, indicating that, on standing, the fat globules tend to coalesce and rise in the emulsion.

- (4) Studying the effect of high butter intake on rats, an experiment designed to test whether our high intake of butter is deleterious. The experiment is as yet incomplete.
- (5) Some sixteen urines collected at the Otekaike School for iodine estimations were analysed for their nitrogen content, from which the daily protein intake was ascertained. It varied from 56.1 gm. to 113.2 gm.
- (6) During February and March, 1939, Miss Wilson has been continuing the work on dietaries begun with the Social Science Bureau. She will be thus occupied (in Wellington, Auckland, and Christchurch) probably till the end of April.

LADY KING SCHOLARSHIP.

Soon after the last meeting of the Medical Research Council the Dunedin members of the Council and the Chairman of the Nutrition Committee called on the Plunket Committee. The Plunket Committee expressed its willingness to co-operate with the Medical Research Council in the appointment of the Lady King Scholar, accepting the Council's offer to contribute £350 to make the total salary up to £600.

The Nutrition Committee has agreed to help the women's institutes with an inquiry into the quantity of milk consumed in the average home.

POSSIBLE FIELDS FOR FUTURE WORK.

- (1) Further investigations into possible specific dietetic errors, such as high consumption of butter ; low intake of calcium, vitamin C, vitamin B, cobalt.
- (2) Examination and report on technical-school dietaries collected by Dr. Hercus.
- (3) Co-operation with the Goitre Committee on iodine metabolism.
- (4) Inquiries into the effect of the milk ration at schools.
- (5) Comparison of a series of Plunket-fed children with other artificially fed children in a suitable area, such as the Kaikoura district, in which the Acting-Chairman made some preliminary inquiries during the vacation.