criticism of the latest effusion of the Local Government Board is something more than a merely personal one.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Feb. 13th, 1911.

ENERGY.

OMNOPON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I find that "pantopon" is now officially styled "omnopon," and Messrs. Hoffmann-La Roche, the sole makers of this preparation, have been good enough to supply me with samples of the drug under that name. They are in every way similar to the "pantopon" used in the cases referred to in my article, "Some Remarks on Pantopon Anæsthesia," and I should like to add that my remarks with regard to "pantopon" apply equally to "omnopon." The only difference is in the name, since I am told there is a legal difficulty in registering the name "pantopon" in this country. In justice to Messrs. Hoffmann-La Roche I hope you will be good enough to publish this addendum.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Buckingham-street, W.C., Feb. 20th, 1911. C. LOUIS LEIPOLDT.

BIRMINGHAM.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Infants' Health Society.

THE Birmingham Infants' Health Society, founded in 1907, is one of the most prominent of the agencies attempting to grapple with the problem of infant mortality. It concentrates its energies upon St. Bartholomew's Ward, where the infant mortality is particularly heavy, and endeavours not only to enlighten ignorant mothers as to their maternal duties, but to study at first hand the nature of the factors which give this ward an unenviable reputation. A considerable amount of apathy and prejudice has been overcome, and the annual report just issued gives abundant evidence of progress. At the weekly "infant consultations" where babies under 12 months of age are weighed and the mothers advised as to feeding, clothing, and general management, 411 children were examined last year, as compared with 353 in 1909 and 204 in 1908. The infant mortality among these "consultation infants" was 46.4, as against 201 for the whole of St. Bartholomew's Ward. The consultation mortality in 1908 was 95.2, and in 1909 49.8. The part played by feeding is strikingly illustrated by the fact that whereas there were only 8 deaths out of 171 breast-fed children, 7 bottle-fed children out of 53 died. Breast-fed babies 12 weeks old weighed on an average 4914 grammes, bottle-fed children of the same age 3813 grammes. At 12 months of age the difference was still more in favour of natural feeding. The effects of poverty on the physique of the child, even when breast-fed, are indicated in a series of tables contained in the report. Though practically all the mothers attending are in very poor circumstances, yet it is possible to divide them into two groups: (a) those distinctly suffering from poverty; and (b) those in slightly better circumstances. A three months old child belonging to group (a) fed at the breast weighs 4787 grammes, while the weight in group (b) was 5048 grammes. The average mortality-rate in St. Bartholomew's Ward for the five years ended Dec. 31st, 1909, was 205.8, and it is encouraging to note that the very class which in times past furnished the greater proportion of the infant mortality of the ward is the class which is now coming under the influence of the society. The society has "At Homes," at which the women learn knitting and sewing; evening educational classes, at which the lady superintendent, Miss Vine, instructs mothers in the feeding, bathing, and general management of babies; and also lectures on personal hygiene, home nursing, and cooking. The maternity department is very helpful to prospective mothers, and there is a system of home visitation which ensures proper attention for mother and child. At the annual meeting presided over by the Lady Mayoress, Dr. J. Robertson, medical officer of health, in moving the adoption of the report, said that, as to the methods of reducing infant mortality, he for many years sat on the hedge, and looking back he was not sure that he was not

right, because many of the methods proposed 10 or 15 years ago had proved fallacious. Milk depôts where a pure article could be obtained at a cheap rate were supposed to be the method of dealing satisfactorily with the problem, but the Birmingham figures showed all along that the babies did not die because they got bad milk. By the health visitors they found that those districts where ignorance, carelessness, and poverty prevailed were associated with high mortality. If they could do something to stop babies from dying they also did much more for those who survived but whose lives at present were more or less wrecked by carelessness on the part of the mothers. There was a large proportion of babies who weathered the storm of the first year but who grew up into stunted men and women. Mr. Steel-Maitland, M.P., in supporting the resolution, referred to two dangers which occurred when public attention was attracted to a particular subject. One was what he might call washy semi-scientific talk and the other sentimental talk actuated by no wish for knowledge and activities directed by no knowledge. There was hardly any subject, he thought, about which these two faults were more apparent than the birth-rate. Many people uttered a dirge over the decline in the rate, while others regarded it as a good sign. There could be no doubt that if the birth-rate continued to fall without any counter-acting influences, it would be a great disadvantage. There was ample room in this country for a vaster population if properly organised, while in our dominions abroad the room was unlimited. They wanted, not so much that the birth-rate should not decrease, but that the survival-rate of the adult active population should increase. Greater attention, he considered, should be paid to the ante-natal influence in mothers who had to go to work.

Staffordshire and King Edward Memorial.

A meeting to consider the proposal for a scheme to deal with consumption in Staffordshire as a memorial to the late King was held on Feb. 11th, at Stafford, under the presidency of the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Dartmouth. Dr. G. Reid, the county medical officer of health, had drawn up a memorandum on the question. In the course of it Dr. Reid stated that the results obtained by the sanatorium method of treatment had not so far justified the enthusiasm with which it was at first advocated. Experience showed that, with the inadequate means at present available of getting to know of cases early enough, in only about one-fifth of the definite cases could one look for really successful results from such treatment. On the other hand, a sanatorium used for isolation purposes was of great value, because the chief danger of infection was home contact, and the incurable cases were the most dangerous. No matter what form of treatment was adopted, some machinery for home supervision and the detection of the disease in its early stage must be provided. No matter how far local authorities might be induced to go in their efforts to deal with the problem, there would be ample scope for philanthropic help, and he suggested that any fund which might be collected in the county should be utilised in that direction. By means of such a fund it would be possible to organise a system by which, with the coöperation of local nursing associations, subsidised by the local health authorities, district nurses might be employed as house visitors to act under the direction of the medical officers of health, whom they would keep informed regarding the progress of cases which had undergone treatment. The nurses would also exercise supervision with the families as regarded home preventive measures and note from time to time any signs of ill-health suggestive of commencing consumption, in order that, if verified by medical examination, early, and therefore far more effective, steps might be taken in the way of treatment. It would be necessary to have classes for nurses to instruct them in their duties. The organisation of such a scheme might be entrusted to the County Nursing Association, and arrangements could also be made for lectures to be given in populous centres. The following resolutions were passed at the meeting:—

(1) That it was not advisable that the fund to be raised in the county should be utilised for the assistance of institutions already in existence; (2) that a fund be raised to be known as the King Edward VII. Tuberculosis Prevention Fund, and that it be utilised from time to time towards the cost of general measures for combating tuberculosis; and that (3) having regard to future possibilities, it is not considered expedient to expend any monies in the erection of a sanatorium at present.

Feb. 20th.