

Annotations.

A BOARD OF HEALTH.

At a meeting of the Congress of the Royal Institute of Public Health, held in Aberdeen on Monday last, Professor Frankland, of Birmingham, strongly advocated the establishment of an Imperial Board of Health, for the scientific prosecution of inquiries into the public health question; and at the conference of Sanitary Inspectors, held under the same auspices, a resolution was passed in favour of the appointment of a Minister of Public Health with Cabinet rank.

There is no doubt that such an appointment would conduce to the well being of the community generally, there are many sanitary matters needing attention, which at present do not come into the province of any public department, we hope, therefore, that the suggestion made and the resolution passed at the Congress of the Royal Institute of Public Health will receive the consideration they deserve.

THE EDUCATION OF MIDWIVES.

The question of the Registration, or rather the Annual Licensing of Midwives has been prominently brought before the public of late, and though we have probably heard the last of the Bill dealing with this matter, which was talked out in June last, yet there is no doubt that its promoters will endeavour to bring their views before Parliament in a future Session and the Association for Promoting the Compulsory Registration of Midwives (a misleading name as the Association is promoting Annual Licensing), at their annual meeting passed a resolution urging the Duke of Devonshire to bring the matter before the Cabinet, with a view to its being included in the Government Legislation of next Session.

It is therefore well to direct attention to the important resolution proposed by Mrs. Charles McLaren at the Conference of the Women's Liberal Federation, seconded by Mrs. Corrie Grant, and carried. The resolution is as follows:—

"That it is important that the duties and powers of the Central Midwives' Board (proposed to be formed under the Midwives' Bill) should include provision for the training and education of midwives, and the Council therefore instructs the Executive Committee to take the necessary steps to secure this amendment of the Bill before it passes into law."

If the Bill is ever to become law such a pro-

vision is highly necessary, otherwise we shall have a set of women officially licensed to practise midwifery for whose training and education no regulations are laid down.

Our own views on this important matter have frequently been stated, but will bear repetition. They are that the need and the desirability for legislation for midwives as a class, as for any other class of specialists is non-existent. Midwifery should be undertaken only by medical practitioners, or by trained nurses working under medical direction. The licensing of women, with only a few months' training in a special branch, would not be conducive to the public welfare, as this short and special training is not sufficient to qualify them for the responsible duties which subsequently devolve upon them. It would be well if those who are now interesting themselves in the registration of midwives would turn their attention to obtaining a Bill for the registration of medical, surgical, and obstetric nurses. In doing so they would secure the support of many who withhold it from the present Bill, because they believe it to be inadequate. They hold that a general training should always precede a special one, and that women who practice midwifery should be required to be qualified either as medical practitioners or nurses, in all three branches of their profession before they can practise any one of them.

A WOMAN'S HEROISM.

The following account of a woman's heroism comes from the village of Creetingham in Suffolk. A builder descended a well 48 feet deep and was overcome by foul air, but, although it was obvious that he was gasping for his life, his fellow workmen refused to go to his aid, and rather than risk their lives were ready to let him die. The woman standing by, a Miss Pretty, thought otherwise. "Something must be done," she said, and forthwith getting into the bucket she made the men lower her into the well. On reaching the perishing man she endeavoured to revive him with brandy, but unhappily failed, and she was eventually drawn up again half dead from the effects of the foul air. The man's dead body was afterwards recovered. That her prompt action was ineffective in saving the life for which she imperilled her own must have been a keen disappointment to this brave woman.

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