

## The Central Midwives' Board.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held on Thursday, November 23rd. There were present—Dr. Champneys (in the chair), Miss Paget, Miss Wilson, Mrs. Latter, Sir William Sinclair, Mr. Fordham, Dr. Ward Cousins, Mr. Parker Young, and Dr. Dakin.

Amongst the letters considered were those from the Clerks of the Strood Rural District Council and the Alton Rural District Council, asking the opinion of the Board as to the right of a Local Supervising Authority to inspect midwives not resident within their jurisdiction, but from whom they have received notice of intention to practise within their district. It was agreed to direct attention to the Act, Section 8, sub-section (1), which states it to be the duty of the Local Supervising Authority "to exercise general supervision over all midwives practising within their area."

A letter was considered from Dr. Fothergill making certain suggestions on behalf of the six examiners for the Manchester centre, who were all present at a meeting which considered the matter, as to the examination system of the Board. The examiners were of opinion that the paper set in October was too easy, that candidates were able to answer it briefly, and in some sense correctly, who on oral examination proved themselves quite incompetent. As it is an unspoken rule with some examiners that a woman who gets a fair percentage of marks in her written paper is, as a matter of course, passed at the oral one, they were of opinion that the questions set in the written examination should be such as to really test the knowledge of candidates. Amongst the other suggestions made were the necessity for uniformity in the teaching of pupil midwives, that candidates who failed should be referred back for at least three months, and that the number of examinations should be the same in the provinces as in London.

It was decided that the suggestions should be printed and circulated to all members of the Board and that they should be discussed at a future meeting. It was decided to communicate with the Registrar-General in respect to a letter from the Clerk to the West Riding Sanitary Committee, who stated that the deaths of six midwives in the West Riding had been reported to the Central Midwives' Board, with which the Local Authorities had not been acquainted.

The financial statement showed £6,400 on deposit.

The Secretary then made a report on the October examination: 471 candidates entered for the examination as compared with 311 in June. Of these 463 presented themselves and 352 passed. The total percentage of failures was 24.

Miss Paget drew attention to the large percentage of failures from the Liverpool Lying-in Hospital connected with the Liverpool Ladies' Lying-in Charity. As the institution was one which was recognised by the Board as a Training School, she thought the point was important.

Twenty-six candidates had presented themselves for examination and twelve had failed, which meant 46 per cent. Either there must be something wrong

with the Board's examination for such a result to be possible, or with the training given by the school. As the percentage of failures from other institutions did not approach 46 per cent., it was presumable that the school was at fault. She proposed that the attention of the authorities should be drawn to the matter. After some discussion it was decided that it would be premature to take action on the result of one examination.

Sir William Sinclair gave notice that at the next meeting he would move that inasmuch as fuller information is required, certain details should be included in the Reports of Examinations.

The adoption of the Report of the Committee on facilitating the business of the Board was opposed by Sir William Sinclair, who was full of fight on behalf of the Provincial Members. The Committee, after circularising the members of the Board, recommended, on the opinion of the majority, that Standing Committees should be held a week before the Board meetings and full reports of the proceedings be furnished to the members. Sir William Sinclair thought the suggestion a slight on the country members on the part of those resident in London. The London members made no sacrifices to attend meetings of the Board. ("Oh, oh!") Well, they only had to walk round to the offices after lunch, while he had to devote the whole day to travelling and attending the meetings. Neither he, nor Dr. Ward Cousins, could attend a Committee one week and a Board Meeting the next, and if they could not attend, the only course was for them to resign their seats.

Dr. Ward Cousins having by that time left, Mr. Parker Young explained that he was one of those who expressed themselves in favour of the proposition. The suggestion was made because the Committee recognised the difficulties of the country members in attending meetings, and hoped to lessen the routine work for them, and to expedite the business of the Board.

Miss Wilson said the idea was that the Standing Committee should get through the drudgery a week before the Board met.

After considerable discussion, during which Sir William Sinclair and Mr. Fordham expressed themselves in favour of a whole day session, it was decided to discuss the question at a future meeting of the Board.

The Reports of the Standing Committee were then presented.

The Committee recommended for approval as training-schools the Eastern District Hospital, Glasgow, the Western District Hospital, Glasgow, and the Chorlton Union Infirmary, Manchester. In three other cases it was agreed that the institutions be not approved until certain defects were remedied. Sir William Sinclair moved that the above-mentioned institutions be not approved. In the case of the Glasgow institutions, Poor-houses in Scotland were much worse found than similar institutions in England, further, those in Glasgow were not required for teaching purposes. In regard to Chorlton Union Infirmary, it was not necessary that it should be recognised as a training-school. There were splendid

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