

The Central Midwives' Board.

A Meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at 6, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, on Thursday, May 24th. There were present: Dr. Champneys in the chair, Miss Paget, Miss Wilson, Mrs. Latter, Dr. Dakin, Sir William Sinclair, Mr. Ward Cousins and Mr. Parker Young.

A letter from the Clerk of the Council enclosing a copy of a resolution passed by the Board of the National Maternity Hospital, Dublin, in favour of examinations being held by the Board in Dublin, was referred to the Standing Committee.

A letter from Dr. Park, M.O.H., Dukinfield, relative to the circumstances under which the names of two midwives were omitted from the Midwives' Roll, and asking that they might be certified, was considered. The Board asked for further details. In a somewhat similar case which had been considered by the Standing Committee the Board confirmed the recommendation of the Committee, which considered that the applicants should not be entered on the Roll. They could neither read nor write, and the Committee considered that they should not take the fees of these women only to remove them again probably in a short time.

Dr. Freemantle, County Medical Officer for Herefordshire, wrote to ask the Board whether a midwife practising under a doctor was bound to keep a Register. It was agreed that when acting as a monthly nurse a midwife should not keep a Register. In cases of doubt inquiry should be made by the Local Supervising Authority, to the medical practitioner in charge of the case.

The New Offices Committee reported that acting under the authority conferred on them by the Board at its Special Meeting on May 3rd, they had taken offices at Caxton House, Westminster, on a lease of seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, at the option of the Board, at a rental of £350 per annum, including heating and cleaning, except of windows and chimneys.

The Standing Committee having considered the application of Miss Bell Alison to have her certificate amended recommended further inquiry on the matter.

In reply to a question from Dr. Wheatley, County Medical Officer for Shropshire, as to whether midwives who have notified the Local Supervising Authority that they are no longer practising as such, but as monthly nurses, remain subject to inspection, the Committee recommended that Dr. Wheatley be informed that notification to the Local Supervising Authority that a midwife intends to cease to practice as such, renders her free from the necessity of (1) Instruction; (2) Keeping a register of cases; (3) Keeping the appliances required by the rules.

The Committee presented a Memorandum on applications from Poor Law Institutions for the consideration of the Board. It was moved by the Chairman, and seconded by Mrs. Latter, that this be adopted.

Sir William Sinclair said it was useless to propose amendments, because there was scarcely a paragraph in the Report to agree with. Neither in public nor in private work was it desirable to employ workhouse

infirmaries trained nurses. They were roughened and coarsened by their experience.

Miss Paget said that she had had considerable experience of infirmaries trained nurses as a member of the Council of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute and of the Colonial Nursing Association. Workhouse nurses with three years' training were frequently on a level with hospital trained nurses; the Q.V.J.I. found that such nurses were very kind, and were not coarsened at all. They were very useful in chronic cases as they did not expect all cases to be interesting ones. The Colonial Nurses' Association also found that infirmaries trained nurses answered their purpose very well. She could not allow the accusation to pass, as her experience was quite different.

Miss Wilson supported Miss Paget's remarks.

Sir William Sinclair said that with all respect to the ladies they were not qualified to judge. They were not in charge of cases. In cases of abdominal section, for instance, an infirmaries trained nurse was not sufficient.

Miss Paget said that she was not acquainted with Lancashire workhouse infirmaries with one exception, that of Brownlow Hill. She knew that at such infirmaries as that at Birmingham the nurses had considerable experience in the nursing of abdominal section.

The Standing Committee recommended that the applications for approval as teachers of A. H. A. Huckle, Esq., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., and F. R. Humphreys, Esq., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., be granted. Also the application of Eleanor Caroline Watling for approval to sign forms III. and IV.

Sir William Sinclair did not consider that it was in the public interest to recognise teachers giving private tuition, he thought that midwives should be trained in the wards of a Lying-in Hospital. If it was said that this was advocating too high a standard, the same argument had been advanced in relation to the training of medical students, who now receive the whole of their training in connection with medical schools.

The Report of the Standing Committee was adopted.

The Report of the Penal Cases Committee was next considered. It was decided to cite eighteen midwives to appear before the Board, the whole day on July 12th being devoted to the hearing.

In the case of the loss of a midwife's certificate it was decided on the casting vote of the Chairman not to give a second certificate but to give a voucher that the certificate had been issued.

Sir William Sinclair drew attention to the number of candidates who had passed the last examination after private tuition. Though this result showed they had been able to satisfy the Examiners as to their knowledge, he could not consider the method of instruction a good one. He drew attention to certain advertisements in a lay nursing paper in which medical men were advertised by name, and in which tuition by correspondence was offered. The Board had no guarantee that its rules were interpreted in a straightforward and honest way. He thought a low sort of standard was indicated.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)