

The Central Midwives' Board.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, December 19th. Dr. F. H. Champneys presided.

A letter was read from the Clerk of the Council transmitting a communication from the Local Government Board, enclosing a letter from the Executive Committee of the Rural Midwives' Association in regard to the training of midwives and the possibility of the grant of State-aid towards the cost of such training, which stated that it appeared to the Lord President that more data were required before action was taken. Attention was directed to a statement by Mrs. Hobhouse as to the increased cost of training of midwives in order to qualify them to satisfy the requirements of the Board's examination, and to the policy of the Board in regard to the recognition of workhouse infirmaries as training schools. The Lord President stated that many rural districts did not afford a living wage for women who acted only as midwives. In many of such districts the number of cases did not exceed 20 in the year, whereas 150 cases at the rate of 10s. would be necessary to afford a livelihood. He referred to a statement made by Miss Amy Hughes, General Superintendent of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute—which employed more midwives than any other Association in the kingdom—that rural midwifery and non-infectious nursing could quite well be combined, and enquired whether this might not perhaps be the best solution of the problem. The Lord President's letter was referred to the Standing Committee.

A letter was also read from Miss B. M. Worrall, Hon. Secretary of the Midwives' Defence Association, stating that several members of the Association had received a letter from the Clerk to the London County Council drawing their attention to Rule E 26, of the Board's rules. The letter pointed out that while the L.C.C. was correct in forbidding the use of abbreviations in the form of letters by midwives, it also appeared to prohibit the use of any other description of a midwife's certificates even if set out in full. The Association pointed out that monthly nurses could notify their certificates on their name-plates with impunity, and if midwives were prohibited from doing so, and forced to remove such notifications from their name-plates this would undoubtedly be regarded as a loss of qualification. Well-trained midwives would also, in this event, be unable to distinguish themselves from the *bonâ-fide* ones, many of whom had very slender qualifications, as both would be limited to the use of the term "certificated midwife."

The Secretary stated that the London County Council had fortified itself with the opinion of the Board before taking action.

The letter was referred to the Standing Committee.

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

Letters were reported from Mr. W. Schröder, Deputy Coroner for Central London; from the

Clerk to the Council, Dr. G. F. Sydenham Dulverton; and Dr. W. H. Wright, of Derby; and from the Clerk to the London County Council, and action taken thereon.

Applications from six midwives for the removal of their names from the Roll on the grounds of old age or ill health were granted.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN.

The Chairman then made a statement in reference to a report received from two of the Manchester examiners as to the insufficient training of a candidate at the October examination, which had been adopted in camera as follows:—

REPORT BY DRs. STALLARD AND WALLACE AS TO THE INSUFFICIENT TRAINING OF A CANDIDATE AT THE OCTOBER EXAMINATION HELD IN MANCHESTER.

Dr. Stallard and Wallace, two of the Manchester Examiners, have reported as follows with respect to one of the candidates examined by them at the October examinations:—

"No. 42 has only attended 15 cases personally (ten in hospital, five in district), although she was signed up for 20. Has not fully attended a course of lectures. Quite ignorant of fetal skull and pelvis, and of normal body temperature. Does not know how to deal with post partum hæmorrhage, and has hazy ideas on most subjects."

No. 42 was Elizabeth Christiana Myerscough.

No candidate can be admitted to an examination of the Board unless she produces certificates (a) of having attended and personally delivered 20 cases; (b) of having nursed 20 lying-in women for the ten days following confinement; and (c) of having undergone a three-months' course of instruction.

The three certificates of training comprised in Miss Myerscough's schedule were each signed by Dr. Thomas G. Stevens, Master of the Coombe Hospital, Dublin, and she was admitted to the examination in virtue of these certificates. The candidate herself had signed the declaration that the certificates signed by Dr. Stevens were in all respects correct and true. The Secretary communicated with Miss Myerscough, and after some difficulty ascertained from her that her statement of having conducted 15 labours only was true. She added that the Matron, although she knew she was entering for the Central Midwives' Board's examination, informed her that 15 cases would be sufficient. Her excuse for having signed the declaration was that she had no idea that the Board would be so particular.

She stated finally that she did not wish any publicity to be given to her name should the matter be taken up by the Board.

The Secretary then wrote to Dr. Stevens informing him of Miss Myerscough's statement to the examiners, and that she adhered to it, and asking him for his explanation of the circumstances.

A reply was received from the Registrar of the Coombe Hospital, which merely stated, as regards the point at issue, that Miss Myerscough was credited in the books of the hospital with having attended and watched the progress of not fewer than 50 cases, of which she had had per-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)