

## The Rural Midwives' Association.

Mr. Newman Rogers, M.P., presided at the Annual Meeting of the Rural Midwives' Association, held on Wednesday, May 27th, at 3, Grosvenor Place, by kind permission of Lady Esther Smith. He spoke of the 4,000 deaths annually in this country from puerperal fever—an entirely preventable disease—and pointed out that while in London maternity hospitals the maternal death rate is 3 per 10,000, throughout the country it is still 47 per 10,000.

The adoption of the Annual Report was moved by Mr. C. W. Allan Hodgson, and seconded by Mr. Bostock Hill, who said that there was the greatest difficulty in getting the poor to accept the services of trained midwives. In instances within his own knowledge one woman trained for 7 or 8 months had had to seek Poor Law relief from lack of work, and another who had passed the examination of the Central Midwives' Board had not had a case for four months.

The Countess of Radnor then distributed certificates to midwives working in connection with the Association as follows:—

*Third Year's Good Service Parchment Certificate.*—1. Chamberlain, Rose Venn; 2. Edwards, Mary Emma; 3. Goulding, May E. (monthly only); 4. Kay, Jessie Agnes; 5. Maskell, Lilian (monthly only).

*Second Year's Good Service Certificate.*—1. Edwards, Jenny; 2. Gunson, Martha E. (monthly only); 3. Lake, Ethel; 4. Mitchell, Jessica; 5. Morgan, Elvira Jane; 6. Powell Emma.

*First Year's Good Service Certificates.*—1. Bizzell, Henrietta R.; 2. Clift, Florence; 3. Cole, Charlotte, E. (monthly only); 4. Gill, Helen M.; 5. Hill, Mary H.; 6. Ingram, Rose Ellen; 7. Jones, Catherine; 8. Kellett, Edith M.; 9. Lee, Amy; 10. Lownie, Bessie; 11. Martins, Edith M.; 12. Townsend, Maria P.

Colonel Morton then moved a vote of thanks to Lady Radnor, and said he would *try* to thank her, but evidently doubted his ability to do so.

Mr. Sidney Seymour, who seconded, regretted that more midwives were not present to receive their certificates from Lady Radnor's hands. It would, indeed, have been a red letter day in their lives.

The rural midwife is evidently expected to be a very humble person, properly appreciative of any small crumbs of aristocratic favour. Lady Radnor, replying said that it was difficult to keep pace with the demand for midwives.

Dr. R. Kaye, Medical Officer of Health for the West Riding of Yorkshire, spoke of the difficulty of obtaining adequate remuneration for midwives, whose predecessors had been content with an apron, a pot of jam, or a pair of stockings as their fee.

Mr. Baldwin Fleming, Inspector under the Local Government Board, spoke of the need of supplementing midwives' fees, and Mrs. Heywood Johnstone, Chairman of the Association, boldly appealed for £80,000, so that a complete and ample supply of midwives might be forthcoming before 1910.

Other speakers were Major-General Sir George Marshall, Mrs. Charles Hobhouse, who advocated a conference between the various societies interested in the supply of midwives, with a view to concerted action, Mr. Fremantle, M.O.H. for Hertfordshire, and Mrs. Newman Rogers.

## The Maternity Wards at the Middlesex Hospital.

At one time the death rate from puerperal fever in lying-in and other hospitals was so great that it seemed likely that the hospital treatment of midwifery cases would be altogether abandoned, and one of the institutions which closed its midwifery wards was the Middlesex Hospital. It is significant of the great advance made by the introduction of aseptic methods that this hospital has now opened its doors again for the admission of midwifery cases, and Mr. Pearse Gould, senior surgeon to the hospital, in seconding the adoption of the report, at the recent quarterly Court of Governors, spoke of the re-establishment of the lying-in wards as the most important point referred to in that report. It might, he said, appear on superficial observation to be merely the swing of the pendulum, but it was really a great deal more than that. It was a demonstration of the advance which had been made since the time, not perhaps more than fifteen years ago, when these wards were considered much too dangerous for a general hospital, and when their knowledge of puerperal fever and other infectious diseases was so limited, that the results in these wards, and even in the special lying-in hospitals which were established were little less than disastrous. Now there were few institutions in which the results were more uniformly satisfactory and in the lying-in wards they had as much success as in the general wards.

All the same, the scheme of the board for the reconstruction of one of the special wards and a portion of the premises over the out-patient department as a lying-in department of eight beds cannot be considered ideal. Lying-in wards should form a self-contained block, and to place them over the out-patient department seems scarcely consistent with modern knowledge.

## The Central Midwives' Board.

At the last meeting of the Central Midwives' Board, Mr. Fordham moved the following resolutions, which were seconded and carried:—

(1) That it is desirable that an Annual Report of the proceedings of the Board should in future be prepared and presented to the Privy Council, with a view to its issue as a public document.

(2) That, in the meantime, a summary of the proceedings of the Board for the five years ending March 31st last be prepared.

(3) That the Privy Council be approached in order to obtain their assent to these arrangements.

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