

The Central Midwives' Board.

SPECIAL MEETING.

A Special Meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, December 17th, for the purpose of hearing the charges alleged against two midwives. The first was postponed for the formal finding of a *prima facie* case by the Local Supervising Authority for Wigan, and the second because Messrs. Russell, solicitors to the midwife concerned, certified that she was still a patient in a hospital. A Penal Board for the purpose of hearing the charges in these two cases was fixed for January 14th, at 2.15 p.m.

THE MONTHLY MEETING.

The ordinary Monthly Meeting of the Board was then held. The minutes having been read and confirmed, the Secretary reported that there was no correspondence.

Dr. Stanley Atkinson inquired whether any intimation had been sent to the Board respecting the appointment of a Departmental Committee by the Lord President of the Council, to inquire into the working of the Midwives' Act.

The Chairman said that official notification had not been sent to the Board, but on December 7th he had been notified of his appointment as a member of the Committee, and the first meeting had been held on Wednesday, December 16th.

Mr. Parker Young said he was sorry the scope of the inquiry was not more elastic. A Finance Committee of the Board had just held a meeting and found that the Board was practically within £1,000 of the end of its balance. He wished the financial question could have been included in the terms of reference.

The Chairman said that the Committee proposed to ask the Secretary of the Central Midwives' Board to give a general statement, and various associations would be asked to give evidence. Witnesses would be requested to furnish the Committee with a précis of their evidence first.

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

The Report of the Standing Committee was then received. Amongst the business reported was a letter from the Marchioness of Winchester, President of the Hampshire County Nursing Association, suggesting a modification of the present requirements of the Board's examination. It was agreed to inform the Marchioness of Winchester that the Board is unable to take steps tending to lower the standard of examination, and pointing out that a glossary is supplied for the assistance of candidates studying the Rules.

In reply to a letter from the Clerk of the West Sussex County Council suggesting the framing of Rules (1) prohibiting a midwife in attendance on a patient suffering from puerperal fever from taking another labour case for a month; (2) compelling midwives to notify the Local Supervising Authority cases in which they lay out dead bodies, and cases of infectious illness attended by them; The Board passed a Resolution "That prolonged suspension after infection is not to be recommended (a) because suspension without ade-

quate disinfection is useless, (b) because adequate disinfection renders suspension unnecessary. The time of suspension from practice should be limited to the time required for adequate disinfection, which should not take longer than twenty-four hours."

The second suggestion of the West Sussex County Council was noted for consideration at the next revision of the Rules.

In connection with a letter from the Secretary of H.R.H. Princess Christian's Maternity Home as to the cases of two midwives brought before the last Penal Board, the Standing Committee recommended the adoption of the following resolution: "That the Board considers that the Committee of H. R. H. Princess Christian's Maternity Home did their obvious duty in reporting the cases of alleged drunkenness in two of its nurses to the Local Supervising Authority, but it also thinks that the authorities of the Home will see that it is to their interest to redouble their precautions in selecting women to act as midwives in connection with the Home."

Sir George Fordham said that he did not like the wording of the end of the Resolution. He would like to delete the words after "authority." The Chairman said it was necessary to frame a resolution. The Committee of the Home had not yet met since the Penal Board was held, but the letter received from the Secretary of the institution implied that the authorities would "think twice" about reporting such cases in the future. It was their obvious duty to do so. In regard to the second part of the resolution, it was claimed that the authorities had been careful in the selection of their midwives, the Standing Committee therefore considered that they should redouble their precautions. Mr. Parker Young agreed, and said that it was evident from the correspondence that some such clause should be incorporated in the resolution, and Dr. Stanley Atkinson said it was obvious that the references of these midwives had not been referred to as they should have been. The resolution of the Standing Committee was then adopted.

Six midwives were for various causes, mostly ill-health or old age, removed from the Roll at their own request.

The Middlesex Hospital was approved as a training school, Dr. James Allan was approved as a teacher, and the following midwives were approved for the purpose of signing Forms III. and IV.:—Annie McKenzie Brown 6885, Ann Collier 26677, Catherine Sharp Crabb 26062, Sibyl Avis Dauneay 21443, Rosa Isabel Elwin 27352.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The Secretary presented a financial statement, showing that when the Board had sold out £250 as advised by the Finance Committee to meet current expenses only £1,050, invested in India 3 per cent. stock, would remain. It was agreed to acquaint the Privy Council with the position of the Board's finances.

The date of the next meeting was fixed for January 21st, 1909, and the meeting then terminated.