

The Midwife.

The National Insurance Bill.

THE AMENDMENTS DESIRED BY THE MIDWIVES' INSTITUTE.

The Midwives' Institute has formulated a series of amendments to the National Insurance Bill. The clauses affected, with the amendments desired, are published below.

ADMINISTRATION OF BENEFITS.

Clause 13.—(4) Where, under any such rule as aforesaid, payment of sickness or disablement benefit is suspended on the ground that the disease or disablement has been caused by the misconduct of the person claiming the benefit, such person shall nevertheless continue to be entitled to medical benefit.

We ask that "and when required maternity benefit" shall be inserted after "medical benefit."

ADMINISTRATION OF MATERNITY BENEFIT.

Clause 16.—(1) Where the mother of the child is herself an insured person maternity benefit shall be treated as a benefit for her and shall be administered by the approved society of which she is a member, or if she is not a member of any society by the local Health Committee; if she is not herself an insured person the benefit shall be treated as a benefit for her husband and shall be administered by the approved society of which he is a member, or if he is not a member of any such society by the local Health Committee, and shall be payable in respect of a posthumous child.

We ask for the addition of the following Sub-Clause (2):—

"Notwithstanding anything herein, the mother shall decide whether she shall be attended by a registered medical practitioner or by a duly certified midwife, and shall have free choice in the selection of such practitioner or midwife."

This will allow the woman freedom of choice as to her attendant during confinement.

DEPOSIT INSURANCE.

Clause 32.—(1) (f) The sums payable in respect of a deposit contributor for the purposes of medical benefit and sanatorium benefit, and towards the expenses of administration, shall, except so far as they are payable out of moneys provided by Parliament, be deducted at the commencement of each year from the amount standing to his credit in the Post Office fund;

We ask for the addition of "maternity benefit" after "medical benefit."

LOCAL HEALTH COMMITTEES.

Clause 43.—(5) The remaining members of the committee, not exceeding in number one fourth of

the members appointed in manner aforesaid, shall be appointed by the Insurance Commissioners, but so that at least two of the members so appointed shall be duly qualified medical practitioners.

We ask for the addition of "and at least one duly certified midwife" after "qualified medical practitioners."

This is to insure that the interests of the certified midwife shall be represented on the local Health Committees as well as those of qualified medical practitioners.

POWERS AND DUTIES OF LOCAL HEALTH COMMITTEES.

Clause 44.—(1) It shall consider generally the needs of the county or county borough with regard to all questions of public health, and may make such reports and recommendations with regard thereto as it may think fit.

We ask that "including the provision of certified midwives" shall be added to this Sub-Clause, to allow the Health Committee to arrange for the necessary supply of certified midwives to unprovided districts.

The Midwives' Institute also asks that it be laid down in the Act that the lying-in woman shall have entirely free choice as to whether she employs a doctor or a midwife, and liberty to choose that doctor or midwife; also, if she employs a midwife, and it is necessary for the midwife to send for a doctor, that his fee shall be assured.

It also asks that the midwife (as well as the medical practitioner) shall have some representation on the Health Committees that have power to act in regard to medical benefits under this Bill.

It is also important that midwives should be represented upon the Advisory Committee to be appointed by the Insurance Commissioners under Clause 42, who will be charged with the duty "of giving the Insurance Commissioners advice and assistance in connection with the making and altering of regulations under this part of this Act, consisting of representatives of associations of employers and approved societies, and of such other persons as the Commissioners may appoint." Indeed, there seems no reason why one of the Insurance Commissioners to be appointed by the Treasury should not be a certified midwife.

We commend these amendments to the attention of certified midwives. All midwives should take active steps to bring to the notice of Members of Parliament the points on which they consider the Bill needs alteration in their interest. The time in which to do so is short, and the position therefore urgent.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)