

CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

PENAL CASES.

FRIDAY, JUNE 16TH.

On Friday, June 16th, two cases were heard and considered with the following results:—

Struck off the Roll.—Harriet C. Clarke (No. 5592).

Judgment Suspended.—Elizabeth Seed (No. 30835).

The charges against Midwife Clarke included those of not explaining in the case of serious rupture of the perinæum and the subsequent serious illness of the patient that medical assistance must be sought.

The midwife appeared in person to answer the charges. The Inspector of Midwives and the Acting M.O.H. were also present.

The midwife, who appeared somewhat confused in her statements, denied the accusation that the patient had asked for a doctor, but on the contrary, said that she had advised one being sent for, but the woman said she had no money.

A declaration was read from Dr. Ross, who stated that when he saw the patient on the eighth day she was suffering from a perineal wound inches long, which was gangrenous, the temperature being 104 deg.

Judgment was given as above.

Midwife Seed was defended by her solicitor, and brought three witnesses from Lancashire.

The Inspector and Acting M.O.H. were also present. The hearing occupied three hours.

The charges were negligence in respect of six different patients, three of which could not be supported.

The charges that were proceeded with were, in each instance, of neglect to explain that the attendance of a medical man was necessary in cases of serious rupture of the perinæum. The point was that the Inspector having had information to the effect that there were many ruptured perinæums in Midwife Seed's practice, had herself inspected some of the patients, in one case sixteen months after the confinement, and one on the day of delivery. In three cases she found laceration and in none, she alleged, was medical aid sought.

In the case she inspected on the day of delivery she herself communicated with the doctor.

The midwife's defence was that she did not consider the tears anything but slight, and in one case was not aware that a tear existed. She further said that she had suggested a doctor for Mrs. Holehouse.

Mrs. Holehouse, who was present, and stated she was a mill hand, supported this statement in a broad Lancashire accent.

The midwife said that if the patient objected to paying, she herself could not afford to do so.

It would obviously be a better course for the legal representative of a midwife not to attempt to discuss the seriousness of a condition such as a perineal tear with a Medical Board such as the Central Midwives Board, as not only is time wasted, but it is also somewhat absurd.

THE REVISED RULES.

An Order in Council published in the *London Gazette* of June 27th approves for a period of five years from July 1st the Revised General Rules submitted by the Central Midwives Board in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of the Midwives Act, 1902.

THE HIGHER TRAINING OF MIDWIVES.

The annual meeting of the Council for the Promotion of the Higher Training of Midwives was held at the Mansion House on June 27th, the Lord Mayor presiding.

The speakers included Lord Balfour of Burleigh, P.C., K.T., Lady Betty Balfour, Sir Dyce Duckworth, M.D., and Miss Barbara Tchaykovsky.

The Lord Mayor and Lord Balfour both laid stress on the necessity of preserving infant life, especially at this time when the war was taking such a heavy toll of the population.

Lord Balfour emphasised the necessity of efficient training of the midwife. Amateurs, he said, were of no use; education was of no value without the necessary technical knowledge.

Lady Betty Balfour said that the nation ought not to be content till skilled aid and treatment were within the reach of every mother. It was stated that the site for a new maternity home at Woolwich had been secured, but the necessary funds were not available. The population of Woolwich had enormously increased owing to the influx of munition workers. A collection was taken in support of this object.

SCOTTISH MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION.

It was decided at a meeting held in Edinburgh last week, at which Dr. Laura Stewart Sandeman presided, to form a Scottish Midwives Association, and steps were taken to make the initial arrangements on a resolution moved by Lady Balfour of Burleigh, and seconded by Miss Cairns, Glasgow. Miss Lucy Robinson, Vice-Chairman of the Association for Promoting the Training and Supply of Midwives, London, addressed the meeting, which was attended by midwives from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, and elsewhere, and urged the advantages of union and co-operation.

IRISH MIDWIVES' BILL.

The President and Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland have unanimously adopted a resolution urging on the Government the pressing necessity which exists for passing a Midwives Bill for Ireland, and have empowered their Parliamentary Committee to take such steps as may be necessary to promote the desired legislation which is urged on the ground that it is necessary to protect lying-in women, control infant mortality, and enable Irish trained midwives to take their proper place in the ranks of the Registered midwives of the United Kingdom.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)