

RECIPROCAL TREATMENT OF MIDWIVES CERTIFIED  
IN OTHER PARTS OF HIS MAJESTY'S DOMINIONS.

On the motion that Clause 10, dealing with the reciprocal treatment of midwives, should stand part of the Bill, Sir Archibald Williamson enquired why, seeing it was intended to allow women trained in Canada to practise in this country, the same privilege was not to be extended to women trained in the United States. He asserted that nurses in the United States got an excellent training as midwives, and there seemed to be no reason for admitting nurses from Canada to practice here while refusing those from the United States the same privilege, in the event of the privilege being reciprocal.

Mr. Hayes Fisher replied: "This opens a very wide question. The Clause provides that a midwife who produces satisfactory evidence of having been trained as a midwife, and being certified in any other part of His Majesty's Dominions shall be allowed to practise as a midwife in another part of His Majesty's Dominions. My hon. Friend wants to extend that to certificated midwives whose training may have been quite as excellent in the United States. I do not know whether it would be possible to entertain a proposal for reciprocity as between this country and the United States, unless we also have one for reciprocity between this country and France or some other country; I have never seen legislation founded on those lines. It opens up indeed a wide international question. I should advise this House not to make precedent, but to follow precedent, and to content itself with extending to midwives properly trained in one part of His Majesty's Dominions the right to practise in another part of His Majesty's Dominions." This was agreed.

Sir Archibald Williamson showed an extraordinary ignorance of midwifery conditions in the United States, and had the House supported his proposition he would have led them into an *impasse*, as the midwives practising in the United States are mainly foreigners practising among the foreign population, the care of maternity cases being in the hands of trained nurses acting under the direction of medical practitioners, including a large number of medical women. Training schools for midwives have never been organised in the United States, and the class for which Sir Archibald Williamson desired to legislate is practically non-existent! He further apparently overlooked the fact that Canada owes allegiance to the British flag, whereas it is a matter of history that the United States of America prefers to frame its own legislation under the Stars and Stripes.

THE MIDWIVES BILL IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

On Tuesday last the Order of the Day in the House of Lords was the second reading of the Midwives Bill, which was moved by Viscount Peel, who said:—"The Bill was introduced in another place in the same form as that in which it left the House, and the united intelligence of another place was unable to make any improve-

ment in the handiwork of your Lordships. The only change they did effect was to insert 'January 1st' in the blank space which your Lordships left open for the date."

The Bill was read a second time and committed to a Committee of the whole House.

NATIONAL MATERNITY HOSPITAL,  
DUBLIN.

At the annual meeting of the National Maternity Hospital, Dublin, the Lord Mayor, who presided, said that the Government which could afford to spend millions of pounds daily for war purposes should help to save life by supporting a deserving institution like the National Maternity Hospital. He announced a subscription of £500 from Archbishop Walsh.

ABORTION IN LORRAINE IN THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Dr. A. Satre, of Grenoble (says the *British Medical Journal*), has found a collection of old decrees in an ancient manor house of Lorraine where he was quartered (*Paris méd.*, September 11th, 1918). Among them is an ordinance against concealment of pregnancy and delivery by unmarried women or widows by Leopold "by the Grace of God Duke of Lorraine and Bar, King of Jerusalem, Marches, Duke of Calabria, Guedres, Montferat, Charleville," &c., with a string of other titles recalling those of the Earl of Shrewsbury in "Henry VI." After calling attention to the prevalence of abortion and infanticide in the Duchy he enunciates the principle that, although a child born out of wedlock is the fruit of incontinence, it is nevertheless a citizen of the commonwealth and as such it is the interest of the State to afford it protection against violence by parricidal (*sic*) hands. Women when brought before the magistrate plead that the child was stillborn, and the law provided no definite penalty for the offence; it was therefore deemed expedient to lay down an inviolable rule for the future. Wherefore, says the Duke, "on the advice of our Council and of our sure knowledge, plenary power and sovereign authority we declare, ordain," and so forth, that a woman who has been seduced and become pregnant shall report her condition to the official authorities, a record of which statement shall be signed by her if she can write, or if not by the judge or his clerk. This must contain the name of the father and an undertaking to take care of the child. The mother must be attended by a midwife, and while she is in the throes of labour the chief officer of justice shall be present and press for a declaration on oath of the name of the father. If women are delivered without assistance, and the child is born dead or dies immediately after birth, it shall be presumed to have been murdered by suffocation or otherwise, and they are punished with death. Women convicted of having attempted abortion by means of drinks or drugs shall be liable to such penalties as the judge may think fitting; if abortion has actually been induced, this may be death. Exposure of the child on the highway, at a church door, or elsewhere in such manner as to endanger its life, either by weather or the voracity of animals, is punishable by flogging at cross roads and branding on the shoulder with a hot iron by the public executioner. Accessories are liable to a similar penalty. If an exposed child dies by accident or want of food the mother or other persons convicted of having exposed it shall be punished by death.

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