

notifications since 1940, and represents an increase of 305 on the total for 1946, and maintains the steady increase recorded since 1942, when the figure was 15,615.

Some 12,500 untrained women were originally admitted to the Roll under section 2 of the Midwives Act, 1902, by virtue of having been in *bona fide* practice as midwives for at least a year before the passing of the Act. The records of midwives practising in 1947 show that for the first time since 1902 there were no longer any of the midwives who were admitted under this section of the Act practising during the year.

*Training of Pupil-Midwives.*—The number of pupil-midwives entering first period training institutions during the year ended March 31st, 1948, showed a slight decrease on the previous year's figures, but the number entering second period training institutions has maintained a steady increase.

Of the 4,511 pupil-midwives entering first period training schools in 1947-48, 4,239 (or 94 per cent.) did so under the reduced period of six months' training.

Wastage during training has averaged 10.4 per cent. of registrations.

The further increase in the number of pupil-midwives coming forward for second period training has meant that some pupils are experiencing difficulty in obtaining immediate vacancies for this part of their training. Many training schools still send in a monthly forecast of their vacancies, and this information is made available to pupils who apply to the Board, as well as to the Ministry of Labour and National Service.

Of the total of 5,062 entrants for the First Examinations during the year under review, all but 166, and of the 2,913 entrants for the Second Examinations, all but 150 were State Registered Nurses. The corresponding figures for last year were 211 and 221 respectively.

The post-war tendency for an increase in the number of entrants to this examination, largely resulting, no doubt, from the return of many women from war- to peace-time occupations, has therefore been maintained. It is clear, too, that another reason for this tendency is to be found in the cancellation in June, 1946, of the Nurses and Midwives (Registration for Employment) Order, 1943, which imposed upon midwives the obligation to give a year's service after qualification.

The Second Examinations provide even more striking figures than the First Examinations. The number of entries shows an increase of 35.2 per cent. over the previous year, and the number of passes, again easily a record, an increase of 36.3 per cent.

*Midwife Teachers Diploma.*—Non-residential courses of instruction were conducted in Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and London, and in January, 1948, a full-time residential course was commenced by the Royal College of Midwives in London. At the examinations conducted during the year there were 70 entrants to Part I, 41 candidates being successful; Part II of the examination was held in July for 11 candidates, of whom eight were successful. Another Part II examination was held in November, when there were 42 entries of whom 25 were successful.

For the first post-war residential course organised by the Royal College of Midwives, which commenced in January, 1948, 15 Government scholarships were given. This official recognition, both of the importance of the training for this diploma, and of the grave national shortage of properly trained midwife-teachers, is a sign of growing awareness that it is highly unsatisfactory for a considerable proportion of training schools to be without a properly trained approved teacher in charge of the theoretical instruction of pupil-midwives.

Despite the full-time courses being organised it will probably take several years at the present rate of progress to satisfy the demand from training schools.

*Training Midwives in the Administration of Analgesia.*—During the past year public attention has been focused on the relief of pain in childbirth and the Board has continued to press on energetically with the qualification of midwives in the administration of gas and air analgesia. Up to March 31st, 1948, 6,137 midwives had received the Board's certificate of proficiency. This is in addition to some 4,622 midwives who possessed a certificate of proficiency issued by a training institution prior to January 1st, 1946, when the Board took over certification of midwives in analgesia. In addition, 103 midwives now practising in England and Wales hold a certificate issued by another Board.

During the year the Board decided to incorporate training in analgesia in the ordinary syllabus of training for a pupil-midwife, and it now requires proof that a pupil-midwife has satisfactorily completed the course of instruction and administered analgesia to at least fifteen cases in labour before her admission to the Board's Second Examination.

The Board received an application for approval of the Talley Gas-Air Apparatus for use by midwives on their own responsibility, and in accordance with its usual policy the apparatus was submitted to a consultant chemist for test. The conditions which require to be fulfilled under this test are those which were recommended by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and which have been adopted by the Board. The consultant chemist reported that the machine satisfied the test and the apparatus was added to the list, which now comprises:—

Minnitt Gas-Air Analgesia Apparatus.  
Walton-Minnitt Gas-Air Apparatus.  
Amwell Gas-Air Analgesia Apparatus.  
Jecta Gas-Air Apparatus.  
Talley Gas-Air Apparatus.

The Board has been unable to proceed to authorise midwives to use Trilene as an analgesic on their own responsibility.

*Midwifery Working Party.*—Early in 1947 a Working Party was set up by the Minister of Health in agreement with the Minister of Labour and the Secretary of State for Scotland to inquire into the recruitment and training of midwives and any other matters which had a bearing upon the prevailing shortage of practising midwives. As soon as it was notified of the proposed inquiry the Board informed the Ministry of Health that it welcomed such an inquiry and would be pleased to assist with information or in any other way thought desirable. An informal discussion has taken place between the Working Party and representatives of the Board; in addition the Board's officers have from time to time been called upon to provide information to assist the Working Party in its investigations, and the Board's records have been placed at its entire disposal.

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