

# The Midwife.

## Central Midwives Board.

### Report on the Work of the Board for the Year ended March 31st, 1952

MISS E. J. MERRY, S.R.N., was appointed to the Board in place of Lady Richmond, who had been the representative of the Queen's Institute of District Nursing since April, 1925. At the April, 1951, meeting the Board placed on record their deep appreciation of Lady Richmond's services during her 26 year's membership.

*Re-constitution of the Board.* Section 1 (1) of the Midwives (Amendment) Act, 1950 (now Section 1 (3) of the Midwives Act, 1951) gave the Minister of Health power to vary the Board's constitution by Order. In the exercise of this power the Midwives (Constitution of Central Midwives Board) Order, 1952, was made on March 14th, 1952, prescribing a new constitution, which came into effect on April 1st, 1952.

The new constitution provides for sixteen members' instead of fourteen, and for their term of office to be three years instead of one. The Society of Apothecaries and the Queen's Institute of District Nursing will no longer appoint members; the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists becomes an appointing body for the first time. A history of the Board's constitution and details of the new members will appear in the next report.

*Midwives Roll.* On March 31st, 1952, the total number of midwives on the Roll was 54,840 compared with 52,013 in the preceding year.

In December, 1951, 1,650 circular letters were sent to midwives under the clearance procedure authorised by Section 3 (2) of the Midwives Act, 1951. Up to March 31st, 1951, the names of 123 have been removed from the Roll as a result. This number consists of 43 cases in which the death of the midwife was notified, and 80 removals in consequence of voluntary retirement.

*Midwives notifying their intention to practise.* Section 17 (1) (e) of the Midwives Act, 1951, requires every local supervising authority to supply the Board in February of each year with the names and addresses of all midwives who, during the twelve months ending with January 31st in that year, have notified their intention to practise within their area. During the twelve months ending January 31st, 1952, 17,512 midwives notified their intention to practise. This figure is less by 1,288 than the previous year's which, however, covered a thirteen-month period.

An analysis of the returns shows that, of the 17,512 women who notified intention to practise, 4,706, or 26.9 per cent. of those actually practising midwifery, were not state-registered nurses. 5,341, or 30.5 per cent. of the total, were known to be married.

*Midwives who during 1951/52 notified intention to act as maternity nurses only.* According to returns submitted to the Board by local supervising authorities, the number of women who notified their intention to act as maternity nurses only was 750. This figure is less by 74 than that of last year, which, however, as for midwives notifying their intention to practise as midwives, covered a thirteen-month period.

*Defence Regulation 33.* Defence Regulation 33, made under the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act, 1939, empowered a local supervising authority to make orders authorising women who surrendered their certificates under Section 5 (1) of the Midwives Act, 1936, to act as midwives, provided that there was a shortage in the area of that authority. It has been the practice to extend the operation of this regulation from year to year.

As was stated in the last report, orders have been made in respect of more than 350 former midwives under the regulation, although the number of those who gave notice of

intention to practise during 1951/52 was only 38. Section 3 (4) of the Midwives Act, 1951, prohibits the restoration of the names of these women to the Roll, and their continuance in practice depends therefore upon the renewal of the emergency legislation.

*Training of Pupil-midwives.* The number of pupil-midwives entering first period training institutions during the year ended March 31st, 1952, showed an increase of 290 on the previous year's figures, while the number of pupils entering second period institutions decreased by 130.

Of the 4,531 pupil-midwives entering first period training schools in 1951/52, 4,253 (or 93.9 per cent.) did so under the reduced period of training allowed to state-registered nurses and registered sick children's nurses.

Wastage during training, which is confined almost entirely to the first period, averaged 11.1 per cent. of registrations.

*Approval of First and Second Period Schools.* Although difficulties of recruitment were less marked in the Metropolitan area and the South of England than elsewhere in the country, the number of approved places in first period schools throughout the country as a whole continued to exceed the number of pupils coming forward. The Board have, therefore, maintained their policy of not approving any new first period schools, nor any increase in the number of approved places at existing first period schools.

Details of second period institutions approved during the year are as follows:—

Amersham General Hospital; Burton-on-Trent General Infirmary; Kettering, St. Mary's Hospital; and Workington Infirmary.

In addition approval was given to the transfer of the intern part of the second period of training from Dellwood Maternity Home, Reading, to Battle Hospital, Reading.

*Experimental Training Schemes.* The last report explained the Board's purpose in inaugurating experimental training schemes at selected centres. Experimental schemes were continued at the following schools:—

Birmingham, Marston Green Maternity Hospital; Central Middlesex Hospital; Salvation Army Mothers' Hospital; Southampton Borough General Hospital; and Rochdale, Birch Hill Hospital.

*Examinations for Pupil-midwives.* Of the total 4,713 entrants for the First Examination during the year under review, all but 255, and of the 3,010 entrants for the Second Examination, all but 264 were nurses on the general or sick children's part of the register of the General Nursing Council. The corresponding figures for nurses entering for the examinations last year were 335 and 237 respectively.

*Midwife Teachers Diploma Examination.* Non-residential courses of instruction were conducted in London, Birmingham and Liverpool. During the year the second and third residential courses were held at the Midwife Teachers Training College, High Coombe, Kingston Hill, Surrey.

Part I of the Midwife Teachers Diploma Examination was held in April-May and October-November, 1951, and of 154 entries, 58 candidates were successful.

Part II was held in May and December, 1951, and of 128 entries, 64 candidates were successful.

*Midwife Teachers Training College, Kingston Hill.* The Board have continued to be represented on the Council of the Midwife Teachers Training College and to provide secretarial assistance for it. Of the 32 candidates from the second and third courses who entered for Part I of the examination during the year, 19 were successful, and of the 22 candidates who entered for Part II, 16 were successful.

*Midwives Act, 1951.* On September 1st, 1951, the Midwives Act, 1951, came into force. It consolidated the Midwives Acts of 1902, 1918, 1926 and 1936, and the Midwives (Amendment) Act of 1950. For the first time, therefore, since 1918

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