

# The Midwife.

## Central Midwives Board.

### Report on the Work of the Board for the Year ended March 31st, 1954.

DURING THE YEAR UNDER review, the Board were constantly faced with problems arising from the increase in the proportion of institutional confinements as compared with domiciliary confinements. In considering the future training of midwives, both the content of that training and the number of midwives to be trained will depend upon the future shape of the Maternity Service.

After taking into consideration statistical estimates of the future trend of population, and particularly the increase in women in the age group 18-30, which will take place about 1961, the Board concluded that it was of prime importance that a well organised domiciliary service should be maintained even though it might appear to be under-employed in the next year or two. The Board have sought to impress this view on other authorities concerned with the Maternity Service.

**Board Meetings.** The Board have held 12 meetings during the year of which two were special meetings for dealing with penal cases under Section 3 of the Midwives Act, 1951, and Section D of the Rules.

**Committee Meetings** There have been 24 meetings of the various committees of the Board and, in addition, there have been 11 meetings of the Sub-committee which deals in the first instance with matters relating to training and examinations. The Rules Sub-Committee has also held two meetings during the year.

**Annual Meeting and Election of Chairman and Vice-chairman.** At the Annual Meeting of the Board held on April 9th, 1953, Mr. Arnold Walker was re-elected chairman, and Professor A. A. Moncrieff was re-elected vice-chairman, for the ensuing year.

**Midwives Roll.** On March 31st, 1954, the total number of midwives on the Roll was 56,807, showing an increase of 129 on the preceding year, when the total was 56,678.

In November, 1953, 3,030 circular letters were sent to midwives under the procedure authorised by Section 3 (2) of the Midwives Act, 1951. By the end of March, 1954, the names of 160 had been removed from the Roll as a result. Of these, notification of the death of the midwife was received in 39 cases, and 121 names removed in consequence of voluntary retirement. The names of 2,783 women from whom no reply was received to letters sent out under this procedure in December, 1952, were also removed during the year, after the statutory period of six months had elapsed since the despatch of the letters.

**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 midwives who, during the 12 months ending January 31st in that year, have notified their intention to practise within their area. During the 12 months ended January 31st, 1954, 17,513 midwives notified their intention to practise. This figure shows an increase of 42 on the figure for the previous year. Of those in practice in 1953/54, 264 were supervisors and assistant supervisors of midwives.

An analysis of the returns shows that 4,155, or 23.7 per cent., of the 17,513 midwives who notified intention to practise were not general or sick children's nurses. 5,206, or 29.7 per cent. of the total, were known to be married.

**Midwives who during 1953/54 notified intention to act as maternity nurses only.** From the returns submitted to the Board by local supervising authorities, it was found that 585 midwives notified their intention to act as maternity nurses

only. This figure is less by 104 than that of last year.

**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 had 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.

Section 6 of the Emergency Powers (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1953, revoked the powers of local supervising authorities to make any new orders, but provided that any order in force at July 31st, 1953, should remain effective without limit of time unless revoked by the authority who made it.

Since 1939, orders have been made in respect of more than 350 midwives under the regulation. The number of those who gave notice of intention to practise during 1953/54 has fallen to 20, which is 11 less than in the previous year.

**Penal Cases.** Two penal cases were dealt with by the Board at Special Meetings held under the provisions of Section D of the Rules. The name of one midwife, who had been convicted of illegal abortion, was removed from the Roll of Midwives, her certificate was cancelled and she was prohibited from attending women in childbirth in any other capacity.

In the second case, the midwife, who had been convicted of larceny, was censured.

**Training of Pupil-midwives** The number of pupil-midwives entering first period training institutions during the year ended March 31st, 1954, showed an increase of 146 on the previous year's figures, while the number of pupils entering second period institutions showed a decrease of 14. Figures of the quarterly intake into training schools are given in Table IV, together with corresponding figures for 1952/53.

Of the 4,637 pupil-midwives entering first period training schools in 1953/54, 4,420 (or 95.3 per cent.) did so for the reduced period of training allowed to general or sick children's nurses.

Wastage during training, which is confined almost entirely to the first period, averaged 5.5 per cent. of registrations.

**Approval of First and Second Period Schools.** The Board have continued their policy of not allowing any increase in first period training facilities, in view of the fact that the number of approved places in first period schools continued to exceed the supply of pupils.

The following second period institutions closed down during the year:—

Blackburn, Springfield Maternity Hospital  
Maternity Nursing Association.

Consequent upon the closing of the Maternity Nursing Association, the following institutions, which were approved in conjunction with the Maternity Nursing Association, were approved independently for second period training:—

North Herts Hospital Maternity Unit  
Welwyn Garden City Maternity Hospital.

**Financial arrangements for Second Period Training.** In their previous annual reports the Board have drawn attention to the difficulties arising from the lack of agreement as to the basis for the apportionment of the costs of second period training between the hospital authorities and the local health authorities, when the training takes place partly in the hospital and partly on the district. This has in a few cases caused second period schools to close and in other cases deterred local authorities from taking part in proposed new second period training schemes. The Board hope that it will prove possible in the not too distant future for the Ministry and Local Authority Associations directly concerned, who

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