

we are able to report a part in the movement which resulted in placing a trained nurse in charge of our Army nursing corps.

As a federation we are endeavouring to encourage in every way an international movement among nurses.

Our first International Congress was held last summer at Buffalo, and was attended by delegates from England and her colonies, including Australia. There was a daily attendance of about 500 nurses. Many valuable and interesting papers were read, and the enthusiasm of those present and the whole character of the proceedings made the meeting an event of moment in the history of nursing. In view of the importance of our work to the public welfare, the methods by which our workers are trained, our aims, purposes, ideals, and needs are also matters of importance and justify us in claiming the interest and support, so far as is practicable, of this great body with whom we are now united.

### The Midwives' Bill in the Lords.

On Saturday, July 5th, the House of Lords went into Committee on the Midwives' Bill—when it was passed through Committee and reported, with amendments, to the House.

On Clause 1 (certification),

The Duke of Northumberland moved to strike out Sections 1 and 2 in order to insert words providing (1) that from and after January 1st, 1905, any woman who not certified or otherwise qualified shall take the name of midwife or any name implying that she is certified under the Act shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding £5, and (2) that after January 1st, 1910, "no woman shall habitually and for gain attend women in childbirth unless she be certified under this Act," the fine in case of breach of the law not to exceed £10. It was also provided that the section should not apply to legally qualified medical practitioners or to anyone called in in case of emergency. After considerable discussion the sub-section was carried on a division by sixty-six votes against nineteen.

On Clause 3 ("constitution and duties of the Central Midwives' Board"),

The Duke of Northumberland moved an amendment providing for the representation on the board of one person appointed for a term of three years by the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses.

The amendment was agreed to.

Lord Thring moved to omit the provision that the Privy Council before approving rules framed under the section should submit them to the General Medical Council, and should take into consideration any representation which that council might make with respect thereto. He objected to the mandatory character of the provision. Several other noble lords supported this amendment, and finally it was agreed, upon the proposition of Lord Balfour of Burleigh, that it should be left to the Standing Committee to finally settle the form of the words of this section.

On Clause 5 (Midwives' Roll),

The Duke of Northumberland moved to omit Sub-

sections 1 and 2 and to insert new sub-sections with the object of providing that there shall be a roll of midwives, containing:—“(1) The names of those midwives who have been certified under Clause 2 of this Act; (2) the names of all other midwives who have been certified under this Act.”

The amendment was agreed to.

On Clause 8 (local supervision of midwives),

The Duke of Northumberland moved to amend Sub-section 3 in order to provide that it shall be the duty of the local supervising authority to suspend any midwife from practice, in accordance with the rules under this Act, if such suspension appears necessary, "in order to prevent the spread of infection."

The amendment was agreed to.

On Clause 14 (appeal),

The Duke of Northumberland moved to add the following words:—“Any woman thinking herself aggrieved by any decision of the Midwives' Board removing her name from the roll of midwives, may appeal therefrom to the High Court of Justice within three calendar months after the notification of such decision to her, but no further appeal shall be allowed.”

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was added to the Bill.

The remaining clauses were agreed to, and the Bill was then passed through Committee and reported, with amendments, to the House.

The result of the Lords' action will be:—

1. That after 1905 any woman calling herself a midwife, unless certified or otherwise qualified, will be liable to a fine of £5.

2. That after 1910, "no woman shall habitually and for gain attend women in childbirth unless she be certified under this Act," that is, registered by the Midwives' Board.

3. That two nurses' societies—that is, the Royal British Nurses' Association and the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute—have official representation on the Midwives' Board, whilst the midwives themselves have no professional representation, as the Midwives' Institute must appoint a medical practitioner; so that, although the Bill constitutes midwives independent practitioners, they are governed by medical practitioners and trained nurses—from our point of view a form of legislation which is grossly unfair.

4. That the Privy Council will act independently of the General Medical Council where midwives are concerned.

5. That midwives holding certificates from certain certifying bodies, such as the London Obstetrical Society, will have a statutory right to be placed on the Midwives' Roll in spite of the opposition of the Royal British Nurses' Association.

6. That local supervising authorities, presumably laymen, may suspend any midwife from practice "in order to prevent the spread of infection," without reference to the Central Midwives' Board.

7. That a midwife thinking herself aggrieved by removal from the roll may appeal against the decision of the Midwives' Board to the High Court of Justice.

It remains to be seen how this Bill will work in practice if it becomes law. Personally, we consider the midwives have a very just cause of complaint in that they have absolutely no power over their own professional affairs. We can only repeat that in our opinion such legislation is grossly unfair.

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