

## The Central Midwives' Board.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at the offices of the Board, 6, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, on Thursday, October 27th, at 2.45 p.m. There were present Dr. Champneys in the chair, Miss Jane Wilson, Miss Rosalind Paget, Dr. Ward Cousins, and Mr. Parker Young.

The minutes of the last meeting, which had previously been in the hands of the Board, were confirmed.

The Chairman then said that before proceeding to business he felt sure he would be acting in accordance with the wishes of the Board in proposing that the members express their sympathy with Mrs. Heywood Johnstone in her recent bereavement, and that they should place on record their sense of the services rendered by the late Mr. Heywood Johnstone in the passing of the Midwives' Bill and while serving on the Central Midwives' Board.

Dr. Ward Cousins seconded the proposition. He expressed his appreciation of Mr. Heywood Johnstone both as a gentleman and as a lawyer. The Board had had opportunities of knowing his worth. He was always courteous, had no enemy, and a great many friends.

Dr. Champneys said that in his view the loss to the Board was quite irreparable, and he had told Mrs. Heywood Johnstone so. He should always regret the loss the Board had sustained in Mr. Heywood Johnstone's death as long as he sat upon it.

The President's proposition was then unanimously carried.

The first business before the Board was the consideration of correspondence.

The first letter was from the Association for Promoting and Supply and Training of Midwives, asking for the support of the Board in their efforts, and for further guidance than that contained in the rules of the Central Midwives' Board. It was agreed to write to the Association and inquire on what points it desired information.

The next three letters touched on the personal characters and reputations of the persons concerned, and their consideration was postponed in order that they might be considered *in camera*, the decisions of a Board being subsequently communicated to the Press.

The next letter considered was one from Dr. Handford, County Medical Officer of Notts, notifying the suspension of a certified midwife, and also asking the opinion of the Board as to whether midwives who attend cases only with a doctor are bound to notify the local supervising authority of their intention to practise.

The Secretary, Mr. G. W. Duncan, said that in his opinion, if a woman calls herself a midwife she holds herself out as a practising midwife.

The Chairman disagreed with this view. The Act provided, "Every woman certified under this Act shall, before holding herself out as a practising midwife, or commencing to practise in any area, give notice in writing of her intention so to do to the local supervising authority." A woman who worked only under a doctor could not be regarded as a *practising* midwife. Also, the difficulty would at once arise as to where and whom such a woman was to notify. She might be in London one week, in Yorkshire another, and in Somersetshire still later. He thought

it was clear that the Act only applied to women who intended to *practise* as midwives.

Dr. Ward Cousins agreed. He thought it was desirable that women should be encouraged to register under the Midwives' Board. He personally would prefer to employ a nurse so registered as a guarantee of her knowledge, but a woman who only took cases under a doctor would not be a practising midwife.

Mr. Parker Young thought the Act was clear, "before holding herself out as a *practising* midwife." Miss Paget thought Dr. Handford might be referring to a class of women located in certain areas who called themselves monthly nurses, and professed to work under a doctor, but practically the doctor seldom attended the cases.

On the proposition of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Parker Young, the following resolution was carried:—

"In the opinion of the Board, Section 10 of the Act refers to women practising as midwives and not as monthly nurses.

"Women who are registered as midwives, but not practising as midwives, cannot be compelled to give notice.

"Should such a woman practise as a midwife, she must give notice in accordance with the Act."

A letter from the Secretary of the Newport and Monmouthshire Hospital as to the refusal of the Board to approve the hospital at the present time as an institution for the training of midwives was considered. The Secretary pointed out that if an institution could not obtain recognition until it was in full working order, the first set of pupils must be received in uncertainty as to whether they would be accepted as candidates for examination by the Board. It was pointed out that this difficulty could be got over if one of the staff were recognised as a teacher of midwives.

The next letter before the Board was one from the Clerk to the Chorlton Union Guardians inquiring on what grounds the Board have refused to approve the Withington Infirmary as an institution for the training of midwives. Last year twenty-four pupils had been sent up for the examination of the London Obstetrical Society, and twenty-three had passed.

Miss Wilson, who was present at the meeting of the Board when the application was considered, said that the principal reason for its rejection was that the arithmetic of the applicants was hopelessly at fault. The figures supplied were:—

Number of deliveries per annum	...	121
Pupils trained per annum	...	24
Cases seen per pupil per annum	...	20

As under the regulations of the Board each case can only be counted to the credit of one pupil, it was manifestly impossible that twenty-four pupils could each have attended twenty cases. It was resolved that a copy of the regulations should be sent to the Chorlton Board of Guardians, and that attention should be drawn to the above regulation.

The financial statement was then submitted and adopted. Bills were passed for payment and cheques signed by the Chairman.

After consideration of applications for certificates, the names of 1,238 women were passed under Section 2 of the Act, and ordered for entry on the roll.

The following shows the separate numbers of the various qualifications at present appearing on the roll:—

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