

Central Midwives' Board.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at 6, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, on Thursday, February 23rd. Dr. Champneys presided. There were present Miss Paget, Mrs. Latter, Sir William Sinclair, Mr. Fordham, Mr. Parker Young, and Dr. Cullingworth. The first business was to confirm the minutes of four previous meetings. On the minutes of the meeting held on January 23th, Sir William Sinclair gave notice that he should propose at the next regular meeting of the Board, that the resolution passed on that date, relative to the appointment of a Registered Medical Woman as Inspector under the Board be rescinded.

He also protested that the whole of the minutes of the meeting of February 16th should be expunged. The meeting should never have been held. It had rescinded what had been done at the meeting of the Board the previous week, and was a most flagrant example of the refusal to admit the influence of the country members.

The Chairman explained that the only duty before the Board was the conformation of the minutes, if correct, or their correction, if inaccurate. It was not in order to discuss them.

Sir William Sinclair said he had his remedy through the medium of the Press. He then left the room.

Amongst the letters before the Board was one from the Clerk of the Lindsey County Council, enclosing a copy of a resolution of the Midwives' Act Committee regretting that the stringency of the Board's regulations would involve the retirement from practice on April 1st of a large number of midwives who have hitherto satisfactorily discharged their duties. It was stated that only five out of a possible ninety-four had applied for registration, and that the clerical work required under the Board's regulations was beyond the power of many of these midwives.

Another letter read was from the Hon. Secretary of the Herefordshire County Nursing Association enclosing a copy of a resolution passed by the General County Committee of the Association, protesting against Rule E 15 prohibiting a midwife from undertaking the duty of laying out the dead.

It was decided to reply that the Board had no dispensing power in regard to the rules which had received the sanction of the Privy Council. A letter was also considered from Mary Ann Bradford, a certified midwife asking for directions how to act in case of refusal to attend on the part of a registered medical practitioner sent for under Rule E 17. The applicant understood that the medical practitioners in the district referred to declined to attend under such circumstances unless a fee of from £3 3s. to £5 5s. was paid before the desired visit. This raised the question of the provision for the payment of medical practitioners when necessary, by a public authority, a point on which the Central Midwives' Board has already been in communication with the Privy Council. A letter was also received from the Medical Secretary of the British Medical Association enclosing the copy of an advertisement of a Nursing Institute at Putney, and asking for the opinion of the Board thereon. The Board directed the Secretary to reply that the matter was one with which it was outside the scope of the Board to deal.—The Financial Statement was then received, and £1,500 placed on deposit.

The Secretary reported that 2,400 applications from midwives for certificates had been received in the last four weeks, this was at the rate of 100 on

each week day. The total number enrolled was now 15,490, 8,448 of these having been in *bona-fide* practice in July, 1901.

The report of the Standing Committee was then received, in the course of which it was stated that, in accordance with its powers the Board had decided to cite Hannah E. Clementson, and a midwife whose conduct had been reported by Dr. Walford, Medical Officer of Health for Cardiff, to appear before the Board on March 16th.

The Board also decided to censure a midwife who had operated on a tongue-tied infant, which subsequently died of hæmorrhage.

The Secretary reported that fifteen applications for the post of inspector under the Board had been received. From these five had been selected by a sub-committee appointed to deal with the matter, who would be invited to appear at the Board's meeting on March 16th. Miss Paget then moved:—

"That no Institution with less than seventy-five deliveries annually shall be approved as a training-school."—This was seconded by Mrs. Latter.

Miss Paget explained that this Resolution embodied in regard to general training-schools the standard which it was decided to adopt in relation to Poor Law Institutions. It seemed desirable that the same principles should guide the Board in the approval of all training-schools for midwives.

Probably everyone would agree that unless an institution had sufficient deliveries to train at least three pupils a year, it should not be approved by the Central Midwives' Board as a training-school for midwives. No injury would be done to smaller schools, as in the case of Poor Law Institutions with a smaller number of deliveries the medical officer, who is personally responsible for every case delivered, could sign in regard to the cases attended by a pupil, and in the case of small maternity charities, the head midwife, who, unlike the officials under the Poor Law, would be subject to the rules of the Central Midwives' Board could be approved for signing forms 3 and 4.

The resolution was carried. We are quite of Miss Paget's opinion, and indeed, consider that any institution which does not attain to this very modest standard cannot be regarded as a school at all. As the needs of occasional pupils and small institutions can be met in the manner which Miss Paget describes, we are in favour of a still higher standard as to the number of deliveries required by the Central Midwives' Board before it confers on an institution the dignity of ranking as a training-school.

Future meetings of the Board were arranged for March 2nd, March 16th, and March 23rd. The meeting then terminated.

At an inquest at Chester Workhouse on Saturday on an inmate named Mary Cross, aged sixty-nine, evidence was given by the master of the workhouse that the woman had her shoulder fractured while confined to bed, and that when he questioned her she stated that she had asked Nurse Roberts to turn her over. The nurse (she said) at first refused, but afterwards she got hold of her by the shoulders with both hands and shook her, and struck her on the top of the right shoulder. She then turned her over, and said she would turn her over no more.

The Coroner said there was not sufficient evidence to send the nurse for trial on a charge of manslaughter, and the jury returned an open verdict.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)