

Central Midwives' Board.

THE DISCIPLINARY POWERS OF THE BOARD.

A special meeting under the provisions of the Rules of Procedure on the proposed removal of a name from the Roll, was held at the offices of the Central Midwives' Board, 6, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, on Thursday, January 19th, at 3 p.m. There were present Dr. Champneys, in the chair, Miss Wilson, Miss Paget, Mr. Fordham, Mr. Parker Smith, Dr. Cullingworth, and later Mrs. Latter, who took her seat for the first time.

The business before the meeting was the hearing of charges alleged against Miss Edith Gregory, a certified midwife, No. 1,004 on the Midwives' Roll, of signing false certificates in connection with the training of candidates for the examinations of the London Obstetrical Society. Miss Gregory was present, with her solicitor, Mr. Godwin, of Winchester.

The Secretary, Mr. G. W. Duncan, explained that the Board had met to discharge the statutory duties imposed upon it by section 3, sub-section 5 of the Midwives' Act. The duty of the Board under this sub-section was:—

“To decide upon the removal from the Roll of the name of any midwife for disobeying the rules and regulations from time to time laid down under this Act by the Central Midwives' Board, or for other misconduct, and also to decide upon the restoration to the Roll of the name of any midwife so removed.”

The present proceedings were taken under the clause, “and for other misconduct.”

The case, as stated by Mr. Duncan, was briefly that on January 5th, 1904, Miss Gregory applied to be certified by the Central Midwives' Board, claiming such certification on the ground that she held the certificate of the London Obstetrical Society, on which, within two years from the passing of the Act (*i.e.*, up to March 31st, 1905) a woman can claim to be certified.

The application came before, and was passed by, the Board, and Miss Gregory's name appears on the Roll of Midwives.

On August 6th, 1904, the Board received a letter from the Secretary of the London Obstetrical Society, stating that the Council, having considered certain charges made against Miss Edith Gregory, had judged her “unfit and unworthy” to hold its certificate.

It must be explained that on receiving the certificate of the London Obstetrical Society each successful candidate signs a declaration undertaking to abide by the rules and regulations of the Society, and in the event of her being hereafter convicted of any criminal offence or of being guilty of any act or conduct which, in the opinion of the Council, renders her unfit or unworthy to hold its certificate, the same may be forfeited by a resolution of the Council, in which case she undertakes to return it.

It was on this declaration that the Council of the Obstetrical Society called in Miss Gregory's certificate, and that she complied with the demand.

The correspondence between Miss Gregory and the London Obstetrical Society had been supplied to the Central Midwives' Board by the Secretary of that Society.

It appears that Miss Gregory has a Nursing Home in Winchester, and until recently worked in connection with the Winchester Lying-In Charity, and that

she trained pupils for the Rural Midwives' Association, who were sent up for the examination of the London Obstetrical Society. The Council of this Society, previous to the examination requires to be furnished with a certificate attesting that prior to the date of the certificate the candidate has attended and observed twenty cases of labour, at least five of which she must have personally delivered. It was Miss Gregory's duty to sign these certificates for candidates sent up for examination, and to state that they had truly, and to her satisfaction, attended this number of cases. On information received that this requirement had not been complied with, the Obstetrical Society addressed a letter to the Winchester Lying-in Charity on the subject, and received an answer signed “H. Spencer Browne,” which contained the statement—“Nurse—— will have attended more than twenty cases by the time of the examination.”

On July 6th, 1904, the Society communicated with Miss Gregory stating that the attention of the Council of the Obstetrical Society had been drawn to certificates signed by her, in which seven candidates for its examination were described as having truly, and to her satisfaction, attended and observed at least twenty cases of labour, whereas it had received information that these certificates were untrue, and that in the case of four candidates the number of cases attended were respectively nine, sixteen, thirteen, and seven. If this were accurate, then insufficiently-trained persons had been admitted to the examination of the Society and received its certificate. That the Council of the Society proposed to consider the circumstances at its next meeting, with a view to the forfeiture of Miss Gregory's certificate if the facts were proved. She was further invited to furnish any explanation she thought fit, or to attend the meeting of the Council on August 6th. Miss Gregory did not accept the invitation to attend in person, but sent a written explanation, which was that in one case the candidate had been a monthly nurse at Plaistow, and fulfilled the conditions as she had there watched the course of twenty labours; in three other instances the Register of cases showed that by July 29th the pupils had seen more than the requisite number of cases, two more (who failed in their examination) had not fulfilled the conditions, while the fee of the remaining candidate was returned by the Society, and she was not admitted to the examination. Dr. Spencer Browne was willing to answer any questions which might be addressed to him on the subject.

After investigation of the matter, Miss Gregory was, by a resolution of the Council of the London Obstetrical Society, desired to return her certificate. She protested against its forfeiture, but complied with the demand.

On information received from the London Obstetrical Society, the Central Midwives' Board subsequently communicated with Miss Gregory, stating that the Board proposed to inquire into the charge against her of having signed false certificates, and, pending the inquiry, requested her to forward her certificate, and giving her the opportunity of answering the charges against her in writing and of appearing before the Board either personally or through her solicitor.

Mr. Duncan proposed that three of the cases in which it was alleged a false certificate had been given should be discharged from consideration, as he thought the other cases were sufficient for the purposes of the Board, and if the three referred to were considered it

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