

The Central Midwives' Board.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at the Board Room, 6, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, on Thursday, October 26th. There were present Dr. Champneys in the chair, Miss Wilson, Miss Paget, Mrs. Latter, Sir William Sinclair, Dr. Dakin, and Mr. Parker Young.

Amongst the correspondence considered was a letter, which caused considerable discussion, from Dr. James Wallace, asking the Board what significance is to be attached to the words "under my supervision" in Form III. in the Schedules to the Rules (certificate of attendance on cases).

Sir William Sinclair considered that the term implied that the medical practitioner who gave the certificate of attendance on the cases was present while the midwife performed the duties required of her under the Rules. It implied further, that he gave her instruction as to the method of carrying out the duties referred to.

Miss Paget thought that if a pupil midwife who had attended ten or twelve cases under instruction, were under constant supervision during the remainder of the twenty cases, she would not acquire the confidence necessary when she undertook work on her own responsibility in a country district.

Dr. Dakin thought it was quite clear that any person signing the certificate was the actual responsible person in the case; there were doctors and doctors, and he thought this responsibility should be made plain. If every pupil attended twenty cases under close supervision, the result would be a body of well-trained midwives.

Miss Paget deprecated defining too minutely the rules of the Board. Conscientious medical practitioners would carry them out, and the unconscientious ones—if there were any such gentlemen—would not be affected by them.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Parker Young's proposition was carried, "that Dr. Wallace be referred to Rule C I. (1) of the Central Midwives' Board, and told that the responsibility of complying with the rule rests on the person signing the certificate."

We agree with Sir William Sinclair, who contended that throughout the course of the twenty cases which a midwife is required by the Board to attend, she should be closely supervised. The argument brought forward by one member, that students do not have this close supervision, and there should not be a higher standard for midwives than for students, does not hold good. Before obtaining their midwifery instruction, students have a thorough education in anatomy, and thus possess knowledge of which the pupil midwife is quite ignorant. Also if, as Sir William Sinclair alleges, the methods of midwifery education in London in relation to medical students are about as unsatisfactory as possible, there seems no reason for the Central Midwives' Board to follow on the same lines.

The next business was the consideration of the Financial Statement, from which it appeared that the Board has £6,700 on deposit at the bank. Mr. Parker Young suggested that a better interest might be obtained for the money, say for £5,000, if it were invested in trust securities, and gave notice that he would move a resolution to this effect at the next meeting.

The Secretary reported that the following additional

examiners had been appointed by the sub-committee entrusted with this duty:—Dr. Gow, Dr. Rivers-Pollock, Dr. Drummond Robinson, and Dr. Hamilton Bell.

On the motion of Dr. Dakin, seconded by Mr. Parker Young, it was proposed that the examinations of the Central Midwives' Board in London should be held in February, April, June, August, October and December.

Sir William Sinclair proposed as an amendment that the examination should be held three times a year. There was no seconder, and Dr. Dakin's proposition was carried. Sir William Sinclair desired that his dissent should be recorded on the minutes.

Mr. Parker Young, seconded by Miss Wilson, proposed that, for the present, the examinations of the Board should be held in the provinces every four months. Sir William Sinclair proposed as an amendment that the arrangements for the examinations in the provinces should be the same as in London. This was seconded by Mrs. Latter. In the course of a somewhat protracted and heated debate, the proposer said he thought it unjust and tyrannical to the provinces to hold the examinations oftener in London than in the provincial centres. The Chairman endeavoured to pour oil on the troubled waters by saying he was sure the Board wished to afford the provinces every facility if the need were proved. He pointed out, however, that the candidates examined in all the provincial centres, when combined, at the last examination were only about one-third of those who presented themselves in London. The amendment fell through, and Mr. Parker Young's resolution was carried, Sir William Sinclair recording his protest. If the Board had stated that it is prepared to authorise an examination in any provincial centre every two months, provided that a sufficient number of candidates intimate their intention of presenting themselves for such examination, this must surely have appeased the green-eyed monster.

The Report of the Standing Committee was then received. It was recommended that the General Secretary of the Medical Defence Union, who had written asking the opinion of the Board as to the right of a certified midwife to affix the letters C.M.B. to her name, should be informed that the Board does not authorise the affixing of any letters to the name of a midwife.

The Committee recommended that two midwives, against whom *prima facie* cases of negligence, or negligence and misconduct were reported, should be cited, that an explanation should be asked from another, while the consideration of a fourth case was postponed for further information. Sir William Sinclair protested in regard to one case, inasmuch as he considered that the coroner was ill-employed to censure the midwife when he was very courteous to the doctor also concerned.

Several training-schools were recommended for approval, subject to their complying with certain conditions.

The following medical practitioners were recommended for appointment by the Board as teachers under Rule C I. (3):—

Mr. Thomas Robinson, M.R.C.S., and Mr. George Aylwin Clarkson, F.R.C.S. Others were also approved, subject to their complying with certain conditions.

The following midwives were approved for the purpose of signing Forms III. and IV. under Rule

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