

### The Central Midwives' 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 Board Room, 6, Suffolk Street, S. W., on Tuesday, July 25th, at 2.30.

Present: Dr. Champneys in the chair, Miss Wilson, Miss Paget, Mrs. Latter, Dr. Dakin, and Mr. Parker Young.

The first case heard was that of Midwife No. 11,905, a certified midwife, who was charged with:—

- (a) Having been guilty of negligence and misconduct in attending confinements without taking the appliances and antiseptics required by Rule E 2.
- (b) Not having kept a Register of cases as required by Rule E 19 (a).
- (c) Not having kept herself scrupulously clean (surgically), as required by Rule E 1.

Dr. Watts, the Medical Officer of Health, was present to give evidence in support of these charges. He explained that some twelve days before the confinement, he had explained the rules to the midwife, and instructed her as to what antiseptics she should procure; he also told her that she must get the necessary appliances as soon as possible. The patient had developed puerperal fever and died, and events had proved that the midwife had conducted the confinement without the aid of antiseptics.

In answer to cross questions, the midwife excused herself for having neglected to procure the antiseptics by saying that she had been daily expecting to be called to the patient, and was afraid to leave the village for so long a time as it would require to reach the nearest store chemist, who lived four miles away. She further stated that she did not understand the rules, and felt that she was therefore not competent to carry them out; she was quite uneducated, and neither understood the use of the clinical thermometer nor the counting of the pulse, but so far as she understood cleanliness she had always been scrupulously clean in her work.

After a short deliberation, the Chairman informed the midwife that the Board had come to the conclusion that through no fault of her own she was not competent to carry out the rules of the Act; they therefore cancelled her certificate, thinking it most wise of her to have herself suggested that this course should be taken.

The next charge was against Midwife No. 1,465, a certified midwife. Most of the charges against her were similar to those in the last case, with the addition that on the occurrence of a shivering fit in the patient she did not, at once advise that a registered medical practitioner be sent for—Rule E 17 (c); nor did she notify the local supervising authority of the necessity of sending for help—Rule E 19 (b).

The midwife was present, and her case was conducted by Mr. Hodges, a solicitor from Croydon.

A relative of the patient (who had contracted puerperal fever) gave evidence against the midwife. For the defence, Mr. Hodges, who did everything in his power to save the time of the Board, drew attention to the fact that his client had worked for twenty-six years, and this was the first complaint; that she had been called to the case in a great hurry, being met in the street, and not having had time to go home for her appliances; that she could neither read nor write, and therefore had to depend on other people for the solution of the rules. The doctor, who was afterwards called in to the patient, also said that,

although a medical man should undoubtedly have been sent for sooner, he thought the delay might rather be put down to ignorance than to neglect.

After somewhat lengthy deliberation, defendant was recalled, and the Chairman said that the Board had considered her case with exceptional care, and sympathised with her in her difficult position of having to carry out the rules without the help of training or education; at the same time, it was the duty of the Board to protect the poor mothers of England, and for this purpose they must (though with much regret) cancel her certificate; it not being safe that she in such ignorance should continue to practise.

The next charge was one of drunkenness, whilst taking temporary Matron's duty at a large Maternity Hospital, brought against a certified midwife, No. 8,400. The midwife, who did not appear, sent a letter practically admitting her offence and begging for leniency, but it was decided to cancel her certificate. The next charge was against midwife No. 246, that she had been guilty of drunkenness, uncleanness and general neglect of her duties. There was no defence, and it was decided to cancel her certificate.

Charge against midwife No. 6,199, that she neglected to advise that a registered medical practitioner should be sent for to patient seriously ill from the onset of the confinement; the doctor being sent for at the last moment and the patient having died before his arrival, she did not notify the death to the local supervising authority—Rule E 18 (1). This was also undefended. It was resolved by the Board that this midwife should be very severely censured, her name not being removed on this occasion, as she had evidently done everything in her power for the patient, her delay in sending for the doctor being due to her inability through ignorance to grasp the importance of the early symptoms of collapse.

The last case was that of certified midwife No. 3,645. Her patient had contracted puerperal fever, and it was proved that she had neglected all preliminary precautions of cleanliness, that she had neither washed the patient nor changed her linen for three days, and that although the perineum was ruptured she did not advise that a medical practitioner be sent for.

The midwife wrote an explanation but did not appear, and the Board decided to cancel her certificate.

The Board met again on Thursday, 27th inst., for the transaction of routine business.

#### EXAMINATION, JUNE, 1905.

At the recent examination held by the Central Midwives' Board the number of candidates were 307, of whom the following 237 satisfied the Examiners and were recommended for certificates and thus made eligible for registration:—

Martha E. S. Adamson, Alice M. Andrew, Annie Arch, Ethel M. Arr, Mary F. Arthur, Lavinia E. Atthill, Agnes J. Aves, Emily Bain, Louie K. G. Baker, Annie E. Ball, Annie L. Ball, Patience S. Barnard, Alice Batstone, Alice Beaumont, Polly Bell, Charlotte L. Bigg-Wither, Martha M. de Blauwe, Sophia Blundell, Elizabeth Bolton, Sarah A. Boneham, Alice M. Boon, Alice A. Boote, Annie A. Bosworth, Harriet Botting, Alice Bowden, Ruth Bowerman, Frances J. Bowles, Ada A. C. Bray, Ellen Bredenberg, Frances E. Bristow, Bertha Brooke, Lily Brooke, Lilly Budd, Adeline M. Bullows, Ethel Burgess, Lilly Burgoyne, Celia Cameron, Frances E. Campbell, Evelyn M. Cancellor, Ellen F. Capon, Jane S. Carbines, Annie M. Carter, May Carter, Dora C.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)