

The Central Midwives' Board.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held on Thursday in last week at the offices, 6, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall. There were present Dr. Champneys, in the chair, Miss Paget, Miss Wilson, Mrs. Latter, Dr. Dakin, Mr. Ward Cousins and Mr. Parker Young. The Financial Statement for the year ending December 31st shows that the total expenses of the Board for the past year have been £3,934 4s. 4d., printing, which of course includes the cost of publishing the Roll, amounting to £1,442 10s. 5d.

Two examinations, one in June the other in October, were held in 1905. The payments made in respect to these were £750 8s. 9d. The fees received £801 12s. At a first glance it would appear that the examination fees cover expenses. It must, however, be remembered that the only reliable income of the Board is derived from these fees, which, under the Act, are to cover not only the expenses of the examination and certificate, but also the general expenses of the Board. When therefore the Board has expended the capital which it accumulated during the two years, in which a large number of midwives registered, the only means open to it of obtaining a sufficient income will be by coming on the County Councils for the annual deficiencies, amounting presumably to several thousands of pounds.

We note that the Board has realised £739 12s. 2d. by the sale of Rules and Forms, but nothing apparently on the sale of the Roll. Are we to understand that it has no sale?

The lessons of this statement are plain to nurses—namely, that in the case of their registration they must ask for a fee sufficiently large to cover expenses.

The Secretary's Report of the recent examination in London showed that 222 candidates entered for it, of these 7 failed to put in an appearance, thus 215 were examined. Sixty-five of these were candidates who had previously failed, 45 of whom passed. It was decided to hold the next examination in London and the provinces, on June 12th.

The Report of the Standing Committee, the adoption of which was moved by the Chairman, was then considered. Amongst the letters considered was one from Dr. Walford, Medical Officer of Health for Cardiff, asking that Cardiff should be made one of the Provincial Centres for the Board's examination. The Committee recommended that it is not desirable to constitute Cardiff an examination centre at present, that Dr. Walford be asked if candidates not understanding English could write papers in Welsh, if there are facilities for teaching in Welsh, if so where, that Dr. Walford be also asked to furnish the Board with a list of examiners competent to examine in Welsh. Another letter, on which the Committee recommended that no action be taken, was one from a midwife, complaining of the increased fees charged by doctors when called in by a case attended by a midwife. The midwife stated that doctors informed prospective matrons that if attended by certified midwives they would send for a doctor when his fee would be two guineas instead of one. The effect of this, of course, is for the patients to think

that as they may have to pay a fee of two guineas they may as well pay the guinea in the first instance to the doctor, and they consequently employ untrained women to look after them.

Mr. Ward Cousins said that in some well-authenticated cases midwives had been compelled to pay the fees of medical men before they would attend in an emergency. He did not think the profession knew that this was even suggested. He thought there should be an expression of opinion from the Board on the matter of fees, and on the fact that medical men, if not obtaining their fee in any other direction, absolutely demanded it from the midwife.

At Cardiff and Liverpool arrangements for the payment of medical men under such circumstances are made by the Local Supervising Authority. Mr. Ward Cousins thought this should be done in other cases.

The Secretary, Mr. Duncan, explained that wealthy town Corporations were freer to act, but that no County Councils dare pay these fees, as they would be surcharged by the auditor. The Privy Council had said there was no statutory power to do so.

Mr. Parker Young thought there should be an amendment of the Act. Another Government was now in power, and he thought all resolutions passed by the Board as to the payment of medical fees should be sent to it. He proposed the question be referred to the Standing Committee to consider and report as to what amendment of the Act was desirable. This was seconded by Mr. Ward Cousins and carried.

Another letter read was from Miss W. Bell Alison, holder of certificate No. 10,113 (appearing on the Roll as Winifred Bell), asking the Board to amend her certificate.

The Committee recommended that inquiries be made from the Secretary of the London Obstetrical Society as to the original certificate of character sent in with Miss Bell's examination schedule.

Dr. Champneys said that anyone was entitled to have a professional name if she liked. It did not follow that there was anything wrong. What the Board wanted to know was why Miss Bell Alison had entered for the examination of the Obstetrical Society under the name of Bell.

A letter was read from Mr. C. J. Wright, one of the Board's Examiners, as to additional fees for Examiners in certain cases. The Committee recommended: (a) That Mr. Wright be informed that the Board is not prepared to disturb the existing arrangements so soon after inauguration; (b) that the Secretary be instructed to calculate the average duration of the journeys undertaken by the provincial Examiners at each Examination.

The Committee recommended that the Lewisham and Shoreditch Union Infirmaries should be recognised as training schools, and that the following midwives should be approved for the purpose of signing Forms III. and IV.: Mary Ann Ford, Mary Ann Grant, Maud Maria Collings, Daisy Amelia Aldrich.

The Report of the Standing Committee was adopted.

A Sub-Committee consisting of the Chairman, Mr. Parker Young, and Miss Wilson, was appointed with power to act in connection with securing new offices,

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