

The Central Midwives' Board.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at the offices, Caxton House, Westminster, S.W., on Thursday, October 4th, the meeting being the first after the autumn vacation. There were present Dr. Champneys in the chair, Miss Rosalind Paget, Miss Jane Wilson, Mrs. Latter, Mr. Fordham, and Mr. Parker Young.

THE AUGUST EXAMINATION.

The secretary reported that 250 candidates entered for the August Examination, 5 failed to appear, 192 satisfied the examiners, and 53 failed, the percentage of failures being 21.6. The names of the successful candidates were published in this Journal on August 18th.

A MIDWIFE'S APPEAL TO THE HIGH COURTS.

In connection with the appeal of Ita Feldmann against the decision of the Board ordering the removal of her name from the Roll the Secretary reported that the Appeal came before the Vacation Judge who sits to deal with urgent business, who said he would try to form a Court for the hearing of the case. It was ordered to be heard, but, this fell through as Mrs. Feldmann's solicitors had no funds in hand, it would therefore now come on in its regular course, probably some time in November, when if the solicitors were still unable to proceed with the case it would be dropped.

The line of defence adopted by the appellant is that the Board had no power to remove her name from the Roll, as no evidence was offered when her case was heard upon which the Board could act, and that she was removed from the Roll on the report of the L.C.C. inspector. She contends that the Board must have evidence against her before it can legally remove her name and cancel her certificate.

The Secretary pointed out that if the High Court holds that the Board has no business to rely on the reports of inspectors, but must conduct its hearing of disciplinary cases in conformity with the strict rules of evidence, its future proceedings in regard to these cases would require modification. The case being a test one, it was decided to instruct counsel to represent the Board when the case came on for hearing, and on the motion of Mr. Fordham, seconded by Miss Wilson, the Secretary was instructed to take all necessary steps to represent the Board in the proceedings in the High Courts of Justice on the appeal brought by Ita Feldmann against the decision of the Board on July 12th in striking her name off the Roll.

REPORT OF PENAL CASES COMMITTEE.

The Report of the Penal Cases Committee was then considered. On its recommendation it was decided to caution two midwives, one charged with negligence and misconduct, and the other with negligence as to the necessity of strictly observing the rules in future. To call the attention of another, who keeps a Home, and is alleged to be in the habit of placing the children out to nurse 24 hours after birth, that she appears to have neglected her duty under Rule E 11, which provides that a midwife shall be responsible for the cleanliness, comfort and proper dieting of the mother

and child during the lying in period (ten days), and to caution her as to its strict observance in future. To caution two others as to their future conduct: one was summoned for being drunk and incapable, and was discharged on payment of costs; the other was convicted of procuring drink for a drunken person, and of assault, a fine of 2s. 6d. being imposed on each count.

It was also decided, on the recommendation of the Penal Cases Committee, to cite a number of midwives to appear before the Board, and eleven of these will be cited to appear on November 8th, at 2.30. One case was referred back to the Penal Cases Committee.

THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

This Committee reported that a letter from the Clerk of the Council, suggesting certain amendments to the rules as revised by the Board, had been read and considered.

PRIVY COUNCIL OBJECTIONS TO REVISED RULES.

This letter referred (1) to the special provision in the existing rules relating to the case of candidates from poor-law institutions and to its omission in the present rules. This provision the Lords of the Council point out, was inserted at the instance of the Local Government Board, and they are still of opinion that some such provision is necessary, and in a supplementary Memorandum suggest certain additions dealing with Poor Law Infirmaries; (2) to resolutions passed by the Board providing (a) "that no Poor Law Institution be approved as a Training School for Midwives unless the average number of deliveries reaches seventy-five per annum" and (b) that "in future, as a rule, a number of not less than sixty cases of labour annually be essential for an application to be approved from a doctor desiring to teach pupils in an Infirmary or Workhouse which is too small to be a recognised school."

The Lords of the Council consider that these resolutions should be embodied in rules to be submitted to the Privy Council for approval.

Their Lordships also consider that Rule E. 24, which takes the place of the present Rule E. 21, should be maintained in its present form as far as Poor Law Institutions are concerned.

N.B.—Rule E 21 provides that nothing in Section E shall apply to certified midwives exercising their calling, under the supervision of a duly appointed medical officer, in Hospitals, Workhouses, and Poor Law Infirmaries. The Midwives' Board, in their revised rules, proposed to make this exception conditional upon such institutions being approved by the Central Midwives' Board.

The last suggestion made by the Lords of the Council is that in connection with the problem of infant mortality a Rule should be added to Section E, making it the duty of midwives—where the supervising authority requires it—to notify within forty-eight hours to such Authority every birth occurring in their practice together with the name and address of the parent.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD REPLY.

On the recommendation of the Standing Committee the Board decided to inform the Privy Council.

1. That the Board do not see their way to acquiescing in the amendments suggested by

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