

training. On this efficiency of training depend the degree of reliance thereafter to be placed on the midwife in her important vocation, and the inverse amount of supervision necessary to safeguard the welfare of the public from the results of careless, ignorant, or mischievous midwifery. The certificate of the C.M.B. depends chiefly for its value on the curriculum it guarantees, and this guarantee, in the case of pupils trained in Poor Law institutions, it is proposed to transfer to the Poor Law authorities. To ensure the invariable observance of a practicable standard equal to that of the C.M.B. would require in the Local Government Board an advisory board of equal experience in matters concerned with midwifery. It cannot possibly be said that the present Poor Law medical staff of two inspectors for the whole of England and Wales, distinguished and hard-working as they are, can ever attain such experience.

Dr. Fremantle went on to say that those who carried out the law would have to distinguish between the standard of the C.M.B., which they could test and trust, and that of the Local Government Board, which they could neither test nor trust.

Finally, an exemption having once been granted to the authorities of the Poor Law, exemption would inevitably, and, with far greater justification, be claimed, for instance, by the Army Nursing Service. Exemptions would become the rule, and the uniformity intended by the Act would be destroyed.

MISS BRODIE HALL, P.L.G.

Miss Brodie Hall, a Poor Law Guardian of 25 years' standing, spoke of the extremely undesirable moral influence on the community of any exemption from obligation to observe the rules of the Central Midwives' Board, especially the exemption of a prominent Government Department from an Act thought necessary for health and sanitation. Guardians could with ease evade the orders of the Local Government Board, which they were apt to regard as fads, and the red tape of a Government Department. Their medical officers might not have any special qualifications for teaching pupil midwives, whose schedules might be signed by a small country practitioner. It sometimes happened that when a vacancy for the post of medical officer occurred a friend of some of the Guardians was elected, and a better man passed over.

MISS ALEXANDER, P.L.G.

Miss Alexander said that at present each Poor Law Institution throughout the Kingdom to a great extent creates its own standard. There is practically no outside criticism, no contact with public opinion, and very little touch in some cases with the advance of medical science.

Guardians do, sometimes—whether from carelessness or ignorance—appoint unsuitable officers to positions of great responsibility. When this is done the whole Institution suffers, and the standard of work is lowered to an extent which would not be possible in a voluntary hospital, where consulting physicians pay constant visits, and consequently far less depends on the right selection of

one medical officer. The Society of Poor Law Workers considered nothing but good would result from inspection by experts, of workhouse and infirmary maternity wards, and both the standard of treatment of patients and the training of midwives would be uniformly raised.

The visits of the Commissioners in Lunacy to Poor Law lunatic and imbecile wards, are a great and undoubted benefit. The placing of Poor Law schools under the inspection of the Education Department has lately raised the status of Poor Law teachers.

THE LORD PRESIDENT'S REPLY.

The Lord President said he welcomed the visit of the Deputation, and thanked them for their speeches of almost unexampled brevity. He fully recognised the excellent work done by the Central Midwives' Board, and anything he said must not be considered as detracting from the value of that work. He must confess his surprise at hearing it stated as a fact that the Local Government Board proposed to set up a different standard from that of the Central Midwives' Board. He certainly had never heard that that body intended doing anything of the sort, and he would not countenance it.

The Local Government Board was responsible to Parliament for its efficiency, and he should have hoped that the assurance which it was willing to give that the training in midwifery, in the institutions under its control, would be in conformity with the standards of the Central Midwives' Board was one which that Board would accept. To speak of its training as being inferior was begging the whole question.

In relation to the inspection of Poor Law schools, the Board of Education was a public department, which the Central Midwives' Board was not. He hoped that the present differences might be found to be unsubstantial, and that the relations between the Central Midwives' Board and a public department might be adjusted. He hoped it would not be necessary to recommend to Parliament any change in the constitution or powers of the Central Midwives' Board. He recognised its self-denying work, and its unremunerated labour for the community.

In regard to the suggestion that the Central Midwives' Board should undertake the inspection of the work of a public department there was no provision for it at present, and he could not hold out any hope of according the suggestion his support. If he did he was afraid the Council would not give its assent.

CERTIFIED MIDWIVES' DEFENCE UNION.

A general meeting of the above Union will be held on Friday, 5th April, at 10, Adelphi Terrace, Robert Street, John Street, Strand, at 6 p.m. Dr. Stanley Atkinson, M.A., J.P., has kindly consented to take the chair.

It is hoped that all midwives interested in this question, and intending to join the Union, will attend, as it is desired to at once form a thoroughly representative Society.

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