

The Midwife.

The Central Midwives' Board.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, May 30th, Dr. Champneys presiding.

A letter was read from the Clerk of the Council transmitting an Order in Council approving the revised Rules for the period ending September 30th, 1909.

REPORT OF THE ACT AMENDMENT COMMITTEE.

The Report of the Act Amendment Committee was next received.

The Committee recommended the Board to pass the following Resolution:

"That it is desirable that the Midwives' Act, 1902, should be amended so as to provide for the following alterations: (1) The Board to be enlarged by the addition of one member to be nominated by the Incorporated Society of Medical Officers of Health."

The whole Board, with the exception of Sir William Sinclair and Mr. Fordham, were present when this recommendation was made.

Mr. Fordham inquired whether the Chairman would state which of the members supported the recommendation so that the Board could judge of the weight to be attached to it.

The Chairman replied that the whole Committee were agreed that it would be useful for the Medical Officers of Health to be represented on the Board, but were not unanimous as to other suggestions put forward.

The Secretary, Mr. G. W. Duncan, said that since the Agenda had been sent out, two letters containing suggestions with regard to the enlargement of the Board had been received. One from the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute and the other from the Midwives' Institute. On the proposition of Dr. Stanley Atkinson, seconded by Miss Paget, it was moved that these letters be received, which was agreed to.

Mr. Fordham then moved as an amendment to the recommendation of the Committee, that it was desirable the Board be increased by two instead of one, making the number 11. Firstly, it was an uneven number, which was convenient, and secondly in his view it was desirable that the administrative side of the Board should be strengthened. At present it was difficult to get the Board to act with continuity and solidarity. As the only member who was not an expert, he thought it important that there should be an increase in the members acquainted with administrative matters. He would like to add a representative of the Association of Municipal Corporations. The amendment to increase the number to 11 was not seconded.

Mr. Fordham then proposed that the Association of Municipal Corporations should be substituted

for the Incorporated Society of Medical Officers of Health. As representing the Association of County Councils, he himself held no brief for London, Manchester, or other large towns, but chiefly for the Rural Districts. He thought it important that populous centres should be represented. This Amendment also fell through for want of a seconder.

Dr. Stanley Atkinson then proposed as a rider that the recommendations of the Society which he represented, the Incorporated Midwives' Institute, should be adopted.

The proposition of the Midwives' Institute, which considers the present Board too small, was that under Section 3 the Royal College of Physicians of London, the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and the Society of Apothecaries of London should each appoint an additional representative, and that a new sub-clause should be added under this Section providing for the addition to the Board of "two persons to be appointed for terms of three years by the Incorporated Midwives' Institute."

The Institute also desired the appointment of a representative of the Incorporated Society of Medical Officers of Health, and of the Association of Municipal Corporations.

Sir William Sinclair said that it was hardly possible to take these suggestions seriously. Everyone was agreed that the Board was too small. It needed to be twice as large, but no amendment to the Midwives' Act could be considered satisfactory which did not provide for an entirely constitutional medical representation. He did not suppose the Board would carry his suggestions, but he expressed them in order to have an opportunity of putting them forward through the medical papers and the public press. He considered that each University in England and Wales should have a representative on the Board. To prove that it needed strengthening he need only point out that the present Board has refused to insist on enforcing one of its own regulations. He had been in favour of a purely medical board, but he had found to his great surprise that some of the non-medical members had given great assistance.

Mr. Fordham said he was opposed to the suggestions put forward by Dr. Stanley Atkinson. In amending the Act, Parliament would not deal with anything controversial. If there were opposition, as there would be to this proposition, there must be a debate in the House, in which case it was certain that the matter could not be dealt with this Session.

Sir William Sinclair agreed with Mr. Fordham. There must be a debate, and there was no hope of a discussion in the present state of Parliamentary business. The medical representation was put in the worst possible way. One might suppose

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)