

Roll. Her defence was that she did it at the earnest request of the mother.

Rhoda Short, 15729, 'struck off,' was charged with habitually supplying pregnant women with lead pills with intent to procure abortion. In her defence the midwife stated that "lots of other people sells things in Castleford."

On Friday, July 10th, 13 cases were heard, five midwives were struck off the Roll, three severely censured, one censured, and four cautioned. One midwife, in conversation, expressed her appreciation of the Board's method of allowing the defendants to be represented by their solicitors or otherwise, saying: "You've got the trouble on your mind, and when the time comes you are so full up that you can't get it out and explain." She wished her Local Supervising Authority would adopt the same course.

Mary Ann Scadden, 181, previously severely censured by the Board, was struck off the Roll for being on two occasions drunk and incapable when performing her duties.

Mary H. Cridland, 20140, was also struck off for being under the influence of drink when in attendance at a confinement.

Elizabeth Wilde, who holds a district post in connection with the City of London Lying-in Hospital, was severely censured for employing an uncertificated person, to wit her daughter, as her substitute contrary to the provisions of the Midwives' Act. The charge was denied by Mrs. Wilde, and also by her daughter, who appeared before the Board, but the Board considered it proved. Mrs. Wilde was defended by her solicitor, and numerous witnesses were called, the case lasting over three hours.

In one case Miss C. C. du Sautoy, County Council Inspector for Somersetshire under the Q.V.J.I., appeared to give evidence.

London and Counties Medical Protection Society.

REPORT OF MIDWIVES' COMMITTEE.

The following report, incorporated in the annual report of the London and Counties Medical Protection Society, was prepared by its Midwives' Committee, approved by the Council of the Society, and sent to every Board of Guardians in England and Wales:—

This Committee was appointed for the purpose of considering the working of the Midwives Act, and reporting thereon, especially in reference to the remuneration of medical practitioners called in by midwives.

The Committee accordingly directed that a circular letter should be addressed to members of the Society, and other medical practitioners, and also published in the medical press, asking for (1) information as to the number of confinements to which each medical practitioner had been summoned by midwives under the regulations of the Midwives' Board; (2) what payment they had received in each case, and from whom; (3) and what was the nature of each case to which they were summoned.

Several hundred replies were received, and the following information has been derived from them:

A large number of practitioners replied saying that they had never been summoned by midwives, several saying that there were no midwives in their districts.

In considerably more than half the cases the medical practitioners summoned by midwives received no payment whatever, and the average payment, calculated from a large number of cases, was not over 9s. A noteworthy point is that, while some practitioners seem to be uniformly unpaid, a few seem to be almost uniformly paid. Probably the class of people in the districts concerned accounts largely for this; but, in one or two instances, the explanation given by the medical practitioner was that he refused to go unless paid.

Of the fees received, all but a few were received from the patients or their relatives, and it seems to be quite exceptional for payment to be made by the midwife. A few fees were paid by Boards of Guardians, Nursing Associations, Provident Dispensaries, etc.

The cases to which the medical practitioners were summoned were, in the great majority, serious ones. Operative assistance was required in many cases. The largest number of the less serious cases were described as delayed or difficult labour. In about 3 per cent. of the cases the death of the child appears to have been the cause of the summoning of the doctor, and puerperal fever was the cause in about 2 per cent. of the cases.

Grave dissatisfaction was expressed by many of the writers at the present state of affairs, and it is evident from the tone of many of the letters that, unless proper provision is made for the payment of doctors summoned by midwives, the latter will frequently be unable to obtain medical assistance. It is apparently the more galling to medical practitioners to be called on to assist midwives in difficult emergencies without payment, because they often regard the midwives as competing with them for midwifery practice, and doing so with the advantage of charging lower fees, and of being able to advertise for patients with impunity.

This Committee is of opinion that the Poor Law Guardians, or other competent authority, should arrange for the payment of medical practitioners summoned by midwives to assist them in emergencies, and the Committee considers that the scale of payment should, in any case, not be lower than the existing Poor Law scale for attendance on midwifery cases. While present conditions continue the Committee recommends medical men to require payment to be made in advance, or guaranteed by some responsible person.

One of the defects of the Midwives' Act which is at present engaging considerable attention is that while the Act enjoins upon midwives the duty of advising that medical help should be summoned in certain circumstances, no suggestion is made as to the payment of medical practitioners summoned in accordance with this advice.

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