

The Midwife.

The Midwives' Act Committee.

We understand, on good authority, that Miss Jane Wilson, who takes her seat on the Central Midwives' Board as the nominee of the Privy Council, has tendered her resignation as a protest against the absence of any midwife on the Departmental Committee, appointed by the Privy Council to enquire into the supply of midwives, the cost of training, etc.

It would have been a natural and fitting appointment had Miss Wilson—whose valuable work in connection with the Midwives' Act has been recognised by the Privy Council, in nominating her a member of the first Board appointed under the Act—been included in the Departmental Committee. Her unique knowledge of the whole question would have been invaluable in its deliberations. Beyond this the appointment of a Committee to enquire into the working of an Act governing any profession or calling, without including one of its members, is inconceivable, and Miss Wilson has done public service in drawing attention to the fact that the Midwives' Act Committee does not include one midwife.

As a member of the Board, whenever Miss Wilson has spoken she has been listened to with attention because she manifestly spoke about what she knew, and she always put her points clearly and effectively, so that every one of them told. She pre-eminently understood when and how to speak, as well as when to be silent. Further on a small Board—too small to carry out all its responsibilities without entailing much self-sacrifice on the majority of its members—one of the hardest working and wisest of their number must be an irreparable loss.

Mr. Parker Young has given notice to move the following resolution at the next meeting of the Central Midwives' Board:—

"That the Lord President of the Council be respectfully requested to consider the advisability of adding to the Departmental Committee representatives of the interests of General Medical Practitioners and Midwives, as the Board consider that such additions would greatly enhance the value of the report eventually come to by that Committee."

The result of the deliberations of the Board will not be known before we go to press, but we hope that the course suggested by Mr. Parker Young may be adopted, and, further, that Miss Wilson's resignation may be withdrawn.

The Central Midwives' Board.

A special meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at the Boardroom, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, January 14th, at 2.15 p.m., when the charges alleged against two midwives were heard.

The charges against Maria Booth, 3263, were that, having been engaged to attend as a midwife at the confinement of a patient, and being actually in attendance on July 20th, and again on July 22nd, 1908, the patient suffering from hæmorrhage, she did not explain that the attendance of a registered medical practitioner was required.

That a registered medical practitioner having been sent for on July 25th, she did not await his arrival or carry out his instructions; there were also charges of not washing the patient or taking her temperature.

The patient put in a statutory declaration that she suffered from hæmorrhage for nearly a week before her confinement, but the midwife, who was aware of her condition, did not advise a doctor being sent for. There was also a statutory declaration from Dr. Joseph Foreman Berry, of Wigan, who delivered the patient of a decomposed fetus.

Mrs. Booth's defence, by letter, was that she had advised a doctor being sent for, but the patient did not wish for one. She was sorry she had not been more determined and had her own way. If the Board wished her to come to London, she would be obliged to do so, but she did not know a foot of the way, never having been there before. The words said when she visited the patient on July 20th were: "What's the matter, Mary?" and the patient replied, "I've broke down." She then asked the patient if she could feel the child, and she replied, "Yes." On the 22nd the patient was losing less, and she thought it might pass over. On the 25th she learned that the doctor had been sent for, and that he had "fetched" the child, and said that the patient was doing well.

A report was received from Dr. William Berry, Medical Officer of Health, that the midwife was cleanly and had the necessary appliances.

The Board decided to censure Mrs. Booth, and that a report should be asked for from the Local Supervising Authority in three months time.

The other case considered was that of Catherine Walls, 20066, until recently on the staff of Princess Christian's Maternity Home, Windsor. The consideration of this case had been adjourned more than once. The charges against her were that, on August 30th, 1908, she was drunk when on duty at 23, Trinity Place, Windsor; that, on September 15th, 1908, she was drunk when on duty proceeding to attend a patient at Bracknell; that she is habitually given to drinking to excess.

Mr. E. H. Hoare, of the firm of Messrs. Charles

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)