

ducing training expenses without lowering the standard, that there should be some increase in the number of examining centres, and that the written examinations should, wherever a sufficient need for such facility appears to exist, be conducted under proper conditions, and safeguards through the medium of papers sent down by the Central Midwives' Board in sealed packets. They suggest also that a more extended use of women as examiners might tend to give greater confidence to nervous candidates.

REMUNERATION OF MEDICAL MEN SUMMONED ON THE ADVICE OF MIDWIVES.

The Committee recommend that a secure expectation of payment should be given to a medical practitioner summoned on the advice of a midwife in a case of emergency, and that the Poor-Law Authority should be responsible for the payment, and should be empowered to charge the fee paid as "relief on loan" to the patient.

DELEGATION OF POWERS BY COUNTY COUNCILS.

It is the emphatic opinion of the Committee that the delegation of their powers by County Councils to district councils under Section 9 of the Act should be withdrawn, and in cases where it is still exercised it should be revoked. The Committee state that the evidence given on behalf of the Central Midwives' Board was conclusive on the point, Mr. Duncan, the Secretary, stating that it has been an unmitigated evil.

CONSTITUTION OF THE MIDWIVES' BOARD.

The Committee recommend that the number of members of the Board should be increased from nine to twelve, by giving an additional nominee to the Lord President of the Council, and a representative each to the Local Government Board, the British Medical Association, and the Society of Medical Officers of Health, that the member appointed by the Incorporated Midwives' Institute should in future be a certified midwife instead of a medical practitioner, and that the representation of the Royal British Nurses' Association should be discontinued. Further, that following the model, and subject to the safeguards, provided by Section 10 of the Medical Act, 1886, His Majesty in Council should be empowered to consider, and, if approved, give effect by Order to any representations received hereafter from the Central Midwives' Board for further changes in its constitution.

FINANCES.

The Committee recommend that Section 5 of the Act should be amended by providing that any balance shown against the Central Midwives' Board in their annual financial statement should be apportioned among the local supervising authorities on the basis of population, according to the most recent census returns, instead of on the basis of the number of midwives who have notified their intention of practice.

The Committee also recommend that the members of the Central Midwives' Board should be paid in respect of their attendances such reasonable travelling expenses as may be allowed by the Board.

MIDWIVES' ROLL.

The Committee recommend that every midwife, whether intending to practise or not, should be required to notify annually her address to the local supervising authority, and that unless the form of notification is returned, that her name should be removed from the Roll and not restored without payment of a fee.

DISCIPLINARY FUNCTIONS.

Under this heading it is proposed that a power of suspension in lieu of, or as a preliminary to, striking, off the Roll, should be conferred on the Central Midwives' Board. That the Board, at their discretion, should have the power to pay the whole, or part, of the expenses of a midwife who has been required to appear before them in her own defence. That when a woman's name has been removed from the Roll she should thereafter be prohibited from attending professionally on a lying-in woman in any capacity.

PRIVATE LYING-IN HOMES.

The Committee consider the suggestion that lying-in homes conducted for gain should be specially registered worthy of consideration, and that the powers of local supervising authorities should be extended, so as to include the inspection of the work of certified midwives in such homes, whether kept by them or not.

The Committee also recommend that ophthalmia neonatorum should be made a notifiable disease, the general adoption of the Notification of Births Act, and that statutory provision should be made for the registration of still-births.

APPENDICES.

A number of interesting appendices are attached to the Report, including a memorandum by the Local Government Board, Ireland, on the Irish Dispensary Midwives' System, a memorandum by Sir Shirley F. Murphy on behalf of the Midwives' Act Committee of the London County Council, describing the condition of some of the lying-in homes carried on for gain; a report handed in by Mr. Sydney Stephenson, by Dr. Nimmo Walker, on the work of the Ophthalmia Ward in St. Paul's Hospital, Liverpool; a memorandum submitted by Mrs. Lawson on behalf of the National Association of Midwives, urging the claim of certified midwives for direct representation on the Central Midwives' Board, and some information as to the midwifery attendance on poor persons in France, Germany, and the Netherlands.

We have briefly given some of the most important points in the report this week, and propose to refer to it again at greater length in a subsequent issue. Meanwhile we congratulate midwives that at last there is a likelihood of a seat being secured to a midwife on their governing body, inadequate as this proposed representation is (1 seat out of 12). Another point is that if nursing associations are to manage rural midwifery then the nursing profession should be represented on the Central Midwives' Board.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)