

The Midwife.

The Report of the Midwives' Act Committee.

APPENDICES.

The Appendices to the Report of the Midwives' Act Committee contain much valuable information, and some important suggestions.

APPENDIX I.

Appendix I. contains statistical tables prepared from information contained in the Annual Reports of the Registrar-General, showing the number of deaths of mothers in England and Wales, from (1) puerperal sepsis—including puerperal septicaemia, puerperal septic intoxication, puerperal pyæmia, phlegmasia albus dolens, and puerperal fever not otherwise defined, and (2) "Accidents of Childbirth," including abortion, miscarriage, puerperal mania, puerperal convulsions, placenta prævia, flooding, and "other accidents of pregnancy and childbirth." It is satisfactory that the deaths from both these causes are steadily declining. The average death rate in England and Wales for 10 years 1897-1906 inclusive was 4.39, and in 1907 it was 3.83.

APPENDIX II.

Appendix II. is a memorandum submitted by the Local Government Board for the Information and Consideration of the Midwives' Act Committee. Concerning the Supply of Midwives and the Cost of Training, the L.G.B. discuss the question of grants by County Councils for the training of midwives, and say that "bound up with this question is one which intimately concerns the Local Government Board, viz., the utilisation of the lying-in wards in the workhouses and poor law infirmaries for the purpose of teaching and training midwives . . . it seems desirable that every poor law establishment, which is in a position to teach and train midwives . . . should be enabled and encouraged to do so. It is, the Board believe, generally recognised that the best midwives are those who qualify in midwifery after a course of training in general nursing, and it is, as a rule, midwives of this class who are trained in poor law establishments. But it appears to the Board that the effect of the action of the Central Midwives' Board has been to discourage the supply of trained midwives from poor law institutions."

The Midwives' Act Committee, in their report, come to the conclusion that there was some foundation for this impression, but, "whatever the views of the Central Midwives' Board in their early days may have been, their present wish is to utilise such establishments for the training of midwives to the fullest possible extent."

Contributory causes to the disinclination of the Central Midwives' Board to recognise Poor Law Institutions as training schools were apparently, to those who have watched its work: the exemption granted to midwives working in institutions under the L.G.B. from the full control of

the Central Midwives' Board, the fact that in many instances only a few pupils can be trained each year, and their tuition can be provided for by the recognition of a medical practitioner as teacher rather than by the approval of a small infirmary as a school, and, lastly, the fact urged with some force on more than one occasion by Sir William Sinclair, that if a school is approved the authorities will endeavour to attract pupils, and for the tuition of those pupils as many cases as possible are desirable, so that more women will be admitted to the lying-in wards, and more children born with the stigma of the workhouse upon them.

The Local Government Board conclude their Memorandum on the supply of midwives and the cost of training with the following clause:—"The Board desire to draw the attention of the Committee to the provisions of Clauses 11 and 12 of the Nurse's Registration Bill, 1908, as it left the House of Lords, as affording a useful precedent for any further legislation on the subject.

APPENDIX III.

Appendix III. is a Memorandum by the Medical Officer of the L.G.B. on the Midwives' Act, and on the Evidence given before the Midwives' Act Committee in its Relation to Public Health. The chief point of interest in this is the recommendation that there should be an Amendment of the Notification of Births Act, "requiring the name of the person actually in attendance at the birth to be stated in the notification certificate. If the work of the midwife and of the health visitor can be actively co-ordinated, and the work of the latter linked on to that of the school nurse, a complete chain of such supervision of the personal hygiene of children as is needed will have been secured."

APPENDIX IV.

Appendix IV. is a Memorandum by the Local Government Board, Ireland, on the Irish Dispensary Midwives' System.

APPENDICES V., VI., AND VII.

These are supplementary to the evidence given by Mr. G. W. Duncan, Secretary to the C.M.B.

APPENDIX VIII.

Appendix VIII. includes two drafts of Bills put in by Sir George Fordham.

APPENDIX IX.

Appendix IX. contains information supplied by the Association of Municipal Corporations.

APPENDIX X.

Appendix X. deals with Lying-in Homes, in a Memorandum forwarded by Sir Shirley F. Murphy, on behalf of the Midwives' Act Committee of the London County Council, and quotes a paragraph in a report by Dr. Wanklyn of the Council's Public Health Department. As many as 122 of these homes were known to exist in London, the majority of them having come under the cognizance of the Council through its administration of the Infant Life Protection Act; of these homes 47 were found to be kept by certified midwives.

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