

Chicago is due, says a contemporary, to the fact that 30 of the 45 Negro midwives in the former city can neither read nor write.

The investigation was presented by Dr. Sherwood to the Medico-Chirurgical Faculty at a recent meeting, and an effort will be made by the committees on legislation and on midwives to secure the passage of a law providing for qualifications for registration, accurate registration and licensing, supervision, and limitation of practice to normal cases of child-birth.

## London County Council.

### THE MIDWIVES' ACT COMMITTEE.

The Midwives' Act Committee of the London County Council have reported to the Council "That as the certified midwife against whom the Council decided, on July 7th, 1908, to report the establishment of a *prima facie* case of malpractice, negligence, or misconduct, appears to show but little improvement in her methods of practice, a communication to this effect be made to the Central Midwives' Board."

It was also decided to send the particulars of a charge of negligence made against another midwife to the Central Midwives' Board.

The Committee also submitted a report in which they recommended: (a) that the operation of Standing Orders Nos. 161 and 162 be suspended in order that the following recommendation may be dealt with. (b) That the Midwives' Act (Special) Committee be authorised to submit, if necessary, to the Council after the summer recess, 1909, detailed proposals for legislation in the Session of 1910, providing for the payment of fees of medical practitioners who may be summoned at the instance of midwives to cases of emergency in which the patients or their relatives are too poor to pay such fees; also providing for the licensing of lying-in homes.

The consideration of the Report was adjourned until last Tuesday, when it again came before the Council for its consideration.

It was pointed out by Mr. Cassel that a Departmental Committee was now sitting to consider the working of the Midwives' Act, and before they knew what the report of that Committee was they were asked to suspend Standing Orders so that at some future date the Midwives' Committee could, if necessary, outline legislation in connection with the Midwives' Act. He thought that hypothetical decisions were unsatisfactory. As soon as the Recess was over he, as Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, would give every assistance in securing the suspension of Standing Orders.

Another member said that the recommendations of the Committee were in direct contradiction to the preamble of their report, which was illogical. Nothing could be done until the Departmental Committee issued its report. By the recommendations of the Committee it was also proposed to transfer from the Council to the Committee the right to initiate legislation. He agreed with the Report, but not with the recommendations.

Dr. Beaton, the acting Chairman of the Midwives' Act (Special) Committee, said that the un-

derlying reason why the Committee sought the suspension of Standing Orders was that they might come into line with the expressed wishes of the Parliamentary Committee. The report of the Departmental Committee might or might not come soon, and they wished to be ready with legislative proposals. He was willing to withdraw the report, and this was done.

## Rural Midwifery.

Speaking at the Annual Meeting of the Gloucestershire Nursing Association at the Cheltenham Town Hall, Viscount St. Aldwyn, who presided, and presented the annual report, said that of late years everybody had felt bound to pay increased attention not merely to the necessity of trained nurses, but also to the necessity of trained midwives in remote districts where the visit of a doctor was practically impossible. Parliament had taken action in the matter by the Act of 1902, which would come into operation next year, and he thought it impossible to exaggerate the importance to mothers and infants, and therefore to the whole nation, of the care of trained midwives at the time of difficulties with the mothers. He had no doubt public assistance was necessary, but he thought public funds much more likely to be wisely and usefully expended by local committees working under such an association as that, which possessed a complete local knowledge of the circumstances of each case, and whose members were animated by a thorough sympathy in their work, than by the almost stereotyped working of local inspectors or members of committees of local authorities.

Dr. Macartney (Coroner for the Forest of Dean) stated that in a district of 10,000 inhabitants in his division there would be but one trained midwifery nurse when the Act of 1902 came into operation next year, unless more were imported.

The question is, however, is there the work to induce a midwife to settle in the district, or, if not, are the more wealthy residents prepared to subsidise her? Midwives are working women, and a living wage is a necessity.

## A Model Infants' Home.

Another important new institute, State built, is, says the *British Medical Journal*, the Charlottenburg "Kaiserin Augusta-Victoria-Haus zur Bekämpfung der Säuglingssterblichkeit im deutschen Reich." As its name—the length of which is phenomenal, even for Germany—reveals, it is largely to the personal initiative of the German Empress that this new creation owes its existence, and its opening was graced by the presence of Her Majesty and her daughter-in-law, Princess Eitel Friedrich. Cabinet Ministers, high Government officials, university and municipal delegates were present at the ceremony, but it was a Court official, Herr v. Behr-Pinon, the Empress's Cabinet Councillor, who delivered the opening address. He explained the objects of the new institute, which is to combine laboratory, hospital, theoretical, and practical work, in the hope that its outcome may be the laying down of firmly-established scientific principles for infantile feeding.

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