

## The Midwife.

### The Central Midwives' Board.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, January 27th, the Chairman, Dr. F. H. Champneys presiding.

Since the last meeting of the Board, at which Dr. Stanley Atkinson was present, he has passed away, and Dr. Champneys moved from the chair:—

"That the members of the Board have heard with deep regret of the death of their colleague, Dr. Stanley Atkinson, and desire to convey their sincere sympathy with his family in the loss they have sustained." This was seconded by Sir William Sinclair and carried unanimously.

A letter was received from the Town Council of Norwich forwarding a resolution of the Health Committee of the Corporation suggesting that the Municipal Corporations Association should be represented on the Central Midwives' Board.

#### REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE.

A letter was reported from the Clerk of the Council as to the proposed amendment of Rule B 3, so as to empower the Board to enrol women who, though qualified under Section 2 of the Midwives' Act, failed to claim the Board's certificate before April 1st, 1905.

Sir George Fordham moved that before the Rule was amended in this sense that the Board should take counsel's opinion as to the legality of such action. He pointed out that the Privy Council was careful to safeguard itself by saying, "Assuming the Board is competent to deal with this matter, thereby throwing the responsibility upon the Board. He was of opinion that the Board should be fortified by taking legal advice. He moved, therefore, that counsel's opinion be taken. This was seconded by Mr. Golding-Bird.

The Chairman pointed out that if the opinion obtained were adverse the Board would be cut off from further action, whereas, if they framed the rule, which would have to be sanctioned by the Privy Council before it was promulgated, they might be quite certain that the Privy Council would take the advice of the Law Officers of the Crown as to its legality.

Sir William Sinclair thought it most improbable that any exception would be taken if the Board chose to add names to the Roll, and Mr. Parker Young thought that in the interests of the rate-payers they should avoid the expense of taking counsel's opinion, and leave this to the Privy Council.

Sir George Fordham's resolution, on being put to the vote, was lost.

A letter was reported from the Clerk of the Portsmouth Guardians asking the Board to inspect the maternity block of the Portsmouth Infirmary, or to receive a deputation of the Guardians on the subject of the Board's refusal to recognise the In-

firmatory as a training school. The Chairman said that the Infirmary had been rebuilt, and was said to be very specially good, but the number of cases admitted during the year was less than the minimum usually required by the Board in a training school. It was a question, in his mind, whether it was not desirable to cease recognising institutions altogether, and only to recognise teachers, but that was outside the matter at present before the Board. The Standing Committee recommended that the Board consent to receive a deputation, but a discussion took place in which it was pointed out that one of the arguments put forward by the Portsmouth Guardians in favour of the recognition of their school was that they were hoping to attract more women to their lying-in wards, the Board felt that in view of the stigma attaching to infants born in workhouses this was undesirable. Eventually it was considered that if the point which the Guardians desired to put before the Central Midwives' Board in person was the number of cases admitted, this could be ascertained by a less costly process, and the Secretary was directed to write to the Clerk of the Guardians and say that before receiving a deputation the Board would be glad of the latest figures as to the number of cases admitted.

A letter was reported from a candidate excluded from the April examination, 1909, under circumstances reported to the Board at the time, asking to be allowed to enter for a future examination. This was agreed.

A letter was received from Mrs. Buckland, Hon. Secretary of the East Malling Nursing Association, as to the refusal of a local medical practitioner to attend when summoned on the advice of a midwife in the manner provided by the rules. This medical man is reported to have written to Mrs. Buckland that the Central Midwives' Board has nothing to do with general practitioners, and that he had decided to ignore the peremptory notice on the official form when sent by midwives. Strong representations had been made to the Board without effect, and he would have nothing to do with it.

The Chairman said that this gentleman was behind the age, and Sir William Sinclair remarked that the letter showed "sheer rank ignorance and nothing else."

It was decided to reply that "the Board has no power to enforce the attendance of a doctor, even on the midwife's request, but that the Board understands that the Malling Guardians will pay the doctor for his attendance in suitable cases. In any event, the midwife has discharged her duty when she has advised, as directed by the rules, that the presence of a doctor is necessary."

The Secretary was authorised to remove the names of nine midwives from the Roll at their own request.

The resignations of Dr. Mary Thorne and Dr. A. M. H. Gray, as examiners, were received with

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