

The Midwife.

The Central Midwives' Board.

SPECIAL MEETING.

A special meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, on Tuesday, April 26th, to consider the Bill of the Lord President of the Council, introduced into the House of Lords, to amend the Midwives' Act. Dr. Champneys presided.

CLAUSE I.

In the discussion of Clause I. (c), which provides that two certified midwives shall be appointed members of the Board, one by the Midwives' Institute, Miss Paget said she considered it hard that there should be only one representative of the Midwives' Institute on the Board, as it was a midwives' Bill, and not a doctors', for four of whom provision was made on the Board. She hoped the Board would endorse the view that the Midwives' Institute should have two representatives, and Dr. Herman supported this.

Dr. Champneys said the Board existed neither in the interests of doctors nor midwives, but in the interest of the mothers of England, and personally he was only concerned to safeguard that interest.

Mr. Parker Young considered the Midwives' Institute was only a small society, consisting of about 1,000 members out of a possible 6,000 trained and certified midwives, and that to give the Midwives' Institute two members on a Board of thirteen was excessive. Accordingly he and Mr. Golding Bird voted against the proposal, which was not carried.

CLAUSE VII.

Clause VII. provides that "every certified midwife shall, on or before the 31st of March in each year, send to the Central Midwives' Board, on a form to be supplied by the Board for the purpose, her name and address, together with a fee of one shilling, and if any certified midwife in any year fails to comply with this requirement her name shall be removed from the Roll, and thereupon her certificate shall be deemed to be cancelled."

Miss Paget opposed this on the ground that it would confuse midwives if they were required to notify the Local Supervising Authorities of their intention to practice in January and to furnish the returns suggested to the Central Midwives' Board in March. It was suggested by the Secretary that if this clause were enforced half the midwives would be struck off every year for non-compliance.

The Secretary was directed to frame a recommendation as to the desirability of an alteration in the date (March 31st).

CLAUSE X.

Clause X. provides that "where the Central Midwives' Board decide upon the removal from the Roll of the name of any midwife they may, in addition, prohibit her from attending women in childbirth in any other capacity."

The Chairman was strongly in favour of those

struck off the Midwives' Roll being prohibited from acting as monthly nurses.

CLAUSE XI. (1).

Clause XI. provides that "where a woman certified under the principal Act, who has not given the Local Supervising Authority such a notice as is mentioned in Section 10 of the principal Act, attends any woman in childbirth in any capacity other than that of midwife, and a duly qualified medical practitioner is not present at the time of the birth, she shall, within 48 hours from the birth, give to the Local Supervising Authority notice in writing of the fact that she so attended, and if she omits to do so shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five pounds."

This was warmly opposed by Mr. Parker Young, who said if it were passed he should hesitate to employ a trained midwife to nurse his cases, as, if he were not present for the actual delivery, a report of the case would have to be sent to the Local Supervising Authority. He instanced the annoyance this might cause in the case of an unmarried girl. It was generally agreed that this clause put the trained midwife in a worse position than the untrained person. Its deletion was recommended, the Secretary to frame the reasons.

CLAUSE XIII.

Clause XIII. provides: "A Local Supervising Authority may aid the training of midwives whether within or without their area, and may make grants for the purpose."

In the discussion upon this clause, it was suggested as desirable that the Boards of Guardians should be approached for the necessary grants rather than the Local Supervising Authority.

CLAUSE XV.

Clause XV. provides that "For the purpose of exercising the powers of supervision over midwives conferred on Local Supervising Authorities, any officer appointed by such an Authority for the purpose may at all reasonable times enter any premises which he has reason to believe to be a lying-in home conducted for profit within the area of the Authority, and in which he has reason to believe that a certified midwife is employed or practises, or that a woman not a certified midwife practises in contravention of the principal Act, and any person who wilfully obstructs such officer in the performance of his duties shall on summary conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding five pounds."

Miss Paget opposed this on the same ground as Clause XI. (1), it being another injustice to the trained midwife. She pointed out that an untrained person might receive a lying-in woman for pay, if a medical man were in attendance, and escape inspection, whereas a certified midwife under the same conditions would have to be under supervision.

Mr. Parker Young supported this view.

Dr. Herman proposed that the deletion of this clause was desirable. This was carried.

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