

Association for Promoting the Training & Supply of Midwives.

A meeting of the Council of the above Association was held at 2, Cromwell Houses, 23, Cromwell Road, S.W., on Thursday, November 24th.

In the absence, through prior engagements, of the President of the Council, H.R.H. Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, Mrs. Samuel Bruce, who kindly lent her house for the occasion, occupied the chair.

Mrs. Wallace Bruce, Chairman of the Executive Committee, gave a short account of the work of the Association during the year, and referred in particular to the Midwives (No. 2) Bill. Mrs. Bruce said there were two points upon which the Executive Committee of the Association felt strongly—viz., Clause 12 (1) (b), which would permit a midwife, qualified under regulations of the Local Government Board for Ireland to be entitled to be certified under the principal Act, and to practise in England; and Clause 17, relating to the payment of doctors' fees. In the first case the Committee considered that the clause should be omitted entirely, as it does not deal in any way with the regulation of midwives' practice in Ireland, for which a separate Bill is necessary, while it would allow a second standard of qualification for midwives practising in this country, a suggestion greatly deprecated by this Association on a former occasion, as well as by a large majority of those who gave evidence on this point before the Departmental Committee in 1909.

With regard to Clause 17 Mrs. Bruce quoted the following resolutions passed by the Executive Committee:—

"That all things considered this Association accept Clause 17 as a temporary measure which provides for the payment of the doctor, but expresses no opinion as to what authority should ultimately be responsible for the payment of fees."

"That satisfactory assurances should be given, or a new clause introduced, to allow town councils to make use of Section 133 of the Public Health Act, 1875, as hitherto done in certain towns."

These resolutions were put to the meeting for confirmation, and were carried *nem. con.*

Amongst other speakers, Miss Lucy Robinson gave an account of the training given under the auspices of the Association and of the Training Home at East Ham, with a special plea for the "cupboard" which has so frequently to produce fire, light, and food where poor mothers are suffering for want of the bare necessities of life. Miss Lorent Grant made a financial statement, and Mr. F. E. Fremantle, in a short speech, asked the members of the Association to bear in mind that they wanted the Bill to pass without serious delay, and not be made a pivot or a test question of Poor-Law reform. The Bill must be considered on its own merits.

In conclusion Lady St. Davids gave a most interesting address on the organisation of district nursing in South Wales.

The Amending Midwives Bill.

Sir Donald MacAlister, K.C.B., President of the General Council of Medical Education and Registration, in his Presidential Address at the opening of the ninety-second session of the Council recently stated that the wish expressed by the Irish Branch Council that an effort should be made for the extension of the Midwives' Act to Ireland was duly communicated by him to the Government. He had reason to believe that in the Bill then under the consideration of Parliament the Lord President of the Council had approved the introduction of provisions which would have the effect of removing the disabilities of midwives trained in Ireland. It had not been possible to obtain assurances that an amendment would be acceptable providing for the prohibition of midwifery by unqualified men.

As no uncertified woman may now practice midwifery under penalty, it is hard upon many who have been in the habit of attending their neighbours for gain that men can practise without restriction. It is still harder on midwives who have spent time and money in obtaining the certificate of the Central Midwives' Board that they should have to compete with unqualified men.

We hope that when the new Parliament assembles a means will be found whether in connection with the Midwives' Act, or otherwise, to penalise the practice of midwifery by unqualified and ignorant men. If only one sex is to be disqualified from delivering lying-in cases, without a legal qualification, that sex should not be the female one.

El Needy Association.

Last week a fancy fair on behalf of the Maternity Nursing Association, 63, Myddleton Square, E.C., was opened by the Dowager Countess of Clanwilliam. The Mayor of Finsbury, Alderman E. H. Tripp, presided at the opening function, and was supported by Major M. Archer-Shee, D.S.O., M.P., and many friends of the movement, as well as by Miss Dauney, Superintendent of the Association. A specially interesting stall was that stocked with gifts from the ten parishes in which the midwives work. In all 550 cases have been attended in the past year, 100 more than last year. The expenses have been £720, and the income £151 from patients' fees, £240 from pupils' fees, and £174 from subscriptions and donations, thus leaving the considerable sum of £155 to be raised by other means. As the Association works in a very poor locality outside financial assistance is essential, and the Hon. Treasurer, Miss Blunt, 5, Sussex Mansions, South Kensington, will gratefully receive subscriptions and donations.

The very inclement weather affected the attendance at the fair, but all who were able to be present were greatly interested. In the evening were various competitions, and there were "side shows." A very popular café chantant in the Minor Hall was under the direction of Miss Evelyn Clifford.

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