

of puerperal mortality all over the kingdom has considerably gone down.

The speaker showed that a woman cannot afford to pay both doctor and midwife, and is safer in the hands of a trained midwife who knows when to send for the doctor, than in those of an exceedingly busy, ill-paid man, who very likely leaves the entire work to be done by a handy woman, of the very class that have, in the past, worked such dire disasters among our working mothers. She added: Our demands are that every woman in this once free country may choose whether she engages a doctor or a midwife, and what doctor or midwife, and that the fee to the doctor who is sent for by the midwife when necessary shall also be assured.

The Central Midwives Board.

A Special Meeting of the Central Midwives' Board for the purpose of hearing charges against nine certified midwives was held on Thursday, June 8th, at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, Sir Francis Champneys in the chair. The results were as follows:—

STRUCK OFF THE ROLL.

Ann Bevan (No. 16485), charged with negligence and misconduct in connection with the confinement of a patient, including failure to adopt antiseptic precautions, and to wash the patient after the termination of labour, with employing her daughter as an uncertified substitute, and by reason of age and physical infirmity of being unable to attend to patients in a manner consistent with their safety. The patient eventually died.

Ann Cregan (No. 2512), charged with not explaining that the case of an infant suffering from inflammation of the eyes from birth was one in which the attendance of a registered medical practitioner was required. The child's eyesight was completely destroyed.

Anna Hooper (No. 8927), charged (1) a patient being ill and suffering from bedsores with not explaining the necessity for the attendance of a registered medical practitioner. The patient later died in hospital. (2) Having been in contact with a case of puerperal fever and having in consequence been warned by the medical man in attendance not to attend any confinement without having undergone adequate disinfection, with attending another case within a fortnight without having disinfected herself, her appliances, or her clothing.

Mary Ann Spate (No. 16347), charged with uncleanliness and other offences against the rules. The evidence of the Inspector was that the midwife and her house were both filthy, that the temperatures of all her patients were recorded as 97 degs. Fahr. On the other hand, the testimony of the husband of one patient was strongly in favour of Mrs. Spate, and he intimated that it was his own and his wife's intention to employ her whether she had a certificate or not.

In announcing the decision of the Board the Chairman said that its difficulty had been the conflict of evidence in the indictment, and the testimonials. They laid stress, however, on the

point that the midwife had been repeatedly warned without improvement.

Emma Tilley (No. 18501), charged with uncleanliness and other offences against the rules. The midwife alleged that she wore washable blouses, but admitted that she only wore washable skirts in the warm weather.

Amelia Waight (No. 9663, L.O.S. certificate), charged with drunkenness on May 9th and May 10th, 1910, while employed as a midwife at St. Clement's Maternity Home, Fulham, and liable to be called on duty at a moment's notice. Charged with drunkenness on February 1st and February 2nd, 1911, while employed as a midwife at the Ladies' Benevolent Institute, Chester, and liable to be called on duty at a moment's notice.

SEVERELY CENSURED.

Mary Jane Barnes (No. 18574), charged with negligence in the case of a child suffering with inflammation of eyes from birth.

CENSURED.

Jane Hill (No. 3482), charged with negligence (1) in not cleansing a child's eyelids at the time of birth; (2) that the child suffering from inflammation of the eyes with purulent discharge, she did not explain that a registered medical practitioner should be summoned.

It was stated that the child was illegitimate, and the mother a woman of reputed bad character. The midwife's defence was that the child was born two hours before she arrived at the house. She also detailed the number of cases she had attended, and said that "when the nurses were entirely stopped from midwifery she expected more cases."

CAUTIONED.

Ellen Girling (No. 11809). The midwife who appeared before the Board was charged with negligence on various counts, one being that she washed the patient with the same water and the same flannel as she had previously washed the baby. This she admitted so far as the mother's face and hands were concerned. Asked by the Chairman whether she considered it a wise thing to do, and whether she would like it herself, she said that she would not mind it at all. The Chairman dissented, and said none of the members of the Board would like it in the case of their own children.

MIDWIVES AND THE NATIONAL INSURANCE BILL.

The Agenda for the Meeting of the Central Midwives' Board for June 15th included the following item:—

Sir George Fordham to call attention to the National Insurance Bill, and particularly to Clauses 13 to 17 (Administration of Benefits), and to move—

That it is desirable that the position of midwives under the Bill should be more clearly defined and strengthened, and their duties in respect of maternity benefits distinguished from those of the medical profession.

That the Chancellor of the Exchequer be requested to receive a deputation of the Board to discuss these suggestions, and generally, the duties and remuneration of midwives under the Bill.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)