

The Midwife.

A Midwives Bill for Belfast.

The Belfast Corporation, in a Private Bill to be introduced into the House of Commons during the coming Session, includes amongst other objects (such as to enable the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of the City of Belfast to construct and work additional tramways, make street improvements, construct works, and exercise powers for the prevention of flooding, acquire lands, to enable the Corporation to raise further money, etc.) "to make provisions for the better control of persons practising midwifery in the city." Examined in detail this section means the passing of a Midwives' Act for the City of Belfast, largely copied verbatim from the Midwives' Act (1902) for England and Wales, and provides for the creation of a Board, to be called the Belfast Midwives' Board, consisting of eleven members, appointed as follows:—Six by the Public Health Committee of the Corporation from amongst the members of that Committee; one (being a woman) by the said Committee; one by the Senate of the Queen's University of Belfast; one by the Council of the North of Ireland Branch of the British Medical Association; one by the Council of the Ulster Medical Society; and one by the Belfast Union.

It will be noted that no representative of the Midwives is included in the Governing Body proposed, and, incidentally it has two more members than the Central Midwives' Board, which governs the Midwives of England and Wales.

It is proposed that the functions of the Board shall be practically those of the Central Midwives' Board, and that it shall hold examinations, and issue a Roll of Midwives who have been duly certified as entitled to practice in the City, and issue and cancel certificates. Further, that rules under this Section shall be valid only if approved by the Local Government Board, and the Local Government Board before approving any such rules shall take into consideration any representations which any Medical Association may make with respect thereto. The representatives of Associations of Midwives are not mentioned.

It seems almost incredible in these days that it should be seriously proposed to procure an Act of Parliament to regulate the education, examination, and certification of the midwives in one city, for we do not in these days live in fenced or beleaguered cities. The midwives of

Belfast are there to-day and gone to-morrow; but it is a serious menace to bodies of women workers at the present day that corporations may introduce private Bills into Parliament which closely affect their professional life and work, without those concerned knowing anything about them until they are laws of the realm.

If Parliament allows such a Bill as that of the Belfast Corporation to pass, so far as it concerns midwives, it must be prepared to enact similar Bills for every city and borough in Scotland and Ireland, in which case let us hope some modicum of time will be left for Imperial affairs.

The Midwives Institute.

At the Annual Meeting of the Midwives' Institute and Trained Nurses' Club, held on Friday in last week, Miss Amy Hughes, General Superintendent of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, was unanimously elected President, after which she took the Presidential Chair, and presided at the meeting. We congratulate the members of the Institute on their choice of a President, and hope that her term of office will be a fruitful and successful one.

The L.C.C. and the Midwives Act.

At the Meeting of the London County Council, held on Tuesday, January 24th, the Midwives' Act Committee reported that it is the duty of the Council as the local supervising authority for the administrative County of London to supply to the Central Midwives' Board during the month of January in each year the names and addresses of all certified midwives who, during the preceding year, notified their intention to practise within the county. Five hundred and twenty-nine midwives gave notice during 1910 of their intention to practise, and ten notices were received from persons who had acted as midwives on specific occasions, and thirty-two from certified midwives who intended to practise during periods shorter than one year. Four women have been convicted of habitually and for gain practising midwifery contrary to the provisions of Section 1 (2) of the Midwives' Act, and sentences varying from a fine of 2s. and £1 1s. costs, to a fine of £2 and £1 3s. costs, imposed.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)