

## The Central Midwives Board.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, January 19th, Sir Francis Champneys presiding.

### REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE.

The report of the Standing Committee was received.

The Board decided that a communication from the Town Clerk of Birkenhead as to the difficulties experienced by the Local Supervising Authority in obtaining a conviction under Section 1 (2) of the Midwives' Act, 1902, be transmitted to the Privy Council. The Section provides that "From and after the first day of April one thousand nine hundred and ten, no woman shall habitually and for gain attend women in childbirth otherwise than under the direction of a qualified medical practitioner unless she is certified under this Act."

The Chairman explained that the Act is evaded by women who practise midwifery but state that they do not do it habitually and for gain.

The Board suggested that with a view to effective administration of the Midwives' Act, 1902, Section 1 (2) should be amended by the omission of the words "habitually and for gain." They further decided that the Town Clerk of Birkenhead be informed of the action of the Board.

In reply to a letter from the Medical Officer of Health for Sheffield as to the extent of a midwife's obligation to visit her patient during the puerperium, it was decided to say (a) that the Board has designedly refrained from making it obligatory on the midwife in every case to attend her patient for ten consecutive days, and that the number of visits paid must vary according to the circumstances of each case, the midwife remaining responsible if anything goes wrong with a patient owing to the omission of a visit; (b) that any visit paid by an assistant must not be in substitution for, but in addition to, a visit of the midwife.

In reply to a request from the Superintendent and Matron of the Government Maternity Hospital, Madras, to hold examinations in Madras, it was decided to say that the Board regretted it was impossible to accede to the application.

A letter was received from the Governor of Holloway Prison reporting the conviction and sentence to two months' imprisonment of a certified midwife for wilful damage to Government property.

A letter was considered from a candidate, who failed at the December examination, complaining of the conduct of one of the examiners. It was decided to inform the candidate that the Board, having carefully considered her two letters, and having communicated with both examiners acting at Table D at the examination in December last, has come to the conclusion that she must have misinterpreted the attitude and the words of the examiner, of whom she complains.

### REMOVAL FROM THE ROLL.

The names of thirteen midwives were removed from the Roll at their own request.

### APPLICATIONS FOR APPROVAL.

The applications of the following medical practitioners for approval as teachers were granted:—

James Beatty, Esq., M.D.; Flavell Edmunds, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

The applications of the following midwives for approval to sign Forms III. and IV. were also granted:—Charlotte Almond (No. 5381), Jessie Murrell Bell (No. 22569), Lizzie Keeping (No. 9472), Jane Margaret Ostle (No. 25939).

### REVISION OF LISTS.

The Secretary was instructed to revise the Lists of Training Schools, Teachers, and approved Midwives on the same principle as in previous years.

### RESOLUTION.

On the motion of Sir George Fordham it was agreed that a second volume of the minutes of the Board be made up and indexed for the three years ending March 31st, 1911, and that thereafter the minutes be made up in three-year periods.

Sir George Fordham also called attention to Clause 7, Section 1, of the Midwives' Bill (No. 2), 1910, which provides for the payment annually of a fee of 1s. by certified midwives, and moved a resolution providing that the Lord President of the Council be asked to receive a deputation of the Board to lay before him the very serious difficulties which will arise if the clause passes into law.

This was seconded by the Hon. Mrs. Charles Egerton.

Sir George Fordham expressed the opinion that if the clause referred to became law the work of the Board in building up the Roll would be frustrated. Further, though those midwives who failed to send the shilling fee to the Board before the end of January in each year, would be automatically removed from the Roll, there was no provision for cancelling certificates. Again, though the names of midwives not complying with this regulation would be deleted at the end of January, the new Roll was not published till May, and it would be impossible for anyone to say with certainty who was, and who was not, a certificated midwife for nearly half the year. The Roll would be useless for practical purposes, and, in effect, there would be none.

There were now some 9,000 midwives trained and examined in conformity with the regulations of the Board, who had spent a large sum of money on their training, and it would be a hardship if they were involved in a considerable financial loss on account of their failure to notify. This applied particularly to midwives resident abroad.

Mr. Parker Young said that the Board had held two special meetings and had agreed that the clause was objectionable and should not be passed, but other clauses were equally objectionable. He did not think that they should go to the Lord President with reference to one clause only, but that if a deputation were received the other clauses of the Bill to which the Board took exception should be added also.

Miss Paget supported Mr. Parker Young.

The Chairman reminded the Board that all the resolutions in reference to clauses disapproved by the Board were not passed unanimously.

Miss Paget thought they might add the clauses which were passed unanimously.

The Secretary, Mr. G. W. Duncan, said that if the clause passed into law the office staff employed

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