

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

A meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, October 12th. Sir Francis Champneys presided.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A letter was considered from a Lincolnshire Training School, stating that a pupil had had an undoubted epileptic fit, and asking the guidance of the Board as to her being allowed to continue her training.

The Chairman said there was no rule of the Board to prohibit a person subject to fits being admitted to its examination, but there ought to be, as a midwife ought not to be a danger to her patients. The Board would do well to bear the matter in mind at the next revision of the rules; indeed, it was a question if they should not ask the Privy Council to sanction a new rule with this object at once.

Mr. Golding Bird remarked that the Board was an examining body, and questioned its right to refuse to allow the candidate to come up for examination.

The Chairman said that was not the point. The training school wished to know if it should allow the candidate to continue her training. After some discussion it was agreed to reply that "in the opinion of the Board a woman subject to epileptic fits is not suitable to practise as a midwife."

REPORT OF PENAL CASES COMMITTEE.

The Committee reported that in the case of six midwives reports had been made by their respective Local Supervising Authorities. These being generally satisfactory it was decided to take no further action.

The charges alleged against 26 midwives having been considered by the Penal Cases Committee it was decided to cite them to appear before the Board.

It was further decided that a special meeting of the Board should be held on Tuesday, November 14th, at 2 p.m. for dealing with all the penal cases and applications then ready for hearing.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE.

On the report of the Standing Committee a letter was considered from Miss Adeline Margaret Taylor, as to a communication received by her from the Hon. Secretary of the Enfield Medico-Ethical Society, informing her that the Society had unanimously agreed that a midwife, calling in a medical practitioner in any stage of a confinement, must guarantee a fee of not less than a guinea and a half, and that the case must be taken over entirely by the doctor. The midwife wrote to the Secretary of the Central Midwives Board:—

"Neither my sister, Emma Taylor, or myself, as midwives, can guarantee that that fee stated can be paid. We are dependent on our cases for our living, and the majority of people here are very

poor, scarcely able to pay our fee, which is 10s. 6d., let alone an extra 31s. 6d. for doctor.

"I spoke to one of the local doctors here this evening, and he told me that it was owing to the States Bill coming in, and he also said that even if I were to send for him he could please himself if he would come to my aid or not.

"What I should like to know, Mr. Duncan, is, is the woman then to be left without medical help (perhaps to die), even after I have done my best, and complied with the rules of the C.M.B. in sending for medical help?"

The Secretary reported that, by the direction of the Chairman, he had forwarded a copy of the letter of the Enfield Medico-Ethical Society to the Privy Council. The following is Sir Almeric Fitzroy's reply:—

The Clerk of the Council,
Privy Council Office,
London, S.W.

31st July, 1911.

SIR,—Referring to your letter of the 28th inst., enclosing a copy of a letter from Miss A. M. Taylor, a certified midwife, together with a copy of a letter addressed to Miss Taylor by the Enfield Medico-Ethical Society demanding guarantees in the matter of the fees of medical men in the Enfield district, who may be called in in cases of necessity, I have to observe that the medical interests of the Society in question appear to be more prominent than its ethical pretensions, and that, in my opinion, the correspondence discloses a most improper imposition on the midwife, and one which it is her duty to ignore.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
(Signed) ALMERIC FITZROY.

The Standing Committee recommended:—

"That a copy of Sir Almeric Fitzroy's letter be sent to Adeline Margaret Taylor, No. 27, 622, and that she be informed that the Board has no control over the medical profession, but that, if she does her duty under the rules, she will discharge the responsibility that attaches to her."

Mr. Parker Young said that he wished to move the addition of the following words: "The Board however, regret that the Government have not yet made provision in such cases."

The Chairman said it would be more convenient to take Mr. Parker Young's proposition as a rider after the Standing Committee's recommendation was adopted, and this was done.

Mr. Parker Young said the time for making provision for the payment of medical fees was overdue. It was sometimes asked outside: "What are your Board doing; are they any good at all?" They sent up recommendations to the Privy Council and received polite replies. The Government, which had been in office six years, had promised social reform, but there seemed no likelihood of it. A midwife was told if she sent for a doctor, and he would not come, she had done her duty, but where did the lying-in woman come in? In the interests of such women, of the medical profession

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