

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,252

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1912.

Vol. XLVIII

EDITORIAL.

THE PAYMENT OF PUBLIC BOARDS.

The resolution moved by Mr. Parker Young at the last meeting of the Central Midwives Board, to the effect that steps should be taken to provide for the payment of the expenses of country members when attending meetings of the Board, embodied an important principle.

We are in agreement with Mr. Golding Bird, however, who held that it would be a mistake if only the country members were remunerated, for, while the out-of-pocket expenses of such members are of course greater, and their loss of time more considerable, life in London is lived at such high pressure that every moment has its monetary value.

The principle of the payment of members of such bodies as the Central Midwives Board is good because the area from which the members can be drawn is thereby enlarged. In the case of a Board which is unremunerated, only such persons as have time at their disposal, and can afford to give their services, are available; and this naturally greatly restricts the candidates. On the other hand, there may be many who would prove eminently desirable members who cannot allow themselves to be nominated because of the financial loss entailed, for work on public bodies not only means that considerable time must be devoted to the duties connected with the office, but certain out-of-pocket expenses are also unavoidable. Service is therefore practically restricted to persons with leisure and means, while it will hardly be contended that the brains and expert knowledge which it is desirable to utilize in the public service are the exclusive monopoly of the well-to-do.

The Central Midwives Board is fortunate in its members, the majority

attending regularly and punctually, and remaining till the conclusion of the proceedings, but its composition would unquestionably be greatly strengthened by the addition of one or more working midwives, who could bring to its deliberations a special kind of practical knowledge now wholly lacking, and which working midwives themselves keenly feel should be represented on their governing board.

A Midwives' Board without provision for a single midwife upon it, is just as much an anomaly as the General Medical Council would be without a registered medical practitioner upon it. It is inconceivable that such a grotesque proposition would be tolerated for a moment by the medical profession, nor would such a suggestion ever be made to a profession consisting mainly of members of the male sex, who can influence legislation through their Parliamentary votes.

It is true that one member of the Central Midwives Board (Miss Rosalind Paget) happens to be a certified midwife, that her knowledge is a valuable asset to the Board, and her services to midwives leaves them her debtor, but she is the nominee of the Council of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, and should she resign her seat it by no means follows that a midwife would be appointed as her successor.

It is of urgent importance that provision should be made, by an Amending Act, for the inclusion of certified midwives on their governing body, as the direct representatives of their colleagues; and as the majority of midwives who practise their profession are dependent on their earnings—their very hardly gained earnings—for their support, it would greatly facilitate their appointment if the services they are prepared to render to the State on their governing body were recognized and remunerated.

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