

# The Midwife.

## THE SUPPLY OF MIDWIVES IN IRELAND.

The following proposal has been submitted to Boards of Guardians in Ireland, with regard to midwives, by the Women's National Health Association of Ireland :—

The Women's National Health Association of Ireland, having learned that the death-rate amongst women in childbirth is considerably higher in Ireland than in Great Britain, and considering that the Midwives Registration Act does not apply to Ireland, and that there are still a large number of unqualified midwives practising in Ireland, especially in outlying country districts, desire to make the following proposition to Boards of Guardians :—

If a Board of Guardians has appointed or does appoint as midwife for a dispensary district a woman having the qualifications laid down as necessary by the Insurance Commissioners for a midwife attending women on behalf of whom the maternity benefit is to be applied, then the Women's National Health Association will endeavour, through its branches, or through special committees to be formed for the purpose, to provide extra salary sufficient to bring up such midwife's salary to £1 a week, with bicycle and allowance for uniform, on certain conditions.

The conditions to be as follows :—

1. That during such time that she is not required for her special duties that she should carry on such work on behalf of mothers and infants as may be directed by the local Women's National Health Association Committee.
2. That she be required to keep each patient that she attends as midwife under supervision for a month after the child's birth, and that she should also give special attention to the care and management of the babies.
3. That arrangements should be made whereby she may be given the opportunity of training in the care and management of infants and young children.
4. That said midwife takes no private practice, save that provided for the wives of insured persons, or for women who are themselves insured, or by special arrangement with the Committee as hereafter indicated.
5. That persons desiring the services of the midwife, and able to pay for them, should pay a fee to the local Women's National Health Association Committee, or a small annual subscription,

thereby entitling themselves to the midwife attendance when required.

NOTE.—Referring to condition 5, the arrangement proposed is a tentative one, on the lines of a scheme which is found to work well in various rural districts in England. The W.N.H.A. does not, of course, wish to make money out of any such transaction, beyond recouping itself, if possible, for the sum paid to midwife according to guarantee ; or in forming local fund for benefit of mothers and infants, under supervision of local committee.

6. That some plan for the inspection of such midwives be devised, should a Midwives Registration Act not be enacted for Ireland.

After consultation with matrons of lying-in hospitals and others of experience, it seems clear that there are a number of midwives who have taken their six months' training at the recognised maternity hospitals, who would be glad and willing to accept the position of midwife under the above conditions, and for a salary of £1 a week.

It is, of course, understood that the proposition applies to districts where qualified midwives are already employed, but it will naturally take some time before the necessary arrangements can be made by the Women's National Health Association.

On the motion of Sir John Byers, M.D., seconded by Dr. Andrew Horne, the following resolution was adopted at the Central Health Conference of Local Authorities, held recently in Dublin :—

That this Conference recommends the scheme outlined by the Women's National Health Association to the careful consideration of the Boards of Guardians.

**QUALIFICATIONS ADOPTED BY IRISH NATIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION AS NECESSARY FOR MIDWIVES ATTENDING WOMEN BENEFITING BY THE MATERNITY BENEFIT UNDER THE NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT.**

The Irish National Health Insurance Commissioners have adopted the same qualifications as required by the Local Government Board, viz. :—

“ Every person to be appointed by any Board of Guardians to serve as midwife of a dispensary district shall have the qualifications hereinafter set forth, that is to say :—

I. Such person shall have obtained from some lying-in hospital recognised by the Local Government Board a certificate of proficiency in midwifery, or shall be a person whose name is contained on the roll of midwives of the Central Midwives Board ; provided that neither of the aforesaid qualifications shall be necessary in the case of any

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