APPLICATIONS FOR REMOVAL OF NAME FROM THE ROLL.

Applications were received from three women for the removal of their names from the Roll.

It was agreed that the applications be granted and that the Secretary be directed to remove their names from the Roll of Midwives, and to cancel their certificates.

PENAL BOARDS.

Penal Boards were arranged for Thursday, June 26th, and Wednesday, July 23rd; and the meeting then terminated.

AN IMPORTANT CASE TO MIDWIVES.

CLAIM FOR DAMAGES AGAINST NURSING INSTITUTION.

Before Mr. Justice Pickford and a special jury, in the High Court of Justice on Friday, June 13th, Mr. Heathcote, a contractor's foreman, *v.* Chadwick and others, claimed to recover damages for the wrongful act, neglect, or default of the defendants, which, he alleged, caused the death of his wife. The defendants were the Committee of the Nursing Institution and Home for Private Persons at St. Albans, of which the Matron is Mrs. Nicoll.

For the plaintiff it was stated that his late wife, Mrs. Heathcote, agreed with Mrs. Nicoll, on behalf of the defendants, that they would nurse her during her confinement for a fee of 30s., the agreement being that she should not have a whole time nurse, but receive visits from a duly qualified midwife. A nurse from the institution attended her on the two days previous to her confinement, again at the confinement, which took place on March 11th, 1912, and on the subsequent day. It was alleged that owing to the nurse's negligence, and failure to exercise due care and skill, she being the servant of the defendants, the plaintiff's wife was infected with puerperal fever and died on March 20th. The nurse was nursing another patient, Mrs. White, who was confined on March 8th, and whose temperature rose on March 10th. On March 12th the doctor in attendance found her to be suffering from puerperal septicæmia. He informed the nurse who thereupon ceased to attend Mrs. Heathcote.

The plaintiff alleged that the nurse was not a fit and proper person to attend Mrs. Heathcote, owing to her attendance on Mrs. White, that she should have known from her own training that it was dangerous for her to attend Mrs. Heathcote after attending another patient, although the doctor had not diagnosed her to be suffering from puerperal fever, and that Mrs. Nicoll, who was the agent of the defendants, was negligent in allowing the nurse to continue in attendance upon his wife, as she knew of Mrs. White's rise of temperature.

The defence was that the nurse was not the servant of the Committee of the Institution, and that there had been no want of care and skill on the part either of the defendants or the nurse.

The judge in summing up instructed the jury that they must consider what the contract was. Did the defendants agree to nurse the plaintiff's wife or did they only agree to supply a nurse to attend her. If they undertook to nurse the case then they would be responsible for any negligence on the part of the nurse. If they only agreed to supply a nurse they were not responsible for any negligence of hers, but it was possible that if Mrs. Nicoll allowed the nurse to attend Mrs. Heathcote when she should not have done so, that they might be responsible for her act in so doing. The judge expressed great doubt as to evidence of a contract by the defendants to nurse Mrs. Heathcote as apart from a contract to supply a nurse, but he left that for the jury to decide, as also whether there was any negligence on the part of Mrs. Nicoll or the nurse, and if so if it was the cause of Mrs. Heathcote's death.

The jury were unable to agree as to the question of negligence, and were discharged, the judge saying if the parties wished to argue the case he would hear them another day.

It will be noted that several points of great importance to nurses and midwives arose in the course of this case, *i.e.*, the claim that the nurse or midwife attending a case is personally responsible for any act of negligence, not the committee of the institution with which she is connected. That a nurse, nursing a case under the direction of a doctor may be charged with negligence because she did not know that it was dangerous for her to continue attendance on a maternity case because the first patient had a raised temperature, although the doctor had not diagnosed puerperal fever, and the Superintendent under whom she was working sanctioned her so doing.

INDUCTION OF LABOUR AT TERM.

At a recent meeting of the Medical Society of the state of New York, Dr. George W. Kosmak presented a paper on Induction of Labour at Term. He said that the normal term of gestation, 280 days, had many exceptions; it has been estimated that 15 per cent. of all gestations were protracted. One had to be governed by the relative size of the child and the pelvis in determining the advisability of inducing labour. The growth of the fetus during the latter months is very rapid, so rapid that a child weighing 7 pounds at term would weigh 14 pounds if the birth were deferred another month. The bones also become harder, pointing to a longer labour and possible mutilation. The rational course was to induce labour within four or five days of term.

At the recent Nursing Conference in Dublin Miss Creighton spoke of the sufferings of women in India from ignorant midwifery, and of the enlightenment of the Begum of Bhopal, who had made the practice of midwifery by untrained women a criminal act.