

## THE L.C.C. GENERAL POWERS BILL, 1914.

### LICENSING OF LYING-IN HOMES.

Details of the clauses to be included in Parts IV and V of the London County Council General Powers Bill, 1914, with regard to the regulation of lying-in homes, and establishments for nursing or special treatment, respectively, were reported to the Council by the Parliamentary Committee on Tuesday, 2nd. The Committee stated that in drafting the clauses it had been guided to a great extent by views expressed by the Home Secretary and certain of the officials of the Home Office.

Part IV provided that no person should carry on a lying-in home in the county unless the name of such person and the premises were registered. The Council was to be the registration authority and the fee was not to exceed 10s. 6d. The Council, by order to be served on a person, might refuse to register or might cancel or suspend the registration of such person or premises if (i) the person was unsuitable for the purpose; (ii) if the premises were unsuitable or were unsuitably equipped; (iii) if there was reason to believe that the premises were being used for prostitution or other immoral purposes, and (iv) if any such home was being carried on in contravention of the provisions of the Act, or of any by-laws made thereunder. Before making an order notice was to be given to the person concerned and a right of appeal to a police magistrate was provided. The Council's officers were given a right of entry, subject to regulations to be made by the Council, into premises which there was reasonable cause to believe were being used for the purposes of a lying-in home. The Committee had included a power of the Council to make by-laws for safeguarding the health of women received in lying-in homes for the purposes of childbirth and for the prevention of prostitution and immorality in connection with such homes. The original instructions of the Council were silent on this point. A penalty not exceeding £50 was fixed, and a further penalty not exceeding £20 for each day on which the offence continued after conviction, and in respect of a second or subsequent offence the Court might, in lieu of, or in addition to inflicting a fine, impose any period of imprisonment not exceeding three months. A penalty not exceeding £5, and a further penalty not exceeding £2 for a continuing offence, was provided for breaches of by-laws, obstruction, and the publication or display of any advertisement of a lying-in home after receipt of notice that the registration of such home had been refused, suspended or cancelled.

The Committee further stated that it had experienced much difficulty in dealing with exemptions from the clauses. It had decided not to exempt any hospitals or institutions by name, but institutions coming within the following classes would be exempt: Institutions maintained or controlled by any Government depart-

ment or any local or other authority constituted by Parliament, institutions for the training of persons desirous of becoming midwives which were approved by the Central Midwives Board, lying-in homes where no payment or reward was received by any person in respect of the reception of women therein, lying-in homes in which only relatives of the person carrying on such home were received, and any hospital, institution or premises or class of hospital, institution or premises which the Council by resolution might specify from time to time. Exemption of homes where women were taken without payment was not expressly mentioned in the Council's resolution, but it appeared to the Committee that it would be difficult to make out a case for their inclusion. An appeal to a Secretary of State against refusal to exempt had been provided. The Committee had not considered it necessary to provide for the repeal of the Lying-in Hospitals Act, 1773, under which certain lying-in institutions were required to be licensed by the justices in Quarter Sessions.

### REGISTRATION OF NURSING HOMES.

Part V of the Bill contained powers for the control of any premises in the county used, or intended, or purporting to be used for the reception of persons requiring nursing during illness, or for treatment by massage, manicure, chiropody, light, electric, vapour or other baths, or for other similar treatment, but did not include a lying-in home. The Committee understood the Council's object in seeking these powers to be the prevention of immorality, and in drafting the clauses this intention had been kept in view. This limitation of the scope of the powers, moreover, was in accord with the views of the Home Secretary. Unlike the clauses relating to lying-in homes, therefore, these powers did not deal in any way with the suitability or equipment of the premises.

It was provided that no person should carry on an establishment of the kind mentioned unless the person and the premises were registered. The Council's resolution contemplated a charge not exceeding two guineas for registration, but the Home Office considered that this was too much and the charge had been limited to one guinea. It was provided that the Council, by order to be served on a person, might refuse to register or might suspend or cancel the registration of such person, or the premises, if the person's character was unsatisfactory on moral grounds, or there was reason to believe that the premises were being used for prostitution or other immoral purposes, or the establishment was being carried on in contravention of the provisions of the Act, or of any by-laws made thereunder. Any person concerned might appeal to a magistrate against any such order. The Council's officers were to have power to enter any premises if they had reasonable cause to believe that they were being used for any of the purposes in question. It was also provided that in any case in which premises were advertised as being used for the purposes of any business to which these provisions did not apply, and the

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