

The Midwife.

MIDWIFERY IN 1913.

THE PRESENT TERM OF TRAINING.

During the present year the three months' period of training for midwives, which is all that is at present required by the Central Midwives Board, has come in for a considerable amount of criticism. The Infant Mortality Conference, held in London in August, passed a resolution declaring "that steps should be taken to secure the better training of women who apply for the certificate of the Central Midwives Board." Speakers at the Nursing Conference held in Dublin, including Miss Ramsden, matron of the Rotunda Hospital, advocated six months' training for trained nurses and twelve months' for untrained women. Miss Ramsden considered that the Central Midwives Board has drawn up an excellent curriculum of training, but that the time in which the pupil is expected to grasp it is too short, and Miss Alice Gregory, Hon. Secretary of the Council for the Higher Training of Midwives constantly proclaims the insufficiency of a three months' training. In New Zealand where State Registration of Midwives is in force, and many are trained in the Government Schools, a full six months is obligatory for trained nurses and twelve months for other pupils.

PRELIMINARY TEACHING.

The Matron of Queen Charlotte's Hospital, London, reports that the preliminary course established in connection with that hospital has had a most beneficial influence on the practical work of the pupils in the wards, but considers that such preliminary teaching should be given in a Central College.

A POST-GRADUATE COURSE.

The Post Graduate Week inaugurated at the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, S.E., and open to all certified midwives, was greatly appreciated and most successful. It concluded with an examination in which many of those who had attended during the week proved how much they had profited by the instruction received.

DIRECT REPRESENTATION.

So far no provision has been made for the inclusion of a certified midwife on the Central Midwives Board, and the only one who is a member holds her position accidentally as

the representative of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses. The sooner this anomaly is rectified by an amendment to the Act, securing direct representation on the Board to midwives the better.

NEED OF A DISCIPLINARY BODY.

The need of a disciplinary body in connection with midwives receives ample proof in the number of midwives who are cited to appear before the Board for various misdemeanours and breaches of the rules. Some of these are of a most serious nature, resulting in the death of mother or infant, or the blindness of the latter. On the other hand, some of the charges on which midwives are cited, on a prima facie case being found by the Local Supervising Authority, are of so trivial or unwarrantable a nature as to prove the necessity for a Central Authority to defend the midwife and dispense justice.

THE NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT.

In connection with the National Insurance Act, an amendment has been passed by which the maternity benefit becomes the mother's benefit, payable to her, or, if paid to her husband, it is to be paid over to her. There is also a new sub-section providing that a married insured woman shall have a special maternity benefit, in lieu of, and equivalent to four weeks' sickness benefit, on condition that she abstains from remunerative work for four weeks after her confinement. This permits the attending midwife to sign the necessary certificate which, in the case of sickness benefit, has to be signed by a panel doctor.

ANTE-NATAL HYGIENE.

During the year the importance of ante-natal hygiene has been emphasised, and, in this connection, the care and feeding of expectant mothers has received consideration. It is impossible that the developing child should receive the nourishment it needs if the mother is ill-nourished and overworked, and now that the subject is receiving attention we may hope that mothers will be better able to meet the strain of motherhood, and will bear children with sounder constitutions than heretofore.

REGISTRATION OF LYING-IN HOMES.

The intention of the London County Council to introduce legislation for the registration of Lying-in Homes will, if carried into effect, have most far-reaching consequences.

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