

The Midwife.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

A meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Thursday, February 19th, Sir Francis Champneys presiding.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE.

A letter was received from the Clerk of the Council transmitting a copy of correspondence between the Privy Council, the National Health Insurance Joint Committee, and the Carnarvonshire County Council in regard to midwifery practice by uncertified women in the County of Carnarvon.

The correspondence resulted from a complaint made by Miss C. M. Daniel, certified midwife, 3, Thomas Street, Carnarvon, who complained that uncertified women were interfering with her practice. The Clerk to the Carnarvon County Council wrote that he had made inquiries, and seen Dr. Griffiths, one of the inspectors who admitted Nurse Daniel's statement, but said that Mrs. Jane Jones, who was an uncertified woman, was quite as competent as Nurse Daniel. The Privy Council, in connection with this letter, referring to the question of uncertified practice, said that it was open contravention of the Midwives Act, under which, if convicted, an uncertified woman was subject to penalty. The County Council was the proper body to prosecute, and the Clerk to the Privy Council suggested that the Clerk of the Carnarvon County Council should bring the facts to the notice of that Council. The question was also referred to the National Health Insurance Commission, as Nurse Daniel stated that an uncertified woman only charged a fee of 6s., and so her services were not required. The point referred to the Commission was whether as the Maternity Benefit was provided in order to make adequate provision for a woman's care during her confinement, the husband would be liable under the National Insurance Act if an uncertified woman was employed. The Insurance Commissioners replied that they were not quite sure whether an action would lie.

It was agreed that the best thanks of the Board be given to the Lord President of the Council for his action in the matter.

A letter was received from the Local Government Board transmitting copies of an Order which they have issued under Section 130 of the Public Health Act, 1875, requiring the notification of all cases of ophthalmia neonatorum.

Miss Paget enquired how this would affect the midwives working under the Board, and the Chairman replied that they would have to notify the Sanitary Authority as well as the Local Supervising Authority.

Mr. Parker Young considered the notification superfluous. If the Government had conferred with the Board it might have been obviated. The dual notification was unnecessary, and a departure from the usual course. It would be well if the Government instead of muddling in this way attended to things which needed doing.

Miss Paget pointed out that under the Midwives Act midwives were required to call in medical assistance in the case of discharge from the eyes of the infant, however slight, when it would be the duty of the medical practitioner to notify. It was resolved: (a) That the Local Government Board be thanked for their communication and be asked whether in respect to any future Orders proposed to be issued by them which affect in any way the duties of the Central Midwives Board under the Midwives Act, 1902, or the Rules made under the Act, a confidential draft could be laid before the Central Midwives Board for their consideration before it is finally settled; (b) That the Chairman be asked to confer with the Local Government Board or their principal Medical Officer on the Ophthalmia Neonatorum Order just issued.

A letter was received from the Inspector of Midwives for the County of Norfolk with regard to the fact of the letters C.M.B. appearing appended after her name in some of her official reports to the County Council. It was decided to take no further action in the matter.

A letter was read from the Town Clerk of Birkenhead transmitting a copy of correspondence between the Health Committee of the Birkenhead Town Council and the Birkenhead Maternity Hospital with regard to the conduct of a certified midwife and a pupil midwife while in attendance at the confinement of Mrs. Thompson, of 2, Howard Street, Birkenhead.

It was resolved:—(a) That the Town Clerk of Birkenhead be informed that the Committee of the Birkenhead Maternity Hospital admit that the midwife "Sister Kerr" failed in her duty in not visiting the patient as she should have done. As regards the skin eruption the occurrence points to the reconsideration of Rule E. 20 (5) at the next revision of the Rules; (b) That the Committee of the Birkenhead Maternity Hospital be informed that the Board is glad to see that they acknowledge that the midwife in question failed in her duty by leaving the patient unvisited. As regards the rash (considering the very dangerous nature of some forms of Pemphigus) they think that the wiser course would have been to seek the opinion of a registered medical practitioner.

A letter was received from a certified midwife complaining of her suspension by the Local Supervising Authority. The midwife wrote that

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