

proposes the establishment of a Health Service linking up the State, the Home and the Municipality, in connection with which all maternity care and the care of children under school age shall be under the public health authority. It proposes that a grant of £7 10s. for every child born should be made by the State, on which every mother would draw £5, partly as a weekly allowance before and after confinement, partly for the expenses of the confinement for which 30s. should be paid down in cash, or 20s. in cash and free midwife. The remaining £2 10s. would, it is proposed, form a fund from which additional benefits might be given during pregnancy according to the need. Further, it suggests the development of infant consultations now in existence, into maternity centres dealing in addition to the infants with (a) care during pregnancy, and (b) medical inspection and treatment of children under five years of age.

MUNICIPAL MIDWIVES AND HOSPITALS.

The Guild further suggests that there should be a municipal service of midwives, whose salary should be not less than £100 a year, and for whom some small fee might be charged by the municipality. These midwives should have a longer and more thorough training, to include nursing, lactation, and the feeding of infants. To meet the expenses of training, municipal scholarships should be offered.

The universal adoption of notification of births is a necessary part of the Guild's scheme, and to this it is urgent to add the notification of stillbirths and all forms of miscarriage.

We hope that Parliament will give sympathetic consideration to this scheme, put forward by a society including 30,000 working women.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

Special meetings of the Central Midwives Board were held at the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, on Monday, March 30th, and Tuesday March 31st, Sir Francis Champneys presiding, for the purpose of hearing the charges alleged against a number of midwives.

MONDAY, MARCH 30TH.

Interim reports on cases adjourned for judgment on the report of the Local Supervising Authority were first considered. Sarah Ellen Moss (No. 3074) was struck off the Roll.

Struck off the Roll and Certificate Cancelled.—Elizabeth Charlotte Bacon (No. 5779), Mary Jane Cambridge (No. 20507), Jane Cox (No. 933), Sarah Ann Crowe (No. 11074), L.O.S. certificate, Mary Donnelly (No. 8976), Elizabeth Kennedy (No. 17709), Decima Smith (No. 4759).

Severely Censured.—Elizabeth Lloyd (No. 36928), C.M.B. examination.

Sentence postponed.—Mary Till (No. 34807), C.M.B. examination.

Exonerated, no Sentence.—Ellen Potter (No.

20264), Sarah Agnes Williamson (No. 15595), L.O.S. certificate.

The first cases taken were those of Mrs. Potter and Mrs. Williamson, mother and daughter, who appeared together, and were defended by their solicitor. After an investigation lasting nearly two and a half hours, the Board found that the charges against Mrs. Potter were not proved. In regard to Mrs. Williamson they considered the charge of not disinfecting herself to the satisfaction of the Local Supervising Authority proved, but that she had answered it to the satisfaction of the Board. It appears that the Sheffield Local Supervising Authority, under which Mrs. Williamson works, insists that all midwives required to disinfect shall do so at the public baths. Notwithstanding the fact, therefore, that she had a bath room in her own house, Mrs. Williamson proceeded to some public baths to find them closed. She then went three miles to some more baths, to find that, being midday Saturday, there was a rush of men and all were occupied. The inspector, Mrs. Franks, who was interrogated by the Chairman, said that the L.S.A. did not recognise the bath which the midwife had taken in her own house. Had she returned to the public baths later she would have found the rush over.

One case in which the midwife was struck off for inebriety was a sad one, as she had suffered from an attack of ague, the result of malaria contracted while in India, and took rum to counteract it. It is regrettable in the circumstances that no medical evidence was available, in respect to the midwife's real condition, as severe malaria may leave the sufferer shaky and even incoherent, symptoms which might be misinterpreted by lay persons.

Elizabeth Lloyd, who holds the C.M.B. certificate may think herself fortunate that she escaped with severe censure for an offence punishable under the Common Law with a maximum sentence of seven years' penal servitude. Having delivered a woman of a still-born child, and given a certificate to this effect, she subsequently, on the representation of the grandmother that the parents could not claim sick benefit from an insurance society unless the child had lived, obliged with a certificate that the mother "gave birth to a male child on December 2nd which lived one hour." The midwife who appeared before the Board admitted the offence, and the Chairman in censuring her enlarged on the wrongfulness and dishonesty of her action, especially in one holding a position of trust.

In connection with the disinfection of a midwife Miss Paget enquired of Dr. Meredith Young, M.O.H., Cheshire, whether his Local Supervising Authority required midwives who had adequate bathing arrangements at home, to go to a cleansing station. Dr. Young replied he would have to be satisfied that the midwife really disinfected. In his area the midwives took disinfecting baths at the Isolation Hospital, under the supervision of the Superintendent Nurse, who practically never left them until she had seen their hair washed and given them tea before leaving.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)