

THE REGISTRATION OF LYING-IN HOMES.

(Concluded)

Miss Rosalind Paget throughout her evidence before the Local Legislation Committee of the House of Commons, in spite of efforts to induce her to say the contrary, insisted that the London County Council should be the supervising authority. Uniformity was very important, and you could not get uniformity by twenty-nine masters. The homes of certified midwives taking in lying-in women had been greatly improved during the time of the inspection by the London County Council. She did not think there was very much to complain of in any of them now. It required an inspector of very exceptional quality to find out the evils of which the County Council wished to get hold.

Mr. John Hunt, Town Clerk of the City of Westminster, considered that having regard to the objects to be attained—the sanitary condition of the premises and the prevention of immorality—the matter was essentially within the jurisdiction of the Borough Councils.

As we have already reported, the Committee decided that the power should be left with the County Council.

When the points in relation to the lying-in homes were considered by the Committee the first dealt with was that of the registration fee. The Committee considered a registration fee of 10s. 6d. too high, and it was fixed, with the acquiescence of counsel for the London County Council, at 5s.

In Clause 15, Sub-Clause 5 was altered as follows:—(a) Power to refuse to register, or to cancel registration, was restricted to the cases where there is evidence before the Council to show that applicants are of known bad character; (b) where the premises are unsuitable.

Clause 17, giving the Council power to make by-laws for safeguarding the health of women received in lying-in homes, and of any children born therein, was struck out, the Committee apparently thinking that these powers clashed with those of the Central Midwives Board.

The Act in regard to both lying-in homes and nursing homes will come into force on April 1st, 1915. The London County Council is required to give notice by public advertisement in two or more daily papers circulating in the county within three months of the passing of the Act of the effect of the provisions, and all persons carrying on lying-in or nursing homes must apply for registration within one month of that date.

MRS. MESSENGER.

“ Honour, anger, valour, fire,
A love that life could never tire,
Death quench, or evil stir,
The Mighty Master gave to her.”

Mrs. Messenger, one of the most distinguished midwives of our time, passed away on Saturday,

August 1st. She is deeply mourned by a wide circle of friends, her pupils scattered all over the world will keenly feel her loss, but her work endures and will endure. The memory of her strong character, winning personality, charm of manner, and magnetic influence, inspire all those who ever came into contact with her. As a teacher of midwifery she was unsurpassed, clear, sound, enthusiastic; her marvellous patience with those to whom the study of midwifery presented great difficulties was ever the wonder and delight of those who heard her explain them in simple, clear English; she was never too tired to take infinite pains with slow, dull pupils.

For twenty happy years Mrs. Messenger was head midwife at the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road; over 10,000 deliveries were conducted under her supervision; the house physicians, many of whom are now eminent obstetricians, appreciated her teaching, tact and wisdom; she was ever loyal, ever modest, and they valued her not only as a highly experienced midwife, but as a faithful friend. She worked in perfect harmony with the medical staff, the Matron, Miss Atkinson, and the Secretary, Miss Annie Whyte, for those twenty years; they were very strenuous, and if she had not had magnificent health and courage she could not have borne the frequent broken nights and busy days. She made fame for York Road Hospital as a teaching school, and was deeply loved by her colleagues and patients; to the end, to be a pupil of Mrs. Messenger was a hall mark of excellence. She gave up her post at the hospital to superintend the York Road District at Surrey Square; she still continued for some time to teach the theory of midwifery to both the hospital and district pupils, and up to within three weeks of her death she was teaching some of the outdoor pupils, so that her connection with the hospital so dear to her was never severed.

She left Surrey Square to become Superintendent of Mrs. Heywood Johnston's Home, and although in the last years she aged rapidly, her work was ever fine and inspiring, and her energy untiring. She disliked publicity, her disposition was retiring and reserved, but her judgment and sympathies were so broad, her opinion so valuable, that she stood in the very forefront of the movement for the better education of midwives, and the improvement of their condition. She was consulted from far and wide on points connected with her profession. For many years she held office at the Midwives Institute, which by her death loses a valuable support.

Mrs. Messenger was, while yet young, left a widow with two sons; in the later years of her life she found much joy in her grand-children, and by her old friends she was ever lovingly spoken of by the name of “Granny.” They would have had her rest after her arduous life, but she was one of those who did not know how to spare herself; the over-work and over-strain were at last too much for her, and after three weeks' illness she entered into rest.

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