

### FEES OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS CALLED IN BY MIDWIVES.

At the annual representative meeting of the British Medical Association the Chairman of the Medico-Political Committee (Mr. T. W. H. Garstang), as reported in the *British Medical Journal*, moved the following recommendations in the Annual Report of the Council, which were adopted:—

That the following should be the minimum scale of fees for the payment of medical practitioners called in on the advice of midwives, but power should be obtained to pay special fees in special cases:

	£	s.	d.
(i) Attendance at cases requiring or necessitating operative assistance, and subsequent necessary visits during the first ten days .. .. .	2	2	0
(ii) Attendance at cases without operative assistance, and subsequent necessary visits during first ten days .. .. .	1	1	0
(iii) Assistance for administration of an anaesthetic .. .. .	1	1	0
(iv) Any visit not covered by (i), (ii), or (iii), including any necessary prescription—			
Day (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) .. .. .	0	3	6
Night (8 p.m. to 8 a.m.) .. .. .	0	7	6

### PENAL BOARD.

A Special Meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held in the Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, S.W., on Wednesday, July 21st (Sir Francis Champneys presiding), for the hearing of the charges against eight women, with the following results:—

*Struck off the Roll and Certificates Cancelled.*—Jane Hopkins (No. 3404), Mary Lee (No. 18459), Eleanor Rancom (No. 12848), Mary Ann Watts (No. 19174).

*Cautioned. Report to be Asked for in Three and Six Months' Time.*—Harriett Hearn (No. 1645), Emily Diana Curtis (No. 23321), Elizabeth Langdon (No. 33071).

*Sentence Postponed for Report from the Local Supervising Authority in Three and Six Months' Time.*—Elizabeth Fisher (No. 12607).

In the case of the last-named, where both mother and child lost their lives, the Chairman directed that the Local Supervising Authority of Durham should be communicated with, pointing out to them that the temperature chart bearing upon the case had not the corresponding dates, also that the receipt of the notification of still-birth did not specify it particularly, but referred to it as a still-birth. This the Chairman said was very improper and requested that in future full particulars of identification should be supplied.

Mary Lee, aged 75, said her great experience enabled her to do without the aid of a clinical thermometer.

The case of Eleanor Rancom occupied the attention of the Board for some time. The Medical Officer of Health for Norwich attended. He stated that the midwife was under liability to

answer at the Assizes to two charges of manslaughter, but as there was not sufficient evidence the case was discharged. He gave evidence that the disinfection had not been carried out to his satisfaction, after contact with puerperal fever, before the midwife attended another case.

Harriett Hearn's case, which was defended, was another instance of the midwife not recognising the symptoms of sepsis. She regarded the rigor as a breakdown of the nerves. The rigor was more like a "fit." When medical aid was finally obtained the doctor called in suggested to her the use of rubber gloves at her next case. She explained that she thought this implied permission to attend other cases. The patient under discussion died. None of the women delivered on subsequent days were affected.

The charges against Elizabeth Langdon and Emily Diana Curtis were taken together, they being sisters and in partnership. They were defended by Counsel. Both held the certificate of the Central Midwives Board. There was some difficulty in this case in fixing the charge as both midwives were in attendance on the woman in question, but as Mrs. Langdon had delivered it was decided to be her case, although entries of temperature were in Mrs. Curtis's book.

The case was yet another of sepsis, the woman losing her life. In this case also the midwives failed to recognise the gravity of the symptoms. When a medical man was at last called in he said it was a case of nerves, and that there was no danger. The grounds for this opinion were that an Insurance Officer in the early days of lying-in had been admitted to see the woman, and had upset her very much about some arrears of payment. The woman told the midwife that her "blood had turned to water." The midwives imagining that they were covered by the opinion of the doctor, did not again seek medical aid, and although the temperature persisted, they put it down to shock.

The Chairman closely questioned Mrs. Langdon on her method of examination of the placenta and membranes. Finally, though taking a lenient view, he withdrew permission from Mrs. Curtis to train pupils.

In all the deaths of five women from sepsis were recorded.

The application of Mary Donnelly (late No. 8976) for the restoration of her name to the Roll, from which it was removed in March, 1914, was received. On the recommendation of the Penal Cases Committee it was decided not to grant it.

In one instance, at the Penal Board on July 20th, where two witnesses were described as "Nurse" on the Agenda the Chairman enquired in virtue of what training they were so described. We have noted with pleasure on more than one occasion recently that the Chairman of the Board has given evidence that he does not consider the interchange of the terms nurse and midwife justifiable.

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