

The Midwife.

MATERNITY BENEFIT.

A conference was recently held at the Royal Maternity and Women's Hospital, Rotten Row, Glasgow, presided over by Dr. J. C. M'Vail, Vice-Chairman of the Scottish Insurance Commissioners, at which the rules applicable to the disposal of maternity benefit under the National Insurance Act were considered.

The Chairman referred to the important work carried on by the maternity hospitals, and said there never was a time in the history of this country when the duties which they performed towards mothers and children were more necessary than they were at the present moment. If they wanted to make up for the losses caused by the war it was absolutely necessary that every child born should be made fit for its place in life, and that mothers should be in a position to do justice to the upbringing of their children. Maternity benefit under the Insurance Act did not mean cash benefit only. The Act was careful to say that maternity benefit might be paid "in cash or otherwise." It was further provided that agreements might be made between hospitals and approved societies, and that, as regarded maternity benefit, the agreements would be to the effect that a given part of the benefit should be paid direct to the hospital by the approved society. That unquestionably was a proper use of maternity benefit with regard to insured persons who took advantage of the hospitals. No matter what society the insured person belonged to the benefit given by the hospital, whether in the wards or by skilled attention under hospital supervision in the home, was uniform. The benefit was uniform, and the payment in respect of the benefit should be uniform. That uniformity could only be achieved by a uniform agreement—by an agreement which would be adopted by all societies.

Dr. Jardine said that in addition to treating the mothers they also hoped to inaugurate a department, which they thought would be of very great benefit, to look after the babies during the first year of their lives. He thought that the Maternity Hospital was the place that work should be done from, preferably to the health department of the city—at all events so far as the babies born in the hospital were concerned. But they required money to carry on all the work of the institution, and he looked to the approved societies to assist them in the way which was now being considered.

A resolution was passed, unanimously expressing the opinion of the meeting that it was desirable that approved societies with members in Glasgow and district should enter into a uniform agreement with maternity hospitals, in respect of members receiving treatment through the hospitals.

THE NOTIFICATION OF BIRTHS (EXTENSION) ACT.

The Notification of Births (Extension) Act, 1915, was amongst the measures which received the Royal Assent before the adjournment of the House of Commons.

A MIDWIVES' ACT IN VICTORIA.

A Midwives' Bill has passed the Legislative Council in Victoria, Australia, and has now become law, thus bringing Victoria into line with Queensland and Western Australia. During the discussion of the Bill in the Legislative Council, an amendment was moved, giving the board power to suspend midwives who treat patients in premises considered to be insanitary. This was opposed by the Minister of Health, Mr. J. D. Brown, on the ground that similar powers were vested in the Board of Health, which enforced the regulation strictly; and that it would be undesirable to have two boards dealing with the same matter. The amendment was, therefore, withdrawn.

Another amendment made it a condition of registration that the applicant should have had two years' practice as a midwife in Victoria: Mr. R. Beckett, who proposed the amendment, said that it would prevent women rejected from practice in other States from obtaining registration in Victoria. He contended that, under Clause 14 of the Bill, no discretion was given to the Board as to accepting or rejecting candidates. The Minister opposed the amendment, which was eventually agreed to, on the ground that it was unnecessary.

The correspondent who sent us this news, writes: "I feel sure you will be interested to hear that we have got our Midwifery Bill through Parliament. I hear the Upper House inserted that amendment *re* the two years' practice in Victoria, but there is every probability that the State House of Parliament will bring it back to one, as in the opinion of those qualified to know, the Board has every possible control and power *re* registration."

MIDWIVES IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

In a report of the committee on midwives, at a meeting of the Medical Society of the State of New York, it was stated that the midwives in New York City were delivering more than four times as many women as the entire capacity of the lying-in hospitals of the city. The committee believed it impracticable to abolish the midwife at present. She should be educated and improved, so that her work would be of such a character as to at least partially justify her existence.

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