

The Midwife.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

PENAL MEETINGS.

Special Meetings of the Central Midwives Board for the hearing of charges alleged against certified midwives were held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on March 15th and March 17th. Sir Francis Champneys presided.

The results were as follows. Wednesday, March 15th:—

Struck off the roll and certificate Cancelled.—Elizabeth Astles (No. 17151), Hannah Eke (No. 15910), Emma Fox (No. 1474), Ann Hughes (No. 4478), Margaret Matheson (No. 20567), Phoebe Whitehouse (No. 1839.)

Judgment suspended.—Bertha Fleming (No. 30137).

Final Report on Interim Case.—Elizabeth Fisher (No. 12607), no action.

There were two separate charges against midwife Matheson, both of which included drunkenness. A particularly sad feature of the second charge, was that she had received two single girls—sisters—one only sixteen, at the same time into her house for confinement. The younger girl died. It was stated by the mother, who attended to give evidence, that she found the girl in a very neglected condition. She seemed ill and afraid of the midwife. In consequence of this she called in a doctor who ordered her immediate removal. This the midwife refused to allow till the next day, her defence being that owing to the bad weather she considered it would be unsafe for the girl to go. The midwife was defended by counsel and there was much conflicting evidence. The solicitors for the L.C.C. were also present. The case occupied over three hours.

An interesting question arose in the hearing of the charges against Midwife Astles, when both the Health Visitor and the Inspector of Midwives appeared to give evidence. The charge was one of neglecting to obtain medical assistance for an infant suffering from inflammation and discharge from the eyes.

It was elicited that the Health Visitor had visited the patient the day after delivery, and had treated the infant's eyes. She admitted having done this and said this course was approved by the medical men of the neighbourhood. She said that although this was her practice she always made it clear that she was not responsible. The Inspector of Midwives pointed out the undesirableness of such action, and the Chairman said he should write to the M.O.H. for the County, calling his attention to it.

In the case of Midwife Fleming which was defended by counsel, the charges were chiefly of neglecting to take pulse and temperature, and also "that you falsify your records." The Chairman said that these were lies of the worst

description, and that he did not trust a single entry. Her counsel urged the Board to give a lenient judgment in her case and incidentally remarked that the days of "Mrs. Grundy" were dying out.

Midwife Fox, aged 70, the Chairman decided ought to have a rest and be released from her duties.

Midwife Whitehouse wrote in answer to the charges against her that the Inspector had never before "chastised" her on account of the pulse glass.

MONTHLY MEETING.

The monthly meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at Caxton House, Westminster, S.W., on Thursday, March 16th, Sir Francis Champneys presiding.

Letters were received announcing the re-election of the following representatives to serve on the Board for the ensuing year: Royal College of Physicians, Sir Francis Champneys, Bart, M.D.; London Society of Apothecaries, Mr. Edward Parker Young, M.R.C.S.; the Incorporated Midwives Institute, Sir Shirley Murphy, F.R.C.S.

A letter was also received from the Clerk of the Council approving for the purpose of the apportionment of contributions from Local Supervising Authorities the balance of £3,009 12s. 9d. shown against the Board in the Financial Statement for the year 1915.

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

The Standing Committee reported that they have carefully considered a large number of suggestions for the amendment of the Rules sent in by Local Supervising Authorities, Medical Officers of Health, Examiners, and others. It was agreed that the copy of the revised Rules initialled by the Chairman be approved by the Board, and that the Privy Council be asked to approve the same, and to order that the new Rules shall come into force on July 1st next for a period of five years.

A telegram and letters were received from the Acting Secretary of the Central Midwives Board for Scotland thanking the Board for the congratulations and good wishes sent to them by the direction of the Chairman.

A letter was received from the Society of Medical Officers of Health forwarding for the information of the Board certain resolutions passed by the Council at its last meeting calling attention to the position of Local Supervising Authorities in connection with the administration of the Midwives Act, 1902, and from the Clerk of the Council transmitting the letters referred to. It was agreed that the letter drafted by the Chairman be adopted and sent to the Privy Council.

A letter was received from the General Medical Council with regard to an apparent case of

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