

## The Midwife.

### SCOTTISH MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION.

#### CONSTITUTION APPROVED.

A meeting of the Scottish Midwives' Association was held in Edinburgh on November 18th, and despite stormy weather, nearly 200 midwives were present, many of them having travelled long distances, some from as far north as Aberdeen. A draft constitution which had been prepared by a Provisional Committee was submitted, and approved after a few amendments had been made. It provides for a Central Council, in which is vested the control and management of the Association, with branch associations throughout the kingdom, and a Scattered Members' Branch for Midwives in the more remote districts. It lays down that the chief objects of the Association shall be to forward the interests of midwives, and to help in raising their status, and further that the main function of the Council "shall be to uphold the principles of the Association, to obtain for its branches and individual members the benefits of co-operation, and to promote the development and effectiveness of the midwifery profession, and through it the good of the community," especially with regard to infant welfare. The Council is to consist of representatives of Branch Associations, one for the first 25 members or under, and one for every further completed 25 on its books, the Matrons of the four Scottish Maternity Hospitals and the midwife members of the Central Midwives Board (Scotland), aided by an Advisory Board when necessary. All certified midwives are to be eligible for membership, and the Association may invite those interested in the profession, but not eligible for membership to become vice-presidents, and distinguished members of the profession to become honorary members. Branch Associations may make their own rules, subject to the approval of the Council.

After the financial position had been explained and a recommendation made as regards the raising of funds with which to start, it was agreed that a secretary should be appointed at an early date, but that the provision of an office in a central part of the city should be delayed until the Association could see its way to meeting the expense thereof.

Another meeting is to be held shortly for all midwives able to join an Edinburgh Branch, and it is hoped that other branches will soon be in process of formation. Two are already in existence, and they are prepared to consider affiliation favourably.

The meeting ended with votes of thanks to the chairman and those who had helped in starting the Association.

### THE NOTIFICATION OF BIRTHS.

Canon Rawnsley writing in the *Times*, asks: "How long will the State tolerate the neglect or the evasion of the law in the notification of births, which now tends to paralyse the work that the county medical officer of health is striving to do to save infant life? At the last meeting of the Cumberland Nursing Association our medical officer of health reported that of 2,574 births notified under the Act, and at once visited by an experienced county nurse, the death-rate was only 68 per thousand. But in the case of 1,476 births which were not notified, and therefore not visited, the death-rate was 147 per thousand."

### EDUCATED WOMEN AS MIDWIVES.

We are glad to note that Miss R. P. Fynes-Clinton, Hon. Organising Secretary of the Midwives' Institute, advocates the employment of educated women as midwives. We have long laid emphasis on this point, which is mainly an economic one, the salaries offered to many midwives being scandalously inadequate and such as no woman of average wage-earning capacity would think of accepting. Miss Fynes-Clinton writes in the *Daily Telegraph* :—

"Only those who are in daily and hourly touch with midwives and their work can realise the enormous difficulties they have to encounter. Within the scope of their limited powers the better class midwives and those who train them have conscientiously endeavoured to live up to their high calling, and to place the health of the community and the fitness of the future generation in the foremost place of importance. It has been abundantly proved that the trained educated woman, with knowledge and tact added to her professional qualifications, is the most suitable to come into close contact with other women, and to win their confidence in their time of trouble. It is being more and more widely recognised as the formation of municipal maternity centres shows, that it is largely to the ante-natal care of the mother that we must look for the improvement of the race, and at a recent meeting of the Royal Society of Medicine Miss Rosalind Paget, Hon. Treasurer of the Midwives' Institute, pointed out that the 'midwife, as the chosen servant and friend of the patient, possessed a unique opportunity for usefulness in the early discovery of some of the causes of abortions, still-births, and premature labours.' But the educated woman, to whom many fields of usefulness are open, cannot be expected to turn her skill and energies in this direction unless she has a recognised position, and her work is not curtailed and harassed at every point by the officious interference of less qualified, though well-meaning, people."

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