

The Midwife.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

The monthly meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at Caxton House on Thursday, December 14th, Sir Francis Champneys presiding.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE.

The Standing Committee reported a letter from Dr. Hugh Falkenberg Powell, declining to accept the Board's approval as a lecturer until the return of Dr. Longridge from his military duties.

Letters were received from the Secretary of the Cheltenham District Nursing Association and the Secretary of the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses pointing out that, owing to Dr. Powell's refusal to accept approval on the terms offered by the Board, it would be impossible to continue the training of pupils at the Victoria Home, Cheltenham, as hitherto.

A letter was read from Dr. Longridge supporting Dr. Powell's application, and from Dr. G. Arthur Cardew making a fresh application for the approval of Dr. Powell under the altered circumstances of the case.

The Board resolved that in view of the additional information now furnished they were willing to grant Dr. Cardew's fresh application "that they will favourably consider his (Dr. Powell's) appointment as a joint lecturer after the war."

Letters were received from an approved midwife informing the Board that a pupil, who had been resident in her house for eight days for final instructions previous to the Examination of October 24th, had, during the period, and in particular on the morning of the first day of the Examination, taken a variety of drugs and stimulants. The Board approved the action of the Secretary in returning the candidate's fee, and in excluding her from the Examination of December 13th.

It was decided to inform a candidate who had tendered a false certificate of birth and had been required by the Board to produce special certificates with regard to her truthfulness from persons satisfactory to the Board who were aware of the nature of her offence, that in the opinion of the Board the certificates now tendered were not satisfactory.

Correspondence with a candidate desirous of entering for Examination, who had tendered an Examination Schedule in which the certificates of attendance on labours and attendance during the lying-in period purported to bear the signature of a midwife formerly approved for the training of pupils, when they had, in fact, been signed by another person not qualified to sign them, without notice to the Board from the candidate who was present at the time of signature, was considered. It was agreed that the further consideration of the matter be adjourned until a full statement of the

circumstances and conditions under which the pupil's certificates were signed be received from the midwife, and that meanwhile the pupil be not admitted to Examination.

In connection with a letter from a candidate for Examination who had tendered a false certificate of birth, it was resolved to adjourn further consideration of the matter till the candidate had furnished the Board with a fresh certificate of birth from the Registrar at Dundalk, and, meanwhile, that she be not admitted to examination.

Letters from the Medical Officer of Health of West Hartlepool, asking advice of the Board on certain points were considered. Advice was sought as to:—

(1) The extent, if any, of the liability of a midwife where she employs an uncertified woman to attend to her patients before the confinement, and in particular whether such employment constitutes an infringement of Section 1 (4) of the Midwives Act, 1902, which prohibits the employment of an uncertified substitute.

(2) Whether the practice which obtains in West Hartlepool, where, a doctor having been engaged beforehand for a confinement, the patient calls in an uncertified woman when the child is about to be born—the doctor not being present at the birth nor until some hours afterwards—constitutes an offence against Section 1 (2) of the Midwives Act.

It was agreed that the Medical Officer of Health for West Hartlepool be informed that the Board is of opinion that—

(1) Where a midwife has been engaged to attend a confinement any employment by her of an uncertified woman to attend on the patient must be (a) as a monthly nurse only and not as a midwife; (b) in addition to and not in substitution for all obligations to attend on the patient entailed on her by the Rules of the Board and in particular by Rule E 1.

(2) Whether an incident of this nature involves an illegal act or not depends upon the *bona fides* of the transaction. The habitual occurrence of the incident, in the case of any one woman, would affect the judgment of the Board in dealing with the particular case.

It may be noted that the General Medical Council has lately dealt with cases of alleged "covering" of handy women by doctors.

The Board resolved to thank the Incorporated Midwives Institute for its letter transmitting for its information a copy of a communication addressed by the Institute to the London County Council, with regard to the advice contained in the Board's Syphilis Leaflet (printed with the Rules, page 59), recommending a midwife on the occurrence of a still-birth to preserve the body, in case an examination should be desired by the medical practitioner who attends, or by the Local Supervising Authority.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)