

The Midwife.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTING THE TRAINING AND SUPPLY OF MIDWIVES.

The annual meeting of the above Association was held, by kind permission of Mrs. Luff, at 9, Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square, W., on March 22nd, when Major A. P. Luff, R.A.M.C. (T.), who occupied the chair, said that the objects of the Association must appeal to every medical practitioner; to supply a class of women who would introduce the infant into the world efficiently, and prevent the wastage of infant life—this was important not only to the infant, but to the mother. If the infant's life were sacrificed at birth, the drain on her physical energy and the pain of her travail had been all for nothing. The aid of competent midwives was, therefore, of the greatest value, especially now when we were in the midst of a devastating and cruel war, depriving the nation not only of the manhood of the present, but of the sires of strong and robust children in the future.

It had been said that there was nothing so misleading as figures except facts, but those detailed in the 44th report of the Local Government Board proved that the supply of midwives in rural areas was insufficient, and that remoteness from midwifery assistance in childbirth meant an increased mortality.

He understood that the National Insurance Act had the machinery for the care of women before, at, and after the birth of their children. He was painfully aware of the wastage of public money in the support of panel practice, which consisted largely of the treatment of symptoms, not of underlying causes. He would therefore be glad to think that useful work could be done for mothers.

The Hon. Officers, and Executive and other committees having been re-elected, Mrs. Ebdon moved the adoption of the Annual Report, which stated that the time of the Committee had been fully occupied with the many important movements in connection with Maternity and Child Welfare. Early in the year the County and County Borough Medical Officers were circularised on the question of health visiting during the attendance of the midwife. The hope is expressed that the rule in certain counties that the health visitor should not visit until the midwife's charge of the case expires should be adopted by all, otherwise there is great danger that the well-trained capable midwife will become extinct. She cannot be expected to submit to any interference in the discharge of her duties from anyone but her inspector, to whom she is answerable.

The report notes with satisfaction that grants

are to be paid by the Local Government Board in respect of "the provision of a midwife for necessitous women in confinement, and in areas which are insufficiently supplied with this service," and "the provision of a doctor for the aid in confinement of necessitous women." Also that the Board of Education is now considering schemes whereby grants may be obtainable from the State for the Training of Midwives.

Mrs. Ebdon pleaded earnestly for increased support of the work of the Association, including its training home at East Ham.

Mr. A. L. Leon, J.P., L.C.C., Hon. Treasurer, who moved the adoption of the Balance Sheet, said there had been a satisfactory increase of £200 in donations. That was because at the end of the year they had made a great effort, and had received donations from a number of the City Companies, and the *Daily Telegraph* had also published several articles referring to the work. The Committee was much obliged to both.

Dr. George Reid, Medical Officer of Health for Staffordshire, then gave an interesting address on "Midwifery and Government Subsidies." He explained that, owing to the passing of the old type of midwives, 52 trained women would be required in the next two years in Staffordshire; in the same ratio 1,902 would be required for England and Wales. The Staffordshire County Council proposed to employ midwives through local nursing organisations, either for whole time or part time, to subsidise midwives where necessary, and to organise an itinerant staff so as to bring skilled aid within reach of all women in childbirth.

A vote of thanks to Major and Mrs. Luff and to Dr. Reid for his address, proposed by the Bishop of Barking, brought the meeting to a close, and on the kind invitation of Mrs. Luff those present adjourned to another room for tea and coffee.

A MATERNITY & CHILD WELFARE CENTRE.

A maternity and child welfare centre has been opened at the Latchmere Baths, Burns Road, Battersea, at which there is a doctor in attendance for infant consultations, and it is intended to extend the work later to all pre-school children. Expectant mothers can have the advice of a specialist at the centre. The Council has also arranged to pay the fees of doctors summoned by midwives to poor women.

Battersea is a progressive borough in relation to the care of infants, and it established the first weighing room for babies.

The next examination of the Central Midwives Board will be held in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, and Newcastle-on-Tyne on May 1st. The oral examination follows in a few days' time.

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