

# The Midwife.

## CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

We have received from the Secretary of the Central Midwives Board a verbatim report of Mr. Golding-Bird's valedictory address on his retirement from the Central Midwives Board, as representative of the Royal College of Surgeons, which was briefly reported in our issue of March 24th. We are informed that the Chairman attaches a high value to this testimony, and have pleasure in printing it in full in our current issue.

### MR. GOLDING-BIRD'S TESTIMONY ON RETIRING FROM THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

"I had always regarded the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons as the type of what a Court or Board should be. But I confess my experience here has taught me that the Central Midwives Board runs it very close indeed.

"Under your Chairmanship, Sir Francis, I consider this Board to be, in its methods and procedure, as perfect as it is possible; the minutest question being weighed and decided with patient care, and with every precaution against a wrong judgment being given. In penal cases this is especially so, and the charges against the poor women who are brought before us (and whose errors are more often from ignorance than of set purpose) are dealt with with absolute fairness, and, when possible, with every exhibition of mercy.

"I have often, too, thought the work of this Board—if only measured by the many consecutive hours that we sit here—to be hard indeed; but, on reflection, I am struck with wonder at what the work must have been for those who, like yourself and some others who still are members of the Board, had the duty of not only shaping the methods of procedure at the first, but also the drawing up of the admirable and exhaustive Rules under which the working of the Midwives Act is carried out, and the creation of the many precedents that now guide us.

"I soon discovered that it takes a long time to 'learn the ropes,' which are intricate indeed, but, once mastered, business proceeds with almost automatic precision.

"It cannot be too widely known how thoroughly the Midwives Act is administered by this Board; and I venture the opinion that its methods might well form an example for other public bodies to imitate.

"I trust you may, Sir Francis, long be spared to continue, with your colleagues, your invaluable services to the State; and I will only add that it is with the greatest sorrow and reluctance that I have been obliged, by circumstance beyond my control, to send in my own resignation."

We may point out that the constitution of the Central Midwives Board, whose work Mr. Golding-Bird eulogises so warmly, is founded on the principle for which the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses is contending in connection with the Registration of Trained Nurses, *i.e.*, its members are appointed by responsible bodies as their representatives. A defect in the constitution of the Central Midwives Board is the absence of provision for the direct representation upon it of the Midwives themselves but the principle adopted is, otherwise, the right one.

### AUTHORITIES REPRESENTED ON THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

The responsible authorities nominating representatives on to the Central Midwives Board are the Privy Council, the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Surgeons, the Society of Apothecaries, the Incorporated Midwives Institute, the Association of County Councils, the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, and the Royal British Nurses' Association.

### THE MONTHLY MEETING.

The monthly meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at the Board Room, Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, Westminster, on Thursday, April 19th.

The first business was the election of the Chairman, and Sir Francis Champneys vacated the chair which was temporarily occupied by Professor Briggs, who, seconded by Miss Paget, expressed the sincere thanks of the Board to Sir Francis for his services. Sir Francis who was unanimously re-elected on resuming the chair expressed his thanks to the Board, and welcomed the new members Mr. H. W. Ayling appointed by the Society of Apothecaries, and Dr. W. S. A. Griffith by the Royal College of Surgeons. The Finance Committee and the Penal Cases Committee were then re-appointed, after which the Secretary read the letter from the Secretary of the Royal College of Surgeons, notifying Dr. Griffith's appointment.

### REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

It was agreed (a) to thank the Leicester and Leicestershire Midwives' Association for a communication urging the immediate introduction of legislation making penal the treatment of Venereal Diseases by any person but a registered medical practitioner and (b) that in view of the grave national dangers arising from the neglect or the improper treatment of venereal diseases the Central Midwives Board considers that legislation with the above object should be introduced with the least possible delay.

The Board refused to allow Form IV, a certificate of having attended a course of lectures,

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