

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

PENAL BOARD.

A Special Meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, Westminster, Sir Francis Champneys presiding, on Wednesday, June 20th, to hear the charges alleged against six midwives, with the following results:—

Struck off the Roll and Certificate Cancelled.—Alice Lavinia Beard (No. 18684), Emma Knight (No. 6429), Jane Margaret Ostle (No. 25939), Ellen Pollard (No. 9049), and Elizabeth Williams (No. 19741).

Judgment Postponed.—Report to be furnished in three and six months: Lavinia Milford (No. 2085).

There were four charges against Midwife Beard, as to having attended the patients being herself a source of infection from a septic finger. In one case, the patient having died, her sister gave evidence that the midwife had in addition washed the patient with an ordinary flannel belonging to the house. The fourth charge was abandoned, as the patient declined to give evidence. The principal charge against Midwife Knight was refusal to give reasonable facilities to the Inspector to see her house or her appliances; and, though registered letters had been sent, she was either not at home on her visit, or refused to answer the door.

The case of Midwife Ostle, who held the certificate of the C.M.B., occupied two hours; she was defended by a solicitor, and her pupil gave evidence in her favour. A patient and a friend gave evidence against her.

The case against her included neglect of her patient, both during and after her confinement, as after the third day she not only did not wash her but neglected to give proper instructions for this to be done. It was alleged that she neither changed, nor caused to be changed, the bed linen during the lying-in period. The child was premature, but the evidence brought out that on the sixth day the mother was sitting up in bed washing it herself. The midwife came in and told her to "do it quickly." It was also alleged that she told the mother to pull off the dressing on the cord, and when the woman refused, she pulled it off herself; the cord came away and the navel bled. When the witness was asked by the Chairman why no one else changed the bed, she said she was afraid of the midwife, as she "ollered" at her.

The midwife, for her defence, denied that she had not washed the woman thoroughly at the time of her confinement; being questioned, said she used a boiled cloth, which proved to be a clean napkin. She admitted that she had washed the patient only for the first three days, and said in excuse that the woman had told her she had suffered from syphilis, and it was in the interest of her other patients that she discontinued. When asked why she had washed her for three days, she said she understood that she was cured. The midwife denied the allegations as to the bed, and was supported in her evidence by her pupil, who also endeavoured to show that the charges

as to the neglect of taking the temperature were without foundation.

It was stated at the enquiry that the Inspector, Dr. Pilliet, was unable to be present, as she had been bitten by a dog and had to keep her bed.

MONTHLY MEETING.

The monthly meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, S.W., on June 21. Sir Francis Champneys presiding.

The Secretary reported that in two cases of covering unqualified midwives which had come before the General Medical Council, the medical practitioner concerned had in each case been found guilty. The first had been adjourned for six months, and as a favourable report was received no further action was taken. The second would come up again in November. The Chairman remarked that in November last a warning notice was issued to members of the medical profession by the President of the General Medical Council. No doubt a much more serious view would be taken of cases occurring subsequently.

In connection with the Report of the Penal Cases Committee the Secretary stated that the Devon County Council had reported the practice of midwifery by uncertified women and a case of alleged covering by a medical practitioner. The Board advised the Devon County Council to prosecute the uncertified midwives, and expressed its willingness if adequate evidence were forthcoming, to proceed against the medical practitioner before the General Medical Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE.

The Standing Committee reported letters from the Privy Council stating that the Lords of the Treasury were prepared to authorise the payment from public funds to the country members of the Central Midwives Board of the difference between their former and their present first class railway fares when attending Board Meetings in London.

APPLICATIONS.

Applications were received as follows:—

For Removal from the Roll.—From thirteen midwives. The applications were granted.

For Approval as Trainer.—The application of Mr. William Tudor Webb, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., was granted *pro hæc vice*.

For Approval as Teachers.—Midwife Ann Jenkins (No. 41159), Midwife Fanny Susan Turner (No. 41959).

INSPECTION OF TRAINING SCHOOLS.

The Board having considered the desirability of making arrangements for the inspection from time to time of all training schools for pupil midwives conducted by midwives approved by the Board for the purpose, it was decided that the matter be left to the Chairman to arrange,

PENAL CASES.

The next penal meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday, July 26th, at 11 a.m.