

# The Midwife.

## THE MIDWIVES (IRELAND) BILL.

The Midwives (Ireland) Bill, to which we briefly alluded last week, is not likely in its present form to satisfy the Irish Midwives, and will no doubt be carefully watched by their friends while before the House of Commons. It would seem simpler and better to have consulted bodies like the Irish Matrons and Nurses Associations, which voice the views of midwives as well as nurses in Ireland, while the Bill was being drafted; but such was not the view of the Government Department concerned.

The provision for the appointment of only one midwife on the proposed Central Midwives Board for Ireland is very unacceptable to Irish Midwives, especially at a time when women have shown so clearly their capacity for managing their own affairs.

The Bill (price, 2d.) can be obtained from His Majesty's Stationery Office, Imperial House, Kingsway, London, W.C. 2; or from E. Ponsonby, Ltd., 116, Grafton Street, Dublin.

Special meetings of the Irish Nurses' Association were held on the 16th and 19th instant to consider the proposed Midwives Bill (Ireland). There was a large attendance at both meetings.

The various clauses of the new Bill were carefully considered. The members were unanimous in objecting to the constitution of the Central Board only making provision for one midwife—who is to be appointed by the Privy Council—on a Board of thirteen members.

Recommendations were sent forward to Members of Parliament urging a larger representation of midwives on the Central Board, and also asking that inspectors, both medical practitioners and midwives, should be appointed by the Central Board, so that Local Authorities should not inspect in their own districts.

## CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

The monthly meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held in the Board Room, at 1, Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, Westminster, on Thursday, November 15th.

### REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE.

The principal business transacted was as follows:—

A letter was considered from the General Secretary of the Medical Defence Union asking the Board to deal with a complaint against a midwife by a registered medical practitioner.

It was agreed that the General Secretary of the Medical Defence Union be informed that, where a complaint for which an appropriate remedy is

provided by due course of law, is made against a midwife it is contrary to the practice of the Board to deal with the midwife until the complainant has exhausted his remedy at law.

A letter was considered from the Clerk of the London County Council asking the Board to take into consideration the opinion expressed by a London coroner that the form of sending for medical help as prescribed by Rule E. 23 (a), page 30, should not specify the name of any particular doctor.

It was agreed that the Clerk of the London County Council be informed that the Board will take the coroner's suggestion into consideration on the next revision of the rules.

A letter was read from the Medical Officer of Health for Brighton enclosing a draft circular letter, which he proposes to send to all midwives practising within his jurisdiction, and asking whether in the opinion of the Board he would be acting within his powers by preventing midwives from attending patients suffering from gonorrhœa conjunctivitis while in attendance on other cases.

It was agreed that, with reference to the circular letter drafted by the Medical Officer of Health for Brighton the reply be:—

(1) *Ophthalmia*.—The Board agrees that in severe cases of ophthalmia, it is very undesirable that the midwife should continue in charge of the eyes, as the disease is highly contagious. But it thinks that special arrangements, under the general supervision of an expert, should always be carried out with the consent of the patient (mother), who has the right to choose the medical practitioner called in according to Rule E. 6, and that the case should be visited and the reasons for such special arrangements explained to the mother and midwife by the Inspector of Midwives or by the medical practitioner called in consultation.

(2) *Stillbirths*.—The Board quite approves of the proposed arrangements for the examination of a piece of the placenta in such cases. It thinks, however, that the information as to the presence of syphilis should not be left to the midwife to convey to the parents.

In view of the present position of the printing trade and having regard to the information supplied with respect to the present conditions affecting Messrs. Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co., Ltd., the Board is prepared, subject to the approval of the Privy Council, to sanction a further increase of 10 per cent. on its contract prices payable for printing.

### ANNUAL REPORT.

The Secretary submitted his report for the year ending March 31st., and it was agreed that the Report as amended be approved and that a copy be forwarded to the Privy Council.

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