

# The Midwife.

## MIDWIVES REPRESENTATION.

The blot on the English Midwives Act has always been that it makes no provision for the inclusion of one midwife on the Central Midwives Board, so that the certified midwives whom it controls have no voice on their Governing Body, a right which is conceded to them in Scotland and Ireland.

Now that the Central Midwives Board have requested the Lord President of the Council to introduce into Parliament, as soon as may be, a Bill to amend the Midwives Act, 1902, in order to secure the reciprocal treatment of midwives certified in other parts of His Majesty's Dominions, and of otherwise bringing into harmony the laws governing the practice of midwifery in the different parts of Great Britain, the time seems opportune for English midwives to press upon the Lord President the justice of providing in any Amending Bill for the inclusion of certified midwives on the Central Midwives Board, preferably by their direct election by the midwives on the Roll.

## THE MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE BILL.

The purpose of the Maternity and Child Welfare Bill presented by Mr. Hayes Fisher in the House of Commons on March 14th is "To make further provision for the Health of Mothers and Young Children," and with this object provision is made for conferring powers on local authorities with respect to maternity and child welfare.

The Bill, if passed into law, will enact that:—

### POWERS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

1. (a) Any local authority to which this Act applies may make such arrangements as may be sanctioned by the Local Government Board, for attending to the health of expectant mothers, and nursing mothers, and of children who have not attained the age of five years and are not being educated in schools recognised by the Board of Education: Provided that nothing in this Act shall authorise the establishment by any local authority of a general domiciliary service by medical practitioners.

(b) The local authorities to which the Act applies are County and Borough Councils, the Common Council of the City of London, the council of any Metropolitan borough or urban district having a population of over twenty thousand, and, in certain instances sanctioned by the Local Government Board, district councils to which the Act would not otherwise apply.

### MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEES.

2. (a) Every council in England and Wales

exercising powers under this Act, or under Section 2 of the Notification of Births (Extension) Act, 1915, shall establish a maternity and child welfare committee, and all matters relating to the exercise of the powers of the council under this Act, or under the Notification of Births (Extension) Act, 1915 (except the power of raising a rate or of borrowing money) shall stand referred to such committee, and the council, before exercising any such powers, shall, unless in their opinion the matter is urgent, receive and consider the report of the maternity and child welfare committee with respect to the matter in question.

(b) Not less than two-thirds of the members of every maternity and child welfare committee shall consist of members of the council, but the council shall also appoint as members of the committee persons specially qualified by training or experience in subjects relating to health and maternity who are not members of the council. Maternity and child welfare committees shall include women and members of the Insurance Committees concerned.

(c) The committee established under this section shall take the place of any committee appointed under Sub-Section (2) of section two of the Notification of Births (Extension) Act, 1915, and the provisions of that sub-section relating to the exercise of powers by a committee shall cease to have effect.

### EXPENSES.

(3) The expenses of any council in England and Wales under this Act shall be defrayed in the same manner as expenses under the Notification of Births Act, 1907 and 1915.

The Act, except the section thereof providing for the amendment of section three of the Notification of Births (Extension) Act, 1915, will not apply to Scotland or Ireland.

It will thus be seen that if the Bill, as seems likely, becomes law, a statutory authority will for the first time be set up the special duty of which is to care for the health of expectant mothers, nursing mothers, and young children, an authority moreover which is to include persons specially qualified to deal with those subjects. We may hope therefore that both the standard of national health and of the happiness of the race may be materially raised thereby.

Midwives and nurses know only too well how expectant mothers in the past have drudged to within a few hours of their confinements, a heavy day's washing, indeed, often precipitating the event, and within ten days of the birth of the child, at most, the majority of working mothers resume their ordinary duties, often underfed, and sustaining two lives on food insufficient for one. No wonder they become weary and dragged, that children grow up puny and ill-nourished, and that some women succumb to the craving for stimu-

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