

## The Midwife.

### THE MIDWIVES (IRELAND) BILL.

The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, and the Societies of Nurses and Midwives acting in conjunction with it, are to be congratulated on the way in which they are safeguarding the interests of midwives in Ireland. The representatives of the societies acting in conjunction with the Royal College of Physicians are:—*Irish Nurses' Association*, Miss Ramsden and Miss Carson Rae; *Irish Matrons' Association*, Miss Chisholm (Superintendent Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute) and Miss Keating (National Maternity Hospital, Dublin); *National Union of Women Workers* (Irish Branch), Miss M. Storey; and the *Civic Union*, Miss Harrison and Dr. McGuire.

Further meetings have taken place between these representatives, and amendments endorsed by the Royal College of Physicians have now been forwarded to the Government, when, if they are adopted, the block on the Midwives (Ireland) Bill will be raised so far as the bodies above enumerated are concerned.

It is now proposed:—

(1) That the registered medical practitioners on the Central Midwives' Board (Ireland) whose appointment was at first to be left in the hands of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons in Ireland and the Irish Medical Association, shall be directly elected by the registered medical practitioners.

(2) That of the four midwives on the Board one shall be, as heretofore, appointed by the Local Government Board (Ireland), and that the other three whose appointment, it was suggested, should be in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant, shall now be appointed by the Local Government Board "on nomination, by the representatives of the various Midwives' Nursing Associations of Ireland," so that if this is accepted the midwives themselves will have a voice in the appointment of their representatives.

(3) The amendment dealing with reciprocity provides that all women certified under the Act shall be entitled without further examination to practise in all places which are under the supervision of the Central Midwives Boards of England and Wales, and Scotland, and shall be under the control of the Central Midwives Board in the countries where they are practising. It is further provided that "this clause shall only apply to the midwives on the Register who hold a certificate of training from a recognised hospital."

### WEDDING PRESENT OR MATERNITY BENEFIT.

We are glad for once to be able to agree entirely with Viscount Knutsford's point of view. Speaking in the House of Lords on the National Health Insurance Bill, Lord Knutsford protested against one clause which introduced for the first time a vital and radical change in all ideas of national health insurance. They were all anxious at this moment about the child life of the nation. Those who had been in contact with the poor must realise the great want of equipment and the misery in which the majority of women had to face woman's greatest danger.

If there were funds available, might they not reasonably expect that the maternity benefit would be increased? But instead of using such funds to help mothers and infants to obtain a stronger hold upon life, it was proposed to use them to give wedding presents of £2 to women who had notified the societies that they intended to marry. Could anyone believe that this money would not be used in the purchase of comforts for the home rather than in provision for childbirth? He questioned whether they had any right whatever to divert money intended for health insurance to this totally different purpose. Why, he asked, should not the £2 be kept for a woman until her first child was born? It was said that this offer of £2 would act as an inducement to women to let approved societies know of their intention to marry, which information was important for administrative reasons; but a more reasonable course, surely, would be to obtain the desired information from the registrars of marriages. The dowry proposal in the Bill was an outrage on commonsense, and he regarded it as an indefensible retrograde step.

Lord Sydenham agreed with Lord Knutsford that to appropriate money intended for health purposes in order to hand it over to a woman as a present on her marriage was a scheme difficult to defend, and he submitted that the provision of this £2 dowry conflicted with the intention of the principal Act.

### CONCESSIONS TO TRAINED NURSES.

We recently emphasised in this JOURNAL the value of the services of trained nurses to institutions in which they are receiving midwifery training, and gave the fees charged by the Royal Maternity Hospital, Glasgow, amongst others, both to trained nurses, and to midwifery pupils with no previous training.

We are glad to learn that the scale of fees charged has recently been revised by the Board of Management of this hospital. The untrained pupil is to pay £31 10s. instead of £26 for her six months' training, and the trained nurse £21 instead of £22 for four months' training.

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