

The Midwife.

THE MIDWIVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

A CONTENTIOUS CLAUSE.

The Memorandum of the Bill introduced into the House of Lords by the Lord President on June 13th and read for a second time on June 18th, states that "It is now proposed to bring the English Act into line with those in the other parts of the United Kingdom, and the present Bill is confined to that purpose, all contentious matter being thereby avoided."

We take leave to take strong exception to this statement, and to say that in our opinion Clause 12 (1) on page 4 is highly contentious, for the very reason that the principal Act is *not* brought into line with the Scottish and Irish Acts in relation to the right of County Councils to delegate their powers as Local Supervising Authorities to District Councils.

The English Midwives Act confers such powers on the County Councils, but in practice delegation has been found unsatisfactory, and in the Scottish and Irish Acts no such powers are given. To bring the English Act into line with those of the Sister Kingdoms, therefore, these powers should be withdrawn, but this is not done; on the contrary, in a subtle Clause, it is expressly provided that they shall still be exercisable with the consent of the Local Government Board, and this points to very strong pressure on the part of the District Councils.

If the Bill is to be regarded as a non-contentious measure, this Clause must be re-drafted and brought into conformity with the practice of the Scottish and Irish Acts, otherwise it is quite possible that its contentious character may wreck a Bill in most of its details admirable and necessary.

The Committee Stage of the Bill has been put down for Tuesday, July 2nd.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

PENAL CASES.

A Special Meeting of the Central Midwives Board (Sir Francis Champneys presiding), was held at 1, Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, Westminster, on Wednesday, June 19th, when the charges alleged against thirteen certified midwives were heard, with the following results:—

Struck Off the Roll and Certificates Cancelled.—Mary Hannah Baxter (38099), Eliza Billington (3902), Rebecca Haden (31483), Mary Jane Hollier (1164), Theresa Jones (6478), Mary Ann Vaughan (18676), and Ellen Wynn (19454).

Censured.—Amelia May Davies (26697).

Cautioned.—Emma Capener (1196), and Anne Jones (44454).

Sentence Postponed. Report from the L.S.A. to be asked for in three and six months' time.—Mary Hannah Gravatt (8423), Sarah Ann Porter (2587), and Rebecca Timms (1310).

The case of Midwife Jones was one, as the chairman remarked, of great importance.

She, a young midwife attached to the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Rhyl, was sent out from that institution to undertake a delivery about which apparently there was no difficulty, and which took place before midnight. At the expiration of two hours, having failed to expel the placenta, she sent to inform the medical man who attended for the institution in cases where medical aid was necessary.

He was ill, but sent a message advising the nurse to wait a little longer, and if the placenta were still retained to send for another medical man whom he specified. The midwife, mindful of the rule of the C.M.B., however, did not wait, but sent at once for assistance to the doctor suggested.

This doctor sent a message advising the midwife to go home for a rest, and if there was no hæmorrhage he would see the patient in the morning.

This the midwife did. The mother died in her absence, alone with her husband, without medical aid having been rendered.

In the morning the doctor gave a certificate certifying the cause of death to be embolism, there being no evidence of hæmorrhage.

The Board decided to caution the midwife only, as the Chairman remarked, he considered she was more sinned against than sinning.

The midwives of this institution work on an understanding with a medical man that he will be responsible for the case in the event of difficulty.

Sir Francis Champneys said that this arrangement could not be allowed. Either the midwife or the medical man must be definitely engaged.

The medical man wrote a letter to the Board confirming the midwife's statements as to his action.

MONTHLY MEETING.

At the monthly meeting of the Central Midwives' Board, on June 20th, on the Report of the Standing Committee, a communication was read from the Acting Registrar of the General Medical Council with reference to the action of a registered medical practitioner who had given a certificate to an uncertified woman certifying that she was "quite capable of undertaking the duties of an ordinary midwife." The Chairman was asked to communicate with the President of the General Medical Council, and to express the views of the Board on the practitioner's letters.

The application of Dora Margaret Laycock (12593) for approval as a teacher was granted.

The applications of twenty-five midwives for removal from the Roll were granted.

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