

The Midwife.

MIDWIVES (IRELAND) BILL.

On January 22nd the Midwives (Ireland) Bill was read a second time in the House of Commons, and the House resolved itself immediately into Committee on the Bill.

The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Duke) then said: "This is a Bill which has been the subject of discussion between the Irish Executive and the Irish Members, and it has been strongly recommended by the public authorities in Ireland, who have deemed it to be necessary. Amendments have been proposed which will be considered generally satisfactory. In these circumstances, and as the Bill is one which is much desired in the interests of public health in Ireland, I hope it will be allowed to pass through all its stages to-night."

Mr. Gulland said he had no objection to what the Chief Secretary said, but he noticed on the Paper several Motions by Irish Members for the rejection of the Second Reading. He would like to be assured that the Chief Secretary had their approval for the course he proposed.

Mr. King also wished to know if the Members who had given notice of objection to the Bill concurred in the line taken up by the Chief Secretary, and Mr. Duke replied in the affirmative and said that the Amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Sligo had been satisfied.

The question was then put and agreed to, the Bill considered in Committee and progress reported.

On January 24th the Bill was considered further in Committee, Clause 3 (Constitution of the Central Midwives Board for Ireland) being the first clause discussed.

CONSTITUTION OF THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD FOR IRELAND.

AS PROPOSED.

It will be remembered that the Central Midwives Board for Ireland proposed by the Government was as follows: (1) Four persons to be appointed by the Local Government Board, (2) Eight registered medical practitioners, elected by medical corporations and bodies, (3) one certified midwife, practising in Ireland, to be appointed by the Lord President of the Council.

The Irish Nurses' Association objected to a Board so constituted, and its friends in Parliament immediately blocked the Bill. The Association then secured the support of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, and other influential bodies.

AS ADOPTED.

When the constitution of the Central Midwives Board was considered in Committee the Solicitor-General for Ireland, Mr. Arthur Samuels, moved the omission of these clauses and the substitution of others in which the Board was constituted of the following persons:—

(a) Three persons to be appointed by the Local Government Board, one a registered medical practitioner, and two persons appointed after consultation with the county councils and county borough councils; (b) Four registered practitioners elected by the registered medical practitioners resident in Ireland, and (c) Four women, referred to in the Act as midwives' representatives, to be appointed by the Local Government Board, of whom three are to be appointed after consultation with recognised nursing associations in Ireland.

To be qualified for appointment as a Midwives' Representative a woman must, after February 1st, 1923, be a certified midwife, and prior to that date must possess one of the qualifications as a midwife named in the Act. She must be resident in Ireland at the time of her appointment.

An amendment was also agreed to requiring that if the local supervising authorities delegate their powers to committees, any such committee shall include at least two women.

Provision was made for the repeal of Part VIII of the Belfast Corporation Act providing for the certification and enrolment of midwives practising in the city of Belfast.

THIRD READING CARRIED.

The Bill was then reported, as amended, considered, Read the third time, and passed.

THE BILL IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

On Tuesday, January 29th, the Bill was read a second time in the House of Lords.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE I.N.A.

The group of professional women associated together in the Irish Nurses' Association, which looks after the interests of midwives in Ireland, is sincerely to be congratulated on the result of its political acumen and its forceful campaign against the constitution of a Governing Body which, as originally defined, included only one midwife. The Association asked to be permitted to see a copy of the Bill before its introduction, but this was refused; when, therefore, copies of the Bill were obtainable, they called a meeting to consider it, and at once took means to have it blocked until such time as more seats were provided on their Governing Body for certified midwives, in whose appointment the midwives themselves had a voice. The result was that the Bill was held up until the demands of the Irish Nurses' Association had been considered and met, though with some reluctance. The Irish Midwives' Board will, therefore, begin its work with at least four midwives upon it out of a Board of eleven, and three of these are to be appointed after consultation with recognised Nurses' Associations in Ireland, and are to be known as Midwives' Representatives.

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