

The Midwife.

THE MIDWIVES' BILL (ENGLAND).

Mr. Hayes Fisher, President of the Local Government Board, presented in the House of Commons, on August 8th, a Bill to amend the Midwives Act, 1902. It was read a first time. The intention is to proceed with it when the House resumes after the autumn adjournment. A Midwives Bill passed through the House of Lords last session, but, owing to certain technical obstacles relating to privilege, it was not found possible to bring it before the House of Commons. Mr. Hayes Fisher therefore introduced his measure in substitution for it. The two Bills are identical, and make no provision for the representation of midwives on their governing body, which is conceded under both the Scottish and Irish Acts. As the object of this amending Bill is to bring the three Bills into conformity it is to be hoped this anomaly will be remembered in the House of Commons.

We hear that Dr. Chapple, M.P., has been making enquiries on this question of the direct representation of Midwives on their own Governing Body in England, and as his sympathies are always warmly with justice to the worker, let us hope he will move in the matter.

It is in our opinion the duty of the Incorporated Midwives Institute to promote and guard the professional interests of midwives, but its council is not, presumably, sound on the principle of direct representation.

We have heard the opinion expressed that the Midwives Board—or some of its officials—fear a great increase of expense if the midwives are to be circularised for their professional votes as a constituency, and owing to the inadequate Registration fee of £1 1s., which requires annually a subsidy from the rates for the conduct of the Board's business, it is disinclined to add further to this expenditure of public money.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD EXAMINATIONS.

Examinations will be held on November 1st, in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, and Newcastle. The Oral Examination follows a few days later in each case.

THE MIDWIVES' BOARD (IRELAND).

Dr. E. Coey Bigger has been unanimously elected chairman of the Central Midwives' Board for Ireland, Sir A. J. Horne deputy chairman, and Mr. J. E. Devlin as Secretary.

WOOLWICH AND PLUMSTEAD MATERNITY HOME.

This snug little Home was opened by Princess Mary Louise on Thursday, October 3rd, at 23, Vicarage Park, Plumstead. Building new houses comes under the all-pervading war-economy system, which means that it is in abeyance for "the duration."

This, therefore, is not a new building, simply an old one adapted for the purpose; scrubbed and cleaned so exquisitely that you felt you would have no objection to taking your meals off the floor should necessity arise!

There were present the Bishop of the Diocese (Southwark), the Bishop of Woolwich, the Rector of Woolwich (who is also the Rural Dean), the Rev. Basil Hughes, Vicar of Plumstead, and Mrs. Hughes, Miss Rowntree, Superintendent of the Refuge and other ladies and gentlemen.

The Bishop of Southwark dedicated the Home, and the Princess, after a few appropriate words, declared it open. Miss Groom, who was trained at Guy's Hospital, has been appointed Matron. The opening of this little Home marks a new departure in the care of mother and child, besides solving in some measure the problem of the unmarried mother. It has been established entirely for her benefit, and is worked in connection with the local "Refuge" mentioned above. It may be that the National Council of the Unmarried Mother and her Child is beginning to make its influence felt.

We gladly availed ourselves of the invitation to inspect the Home. The ground floor is used for administrative purposes. The rooms on the first and second floors serve as wards. There is accommodation for seven or eight mothers and babes. The beds, covered with immaculate white sheets, turned down at the top with blue, assured the comfort of the patients. The lockers by the bed-sides were a triumph of economy and usefulness, namely, plain deal boxes standing on end and divided into shelves, and cunningly camouflaged by pretty blue drapery to match that on the beds. The bedrooms on the top floor are for the Nurses.

The whole has a charming effect of cheerfulness and comfort. We trust it will soon justify its existence, and that the patients for whom such kindly care is provided, will regain their self-respect. Subscriptions of any size would be gratefully accepted, as money is badly needed for its support.

B. K.

It is hoped that owing to the extension of the maternity department at the Royal Free Hospital, shortly to establish a midwifery school, where it is proposed to include training for the C.M.B. examination in the four years' curriculum.

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