

# The Midwife.

## CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

### ENGLAND.

In England the most important event in the midwifery world has been the passing of the Midwives Act, 1918 (which comes into force on January 1st next). The President of the Local Government Board announced, in the debate on the Committee Stage in the House of Commons, that "it is the intention of the Privy Council to give direct representation to midwives on the Board." The hopes of the midwives were raised high by this statement, but unfortunately the term "direct representation" was afterwards interpreted by Mr. Hayes Fisher (now Lord Downham) to mean the appointment of midwives to seats on the Board, under powers conferred on the Central Midwives Board by the Act. This, although a step forward, is not *direct* representation.

The Act, which received the Royal Assent on November 26th, repeals the Clause (Clause 9) in the principal Act giving County Councils the right to delegate their powers to District Councils, and makes provision for reciprocal treatment of midwives certified in other parts of His Majesty's Dominions.

### SCOTLAND.

In Scotland we have to record with regret the death of Sir Robert Kirk Inches, representative on the Central Midwives' Board of the Convention of Royal Burghs. Sir John Lorne MacLeod has been appointed to succeed him.

The Scottish Midwives' Association, which has as its President the Duchess of Montrose, has held several meetings during the year. In our view the President of an Association of professional workers should always be a member of the profession concerned, and elected by her fellow members.

### IRELAND.

The Bill "to ensure the better training of midwives in Ireland, and to regulate their practice" has become law during the year. The Bill was blocked in 1917 because the Irish Nurses' Association, which represents the interests of the midwives in Ireland, was not satisfied with the representation provided for midwives on the Board under Mr. Duke's Bill, namely, one midwife, out of a Board of thirteen persons, to be appointed by the Privy Council. The Irish Nurses' Association obtained the support of the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland, and, so effectively voiced its demand for representation of the midwives, that, when the Bill received the Royal Assent on February 6th, four out of eleven seats were secured on the Irish Midwives Board to certified midwives. These midwives are referred to in the Act as "midwives representatives," and are appointed by the Local Government Board, three out of the

four being appointed after consultation with recognised nursing associations in Ireland. The laurels are with the Irish Nurses' Association, which exercised such an effective influence on legislation in spite of vested interests and the unwillingness of the Government Department responsible for drafting the Bill.

The Midwives appointed on the Board are: Miss J. H. Kelly, Matron Maternity Hospital, Belfast; Mrs. M. Blunden, late Matron Lying-in Hospital, Cork; Miss A. Michie, Superintendent for Ireland Q.V.J.I.; and Miss G. O'Carroll, Matron Combe Lying-in Hospital, Dublin.

The resignation by Miss L. Ramsden of the position of Lady Superintendent at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, which she has held with distinction, has caused wide-spread regret.

### MIDWIVES AND RAIDS.

It is to the credit of the midwives in London and elsewhere that, in spite of air-raids, their service of the poor in their own homes suffered no interruption, although in the East End of London, at least, the position was so menacing that the police obliged the midwives to wear shrapnel helmets and other protections in case of raids, when going to cases in the night. Their posts were posts of danger and honour, quite as much as those of nurses overseas, though no decorations reward services gallantly performed.

### A STATE-AIDED MIDWIFERY SERVICE.

The proposals for a State-aided Midwifery Service made by the Association for Promoting the Training of Midwives, to which we referred last December, have since been revised and embodied in a memorandum as a basis for legislation. It is proposed that by means of an exchequer grant, a fee of 25s. per case, including ante-natal care, shall be ensured to midwives.

The Women's Co-operative Guild published an opportune pamphlet giving the views of the working women themselves in regard to a Midwifery Service. They consider that there should be a Public Health Service, free to all who desire to avail themselves of it.

### NATIONAL BABY WEEK.

National Baby Week has now established itself as an annual function, with a permanent council, and at its Conference held in conjunction with an exhibition, in the first week of July, at the Central Hall, Westminster, and elsewhere, much useful propaganda work was done.

### THE MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE BILL.

The Maternity and Child Welfare Bill became law in July. Discussion settled around the points as to whether the powers given under the Act should be entrusted to both large and small

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