

# The Midwife.

## THE MIDWIVES' ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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When the Midwives Act Amendment Bill comes on in the House of Commons, two points in particular will need careful watching. (1) As we have already pointed out that "to bring the English Act into line with those in other parts of the United Kingdom," which is the intention of the Bill as declared in its memorandum, provision must be made for adding midwives to the Central Midwives Board. (2) The final form of Clause 12. It will be remembered that the Marquess of Salisbury, when the Bill was before the House of Lords, secured an Amendment providing that "Section nine of the principal Act (which enables county councils to delegate their powers and duties to district councils) shall be repealed." This was qualified later by the addition of the words "Provided that where at the commencement of this Act any powers or duties have been delegated, such delegation shall not be affected, unless, on the representation of the County Council concerned, the Local Government Board otherwise direct." This provision affects four district councils. Any further attempt at weakening Lord Salisbury's amendment in the House of Commons must be strenuously resisted.

## THE MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE BILL.

The committee stage of the Maternity and Child Welfare Bill in the House of Lords is down for Thursday, July 25th.

## NATIONAL BABY WEEK.

A meeting of the Council was held at the Armitage Hall, 224, Great Portland Street, on Tuesday, July 23rd. The chair was occupied by Dr. Eric Pritchard, Chairman of the Executive Committee, in the regrettable absence of Major the Hon. Waldorf Astor, whose duties as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food, to which office he has just been appointed, were too pressing to admit of his being present. It was quite obvious that those present in the body of the hall were animated by a spirit of enthusiasm and hope, which augurs well for the future welfare of mothers and babies in particular and for the health of the nation in general. They were not merely lookers-on, but social workers taking a deep interest in this work of great national importance, which was shown by the lively discussion which followed upon speeches recommending a Ministry

of Public Health. The following reports were submitted:—That of the Executive Committee by Mrs. H. B. Irving (Hon. Sec.) That of the Hon. Treasurer, by Dr. Eric Pritchard, in the absence of Sir Edward Penton. That of the Jewel Fund Administrative Committee, by Miss Halford.

The National Baby Week Council is doing good service in publishing a series of pamphlets bearing upon its work. Included in these are four lectures to which reference has already been made in this journal. "National Baby Week, from the Working-class Mother's Point of View," by Mrs. H. B. Irving; "The Factors of Infant Mortality," by Dr. C. W. Saleeby, F.R.S.E., F.Z.S.; "Civic Responsibility with regard to Child Welfare," by Dr. Harold Scurfield, D.P.H., and "Baby Week: its Objects and its Future," by Miss Alice Elliott. "The Nation's Wealth" is a Composite Message from the Well Wishers of the Campaign, including General F. Foch. The most vital message is from a working woman in St. Pancras, and most nurses and midwives will agree with her when she says, "People that do not know much about children should not be allowed to give advice." The message sent two months ago by the late Lord Rhondda has a special interest. He wrote: "The care of the children is a sacred duty we owe to those who are giving their lives for us at the Front, and we can best help our country in these critical times by helping the children. . . ."

"The establishment of a Ministry of Health, which would do much for the nation's children and coming generations is an object for which all well-wishers of the Empire should work, and one for which I hope we shall not have long to wait."

Alas, Lord Rhondda did not live to see the reform he so earnestly desired. We agree with the National Baby Week Council that the best memorial to his memory would be the immediate establishment of a Ministry of Health.

## WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"To those who say that an abundant supply of cheap juvenile labour is necessary to industry we answer 'Hands off the children!' They are the nation of the future. They ought to be regarded as potential parents and potential citizens, not to be sacrificed—as they have been in the past—to the temporary convenience of industry and to considerations of private profit. Industry exists for human beings, not human beings for industry and if the exigencies of employers and the welfare of the children conflict, then the former must give way to the latter, not the latter to the former."—*Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P.*

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