

The Midwife.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD (ENGLAND)

PROPOSALS FOR A STATE-AIDED MIDWIFERY SERVICE.

MONTHLY MEETING.

The Monthly Meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at 1, Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, Westminster, on Thursday, July 27th, Sir Francis Champneys presiding.

A letter was received from the Secretary of the Association for Promoting the Training and Supply of Midwives, enclosing for the information of the Board a copy of a revised edition of the Association's proposals for a State Midwifery Service, a summary of which we give in this issue.

In reference to the application of a candidate for the Board's Examination, it was resolved that she be required to satisfy the Board that she is not an enemy alien before admission to the examination.

A letter was read from the Medical Officer of Health for the County of Durham, raising various points in connection with the relation of medical practitioners to both certified midwives and uncertified women in their practice.

The letter concluded:—

"I am afraid that there is no doubt it is a common practice in many parts of the county for the doctors, especially in these times of stress, not to trouble to attend normal confinements if they know that an uncertified woman is present, though they attend later and sign the maternity benefit certificate. They thus tacitly encourage practice by uncertified women, and enable them to carry on a practice to the detriment and discouragement of any trained midwives in the district."

PENAL CASES.

A Special Meeting of the Central Midwives Board was held at 1, Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, Westminster, on Wednesday, July 24th, at 10.30 a.m., when the charges against a number of midwives were considered, with the following results:—

Struck Off the Roll and Certificate Cancelled.—Ellen Beesley (No. 12400), Alice Jemima Burnett, L.O.S. Cert. (No. 17397), Sarah Ann Dean (No. 18278), Hannah Hammond, C.M.B. Examination (No. 41117), Mary Jane Hartley (No. 20537), Clarissa Lister (No. 15068), Sarah Moxon (No. 2219), Rebecca Taylor (No. 7240), Gertrude Davies (No. 29355), Ada Rawlings (No. 9709).

Severely Censured.—Henrietta Haycock, C.M.B. Exam. (No. 30190).

Adjourned for Report in Three and Six Months.—Lucy Lake (No. 2519), Charlotte Major, C.M.B. Exam. (No. 41223).

There were several defended cases. The charges against one midwife included her carrying in the bag containing her appliances a "pig's black pudding."

In September last we discussed at some length the Proposals for a State-aided Midwifery Service in England and Wales embodied in a Memorandum by the Association for Promoting the Training and Supply of Midwives as a basis for necessary legislation. This Memorandum has now been revised, and we publish below the Summary of the proposals. We hope later to discuss them.

Summary.

(i) The greatest need in maternity and infant welfare is to secure an efficient midwifery service in all parts of the country, so that the most congested areas, where the rate burden is most severely felt, shall not be left with a defective service.

(ii) At present, though there are enough midwives competent to give efficient midwifery services, the fees obtainable are too small to enable them to earn an adequate livelihood. It is, therefore, necessary that every midwife attending a confinement must be secured an adequate fee; this is put at 25s.

(iii) In order that the areas most difficult to serve shall not be left without these services, it is necessary that the requisite sum for paying this fee shall be provided from the Exchequer, and not be met from local rates.

(iv) The fee of the midwife must be guaranteed, and must not depend upon the ability or willingness of the patient to pay.

(v) The Exchequer money should be disbursed through an efficient Local Body, which must supervise the systematic provision of midwives for the area; this body must be the same as that which is responsible for the inspection of midwives under the Act.

(vi) The scheme must include, and be conditional upon, the provision of greatly improved arrangements for the inspection of midwives everywhere.

(vii) The scheme must be accompanied by sufficient Exchequer money for the payment of requisite fees for doctors called in to abnormal cases by midwives under the C.M.B. rules.

(viii) These various items point to a sum of about £1,000,000 per annum being sufficient in England and Wales; its provision is intended to secure efficient midwifery services for every confinement in England and Wales where the income is too small to meet the charges involved.

(ix) The provision of Exchequer money for giving an increased maternity benefit *in cash*, or for giving *cash* allowances to the mother, would not meet the needs of the situation, since this does not secure that any *efficient services* are provided; but the present proposals, by securing efficient midwifery services in every case, guarantee that the whole of the money provided from the Exchequer

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