

# The Midwife.

## TRAINING OF MIDWIVES.

The Ministry of Health has issued a Circular (No. 10) to Supervising Authorities under the Midwives Acts, and to Local Authorities conducting Maternity and Child Welfare Schemes.

With this is enclosed a Prefatory Memorandum which deals with the Regulations made by the Board of Education for the Training of Midwives, and for a grant in aid of such training.

Sir Robert Morant, writing by the direction of Minister of Health (1) draws the attention of the Local Supervising Authorities under the Midwives Acts, and of Local Authorities responsible for Maternity and Child Welfare Schemes to the above Regulations made by the Board of Education. He further states:—

2. Grants will be paid by the Board to recognized Institutions only, in respect of approved courses at those Institutions, and will be at a rate not exceeding £20 for each student who has declared her *bona fide* intention to practise as a midwife, or has been for not less than three years in full time employment as a Health Visitor, or has completed successfully a course of training approved under the Regulations for the training of Health Visitors.

### GRANTS IN RESPECT OF EXTENSIONS OF NORMAL COURSE.

3. Grants at a rate not exceeding £6 will also be made in respect of extensions of the normal six months' course by a period of practical training of not less than a month.

### SPECIAL COURSES FOR PRACTISING MIDWIVES.

Similar grants will also be payable for special courses for practising midwives lasting from two to six weeks, held at recognized residential institutions.

4. With certain exceptions this new system of substantial grants from the Board of Education for the training of midwives will take the place of any Exchequer grants from the Ministry of Health under Maternity and Child Welfare Schemes, or otherwise in respect of midwifery scholarships or other expenditure on contributions to the training of intending or practising midwives. It is hoped that the new grants to training institutions will relieve local education authorities and local supervising authorities of much of the expenditure which it would otherwise be necessary for them to incur in order to ensure a sufficient supply of well-trained midwives in their areas. Pending the development of further training facilities under the new Regulations of the Board of Education, the Ministry of Health will be willing for the present year and possibly the following

year, to pay grants under the Maternity and Child Welfare Regulations in respect of lectures provided by County Supervising Authorities for midwives already in practice in the area.

### GRANTS IN AID OF MIDWIFERY SERVICES.

5. Apart from the question of provision for the training of midwives, the Ministry of Health will continue, until further notice, the grants in aid of the provision of midwifery services in any area (including the provision of substitutes while a midwife of a district is absent attending a training course) as hitherto made by the Local Government Board in accordance with their Circular of August 9th, 1918, under the Maternity and Child Welfare Regulations. The comprehensive and systematic provision of midwifery services is still gravely inadequate in nearly all areas.

### REMUNERATION OF MIDWIVES.

The remuneration usually obtainable by practising midwives is seriously deficient, regarded as a reliable annual income, and is not commensurate with the responsible nature of the duties and the technical qualifications and skill required; nor does it attract and maintain an adequate supply of thoroughly competent women to meet the real needs of the community. It must be realised that so long as the efficient practice of midwifery fails to afford a proper livelihood, not even the best of Regulations or the most substantial grants in aid of training can secure the establishment of a satisfactory system of midwifery services.

6. In view of the urgent importance of this matter in the interests of the health of the nation, the Ministry would urge on all local authorities carrying out Maternity and Child Welfare Schemes the importance of securing, by means of adequate subsidies to competent midwives or otherwise, a complete service of properly paid and well-trained midwives for the area; it is to be remembered that half of the approved local net expenditure on this provision may be reimbursed by grants from the Ministry of Health. Local Authorities who are not Supervising Authorities under the Midwives Acts should consult with the Supervising Authorities of their area as to the best means of making adequate provision, and the Ministry will gladly receive from every local authority conducting Maternity and Child Welfare Schemes any observations they care to offer as to the inadequacy of the present midwifery services of their district, howsoever provided, and any suggestions as to the steps which seem to be needed for improving, supplementing and eventually completing that service.

Next week we hope to deal with the Draft Regulations for the Training of Midwives embodied in the Prefatory Memorandum of the Board of Education, referred to above.

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