

## The Midwife.

### THE CARE OF MATERNITY.

In the House of Commons on Wednesday, April 28th, Mr. Briant asked the Minister of Health the number of practising certified midwives in the United Kingdom and the approximate number required for the proper care of maternity cases; and what steps, if any, does the Ministry propose to take in order to secure that an adequate supply of midwives shall be available?

Dr. Addison: As the answer is somewhat lengthy I propose to circulate it in the Official Report.

The following is the answer supplied:

According to the last report of the Central Midwives Board, the number of women entitled to practise as midwives on March 31st, 1919, was 44,166, but the number who gave notice of their intention to practise in 1918 was only 11,298.

No useful estimate can be made of the total number of midwives required. The shortage which exists in some districts is due to the fact that the number of cases within reach is too small to enable a midwife practising independently to make a living.

The Ministry have continued the policy of the Local Government Board of urging local authorities and nursing associations to subsidise midwifery in the more scattered districts, and of paying grants in respect of such subsidies. By this means the proportion of the rural population served by trained midwives has increased since 1917 from 51 per cent. to 65 per cent., and steady progress is being made. Nearly all the county councils and county nursing associations have framed schemes for extending the midwifery service of their counties.

A number of local authorities in urban areas have also, with the assistance of the Ministry, subsidised the provision of trained midwives in parts of their districts in need of this service.

A grant in aid of the training of women as midwives has been authorised and is being administered by my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Education.

### PENAL CASES.

A special meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at 1, Queen Anne's Gate Building, Westminster, on Wednesday, April 21st, when the charges were heard against seven midwives.

*Struck off the Roll and Certificates Cancelled:* Midwife Annie Christopher (No. 3973); Midwife Eliza Days (No. 219); Midwife Elizabeth Evans (No. 17009); Midwife Priscilla Hames (No. 14882); Midwife Lary Ann Murphy (No. 31944).

*Sentence Postponed. Report asked for from L.S.A. in three and six months' time:* Midwife Jane Eliza Carr (No. 10458); Midwife Eliza Jane Hadley (No. 13683).

### EAST-END MOTHERS' LYING-IN HOME.

The Annual Report of the East End Mothers' Home 396, Commercial Rd., E. is a very human document. The income, both in training fees, and patients' payments increased during the year, but this was counter-balanced by the increase in expenditure owing to the very high prices ruling for everything, so that the net result of the year's finance was the same as the previous year.

In 1919, 1,881 mothers were delivered in the Home and district, 363 in excess of the previous year, 200 mothers had regretfully to be told that there was no room, although their circumstances made them more than eligible for such help. "Notwithstanding," says Miss Anderson, the Resident Lady Superintendent in her report, "we have been terribly crowded, and extra bedsteads had to be put up, but every mother had a comfortable warm bed, a kind nurse, and plenty to eat. It seemed beds, beds, nothing but beds, babies and mothers, yet all were happy, and enjoyed the picnic.

We are booking now with the greatest caution, but, as the poor dears never know their dates, it is a difficult matter to arrange the admissions. It is heart breaking to refuse mothers which we are compelled to do now daily, to avoid the danger of overcrowding. Fortunately our Sisters have been with us so long, and are so entirely to be relied upon, that the germ of sepsis has for us no terrors, and the result shows that our trust is not misplaced."

Miss Anderson gives some examples of the increase in prices. Lint, formerly 1s., now 5s. per lb. Nurses' uniform material, formerly 7½d. yard, now 2s. 9d. for the same quality.

"The domestic servant problem," says the Lady Superintendent, "beggars words; but I suppose we have been fairly fortunate as a whole, although one girl's equipment for domestic service when she arrived was the clothes she wore, a comb, a powder pot, and curling pins!! Yet she had been earning £2 10s. a week in a factory."

### CHARGE AGAINST A MIDWIFE.

A midwife named Alice Gardner, of Bath, was last week charged at Reading with abandoning a baby by leaving it under a tree in St. Peter's Avenue, Caversham.

The child was born in the Bath Workhouse, and it is alleged was handed to the midwife that she might take it somewhere for adoption.

As we go to press, the Annual Meeting of the British Hospital for Mothers and Babies, and Council for the Promotion of the Higher Training of Midwives, at which Princess Christian has consented to preside, is being held in the Great Hall of St Bartholomew's Hospital.

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