

The Midwife.

THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

REPORT OF MIDWIVES' ACT COMMITTEE.

The Midwives' Act Committee of the L.C.C. at its meeting on December 14th, reported that its attention had been drawn to an offer made by the Ministry of Health to the Central Midwives' Board to arrange for the women medical officers and nurse inspectors on the staff of the Ministry to inspect and advise the Board upon midwives or institutions desirous of obtaining the Board's sanction to undertake the training of pupil midwives, and that, inasmuch as this is a service which has been undertaken by the Council's officers in conjunction with their ordinary duties, and the offer of the Ministry indicated the possibility of overlapping, the Council communicated with the Ministry.

In their letter to the Secretary of the Ministry of Health, they drew attention to the fact that hitherto reports have been made in this respect to the Board, at the Board's own request, by the Council's inspectors under the Midwives' Acts, who are qualified women medical practitioners, and stated that the Council would be glad if it might be informed of the exact nature of the Ministry's proposals and particularly whether it intends to undertake this work upon a national basis, and to supersede the service which has previously been rendered in this matter by the local supervising authorities.

To this the Assistant Secretary replied that the Ministry had offered the Central Midwives' Board the services of their medical officers and nurse inspectors for the purpose of making reports to the Board, after local investigation, on midwives in private practice, who are approved by the Board for the purpose of training pupils, and the Board had accepted this offer. It rested with the Board, however, to decide, in each case whether they would ask for a report from an officer of the Local Supervising Authority, or from an officer of the Ministry.

The Midwives' Act Committee report in this connection :—

The reply of the Ministry cannot, we think, be regarded as satisfactory. We have no reason to suppose that the Board is dissatisfied with the assistance rendered by the Council's inspectors in the matter; indeed we are convinced that the Council's officers, whose duties carry them regularly among practising midwives and into institutions dealing with midwifery in the county, are specially fitted, by reason of their experience, to give advice upon the matter. The Council will observe that the Ministry has not given a direct answer to the question in the Council's letter whether it proposes to undertake this work upon a national basis and to supersede the service rendered in the matter by local supervising

authorities. The letter is open to the interpretation that the Ministry desires to participate in work of this nature which has hitherto been performed by local supervising authorities under the Midwives' Acts. Such a course will, in our opinion, inevitably lead to confusion and duplication of work and involve a wasteful employment of staff. We recommend—

(a) That, in the opinion of the Council, the action taken by the Ministry of Health in proffering the services of its officers to undertake, in common with the local supervising authorities under the Midwives' Acts, work hitherto performed by such authorities in connection with inspecting and advising upon midwives desirous of training pupil midwives is unnecessary, would lead to confusion, and involve a wasteful employment of staff.

(b) That a copy of the foregoing resolution (a) be forwarded to the Minister of Health and that he be asked to receive a deputation from the Council in order that the Council may place before him its views in connection with the matter.

THE VALUE OF MATERNITY HOMES.

Much emphasis was laid on the value of Maternity work at the recent annual meeting of the Bath District Nursing Institute, which was held in the Guildhall. Miss E. A. Benians, District Inspector of the Q.V.J.I. for the South-Western Area, presided. The Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, Miss Hope, in presenting the annual report, said that the adverse balance with which the Institute was threatened, had been greatly reduced by the help from the surplus fund of the British Red Cross Society. The maternity work done at the Home, also at the Maternity Hospital, had increased, but still more could be undertaken if more room was available.

Dr. Veronica Christie, in supporting an appeal for funds, drew a graphic picture of the conditions of home discomfort, which so often made the advent of a child an event too acutely dreaded by the expectant mothers. It would make for more decent living among the poor if these homes were multiplied.

LECTURES TO MIDWIVES.

The Winter Course of Lectures to Midwives in Burnley includes one on "The Rules and Regulations of the Central Midwives Board," by Dr. T. Holt, Medical Officer of Health, and another on "The Midwife's Part in the Care of the Expectant Mother," by Dr. L. K. Horne, Maternity and Child Welfare Medical Officer, at the Bank Hall Hospital, by kind permission of the Medical Officer of Health and Matron, Miss Nicoll, who kindly showed midwives over the hospital.

On December 17th Dr. R. F. H. Horne, Tuberculosis Officer and Deputy Medical Officer of Health, is lecturing on "Tuberculosis" at the Parker Street Infant Welfare Centre.

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