

The Midwife.

LYING-IN HOMES UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE L.C.C.

It is the intention of the London County Council to apply to Parliament in the Session of 1921 for the amendment of Part IV (Lying-in Homes) of the London County Council (General Powers) Act, 1915, in order to provide that:—

(i) An application for registration of a lying-in home shall state the full name, address, age, nationality and qualifications (if any) of the applicant and such further information as may reasonably be required, as regards the applicant or the premises or their equipment, in connection with the consideration of the application.

(ii) The power to refuse or cancel registration shall be exercisable against a person who is "unsuitable" instead of "of bad character."

(iii) An additional ground for refusal or cancellation of registration shall be that the applicant is under the age of 21 years.

(iv) The Council shall be empowered to make by-laws in respect of lying-in homes for the undermentioned purposes—

- (a) Prescribing the records to be kept.
- (b) Prescribing the number of patients that may be accommodated.
- (c) Prescribing the equipment.
- (d) Providing that all deaths of patients shall be notified to the Council.

The L.C.C. is guided in this action by a Report from its Public Health Committee, which stated that in the course of over four years' experience of the working of the Act the Council has had practical proof of the inadequacy of the existing law, and they therefore proposed amendments for the purpose of securing more satisfactory supervision of lying-in homes, without disturbing the system of registration prescribed by the Act.

The Public Health Committee further informed the Council that they are advised that under the existing law the Council cannot insist on the provision at lying-in homes of obstetrical appliances such as are usually carried by a doctor or midwife; that there is no power to fix the number of patients that may be accommodated in a lying-in home; and that there is no duty on the keeper of a lying-in home to notify the Council of any death occurring there. With regard to notification, it is true that in the case of midwives such a requirement is imposed by the Midwives Acts, but this does not apply in the case of keepers of lying-in homes who are not midwives; and of 237 lying-in homes at present on the London register, the number of keepers who are midwives is approximately 136. If the Council were empowered to make by-laws dealing with certain matters the Committee think that the supervision of lying-in homes would be much improved and the objects

of the existing law more effectually attained. They consider that the power to make by-laws should be limited to specific purposes.

The proposals have been placed before the Chairman of the Central Midwives Board, who has expressed the opinion that they are desirable.

EDINBURGH ROYAL MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

At the annual meeting of the above hospital, as reported in the *British Medical Journal*, Sir Ludovic Grant referred to the favourable features to be found in a record number of patients and in the firm establishment of the ante-natal clinics as part of the machinery of the hospital; on the other hand he thought that the statistical part of the report afforded food for anxious thought, and emphasized the utter insufficiency and lamentable inadequacy of the hospital in relation to the city at present and still more to the future needs. Major-General W. B. Bannerman expressed his admiration for the work which was being done in the ante-natal department and in that devoted to the care of the venereal diseases complicating childbirth, and stated that in India and in other parts of the world obstetricians looked to Edinburgh Royal Maternity Hospital for guidance in these new developments. They had of recent years begun similar ante-natal work in Madras. The total number of attendances at the ante-natal clinics during 1919 had been 1,414, as compared with 947 in 1918, or an increase of 467. Of the 1,414 cases, 701 were new cases and 713 were revisits.

A PROBLEM FOR THE VERGER.

The sudden illness of the vicar had dislocated the church arrangements in a manner that was highly disconcerting to the harassed verger.

Truly, one half the world knows not how the other half lives, and it must be explained that in many a poor parish there is no one but the vicar to appeal to. The regular services had been arranged for, but there remained many traps for the unwary.

The verger was breathing more freely as the last of the catechism children disappeared, when the door opened to admit two women, both clad in imitation fur coats in spite of the heat of the afternoon.

"Did you want anyone, missis?"

"Yus, I come to be churched."

"Sorry, missis, but Father Jones is took bad, and there ain't no one 'ere this afternoon."

"Well, what am I to do, young man?"

"You'd best go on to St. George's; t'ain't far; and there's someone sure to be there."

"What do you think? I ain't goin' out of this wivout bein' churched; it's that unlucky, and if I did, my old man 'ud bash me."

Truly a problem for the unlucky verger!

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)