

The Midwife.

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD. CHILDREN OF UNMARRIED PARENTS.

As we go to press, on Wednesday, April 20th, the Central Midwives Board is entering upon a new epoch, for the enlarged Board, appointed under Section 1 of the Midwives Act, 1918, is in Session for the first time, and four certified midwives will take their seats as such—not a large proportion, it is true, out of a Board of fourteen members, but an important departure as establishing the principle that the Midwives to be governed have a right to representation on their governing body, and further that they cannot be excluded without depriving the Board of expert information available in no other way.

The original Act of 1902 made no provision for the inclusion of one midwife on a Board of nine persons, an indefensible omission, for even if the Bill was framed in the interests of the lying-in mother, as was asserted by its promoters, the interests of the midwives should have been safeguarded. Fortunately, the Privy Council nominated a midwife as one of its nominees, and so did the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses.

The new Board consists of fourteen persons, two of whom are certified midwives appointed by the Minister of Health, and who are, as already notified, Miss Marion Olive Haydon and Miss Gladys Ivy Da Silva Le Geyt, and two certified midwives nominated by the Incorporated Midwives Institute, whose names have so far not been made public. The other midwife on the Board is Miss Rosalind Paget who, we believe, has not missed a meeting since the Board was first established in 1902.

Other new appointing authorities are the Association of Municipal Corporations, who have appointed Dr. J. J. Jervis, D.P.H., Medical Officer of Health of the City of Leeds, and the Society of Medical Officers of Health, who have appointed Dr. R. A. Lyster, D.P.H., County Medical Officer for Hampshire.

The remaining members of the Board are members of the present Board, namely:—

Professor Briggs and the Lady Mabelle Egerton, appointed by the Minister of Health.

Sir Francis Champneys, Bart., M.D., F.R.C.P. (Chairman), appointed by the Royal College of Physicians.

Dr. Walter S. A. Griffith, F.R.C.S., appointed by the Royal College of Surgeons.

Mr. Charles Sangster, M.R.C.S., L.S.A., appointed by the Society of Apothecaries.

Dr. Fairbairn, appointed by the Incorporated Midwives Institute.

Dr. West, LL.D., J.P., appointed by the Association of County Councils.

Nurses and midwives who are interested in the present unsatisfactory position before the law of the unmarried mother and her child, should obtain a copy of the "Bill to Amend the Bastardy Laws, and to make further and better provision with regard to children of unmarried parents; and for other purposes connected therewith," presented by Captain Bowyer in the House of Commons on February 18th, the Bill is down for second reading in the House of Commons on Friday, April 29th, and, if it commends itself to them, our readers should bring it to the notice of their members of Parliament and ask them to be in their places to support it on the 29th inst.

It will be remembered that amongst the Bills which got through the Committee Stage last session was the "Children of Unmarried Parents' Bill," in charge of Mr. Neville Chamberlain, promoted by the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child, 20, Berkeley Street, W. 1.

The present Bill includes only those clauses of Mr. Chamberlain's Bill which emerged from the Committee stage, and it is therefore regarded as a non-contentions measure. It does not go as far as its promoters would like, but it does enable parents of illegitimate children to legitimize them by subsequent marriage, and it makes provision for an official to be known as the "Collecting Officer," to act as the intermediary between the father and mother of an illegitimate child. It further places the maximum amount which the putative father of an illegitimate child may be required to pay at 40s. a week, instead of 10s., as at present.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

It is reported in connection with the coal famine at Hull, that a husband rang up the authorities to say he had "been presented with twins, and that, owing to the absence of a fire the nurse had to wash them in cold water, and they were consequently blue with cold. The case received prompt attention." We should be glad to hear the opinion of our readers as to how they would have dealt with the twins under the circumstances described, and what steps they would have taken to secure warmth for them.

Holidays for working-class mothers, who are required to write an account of how they spent them, are being arranged by the National League for Health, Maternity, and Child Welfare, to which a sum of money has been given anonymously for that purpose.

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