

The Midwife.

THE WILLESDEN CONTROVERSY.

It will be remembered that there has recently been a keen controversy between the local medical practitioners and the Willesden District Council on the question of the Health Services in that district. The Medical Practitioners' Union appointed a Commission to investigate the conditions out of which the controversy arose, and has now issued a report which is signed Gordon Ward, M.D., E. A. Gregg, L.R.C.P., and A. Welply, M.D.

The Report states that the Health Committee accepted the Labour Party's policy, which it understood to mean the setting up of a new State Medical Service system. The defect of the scheme was the disregard of existing services, with consequent overlapping and wasteful expenditure, besides professional difficulties for medical practitioners whose practices had been largely amongst those for whom the Council Clinics now cater.

What is of interest and importance to midwives is the report on the Urban District Council's isolation hospital, which the Commission describes as "very serious." It states that both infectious and non-infectious cases were received, among the latter being maternity cases (a hardly credible condition of things in the present state of knowledge as to the danger and method of conveyance of puerperal sepsis.) The Commission states that the staff was badly quartered, was below strength, and had a high sickness rate. The buildings were in an indifferent state of repair, and the accommodation did not permit of the separation of puerperal septicaemia from normal labour cases. (A graver charge than this against a responsible public authority in relation to the care of such cases could scarcely be made.) The Commission are of opinion that the risk of conveyance of sepsis from the fever wards to the maternity ward must in any case have existed, and that it was inevitably accentuated by the bad housing conditions of the nursing staff, and, in fact, "there is grave reason to suspect that disregard of these elementary considerations has brought its own punishment—not on the Council, but on the unfortunate inmates of the maternity wards."

The Commission urges that the Willesden Urban District Council must change its policy, and close the present maternity wards, and suggests either that the Guardians should take over these cases or a round-table conference should consider an alternative plan, involving co-operation of existing services which should include both existing officers of the Council, practitioners of the district, with possibly a member appointed by the Ministry of Health, or one of the recognised associations of medical practitioners, having special knowledge of the subject.

The Commission is of opinion that the Council would be well advised to concentrate on the preventive work, and leave the curative work to the local practitioners.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

LIST OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES.

The list of successful candidates at the 91st Examination, held by the Central Midwives Board last month, gives the following results:—

Candidates examined	..	..	..	669
" passed	..	..	..	526
Percentage of failures	..	..	..	21.4

PENAL CASES.

A Special Meeting of the Central Midwives' Board for the hearing of the charges against five certified midwives was held at 1, Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, Westminster, S.W., on Thursday, February 23rd, with the following results:—

Struck off the Roll and Certificates Cancelled.—Midwives Aldwyth Wheawell Abbott (No. 26604, C.M.B. Examination), Elizabeth Atkins (No. 13891), Kate Hailey (No. 18608), Rose Sayers (No. 1565).

Judgment Suspended.—Midwife Beatrice Dorothy Maxted (No. 54391, C.M.B. Examination).

Amongst the charges against Midwife Abbott were the following:—

That on January 24th, 1922, at the Ealing Police Court, you were convicted under the Notification of Births Act of failing to give notice of childbirth to the Medical Officer of Health in respect of six several offences, viz., on October 17th, on November 2nd and 4th, and on December 2nd, 14th and 17th, 1921, and were fined 10s. in respect of each such offence. It having been proposed to substitute artificial feeding for breast feeding, you neglected to send to the Local Supervising Authority the notification required by Rules E, 12 A and 22 (1) (f). She is now prohibited from attending confinement cases in any capacity, as was also Midwife Hailey.

PAINLESS LABOUR IN HYPNOTIC STATE.

The Roumanian correspondent of the *Lancet* writes in that journal:—

"Dr. Louis Hartmann, director of a large county hospital, encouraged by the good results reported in the medical journals on painless labour during hypnotic sleep, has tried this method in the obstetrical wards of his hospital. He selected for the purpose one tertipara, two quartiparae, and one quintipara, and induced hypnotic sleep after the bursting of the sac. Delivery proceeded smoothly in all four cases, the patients obeying promptly when ordered to press; the process was shortened a great deal by having contractions at the doctor's will. After delivery the mothers awoke in good general condition, only one of them complaining of stupor; this state soon ceased, however. The loss of blood was in all cases small. Dr. Hartmann proposes now to select primiparae."

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