

## The Midwife.

### MIDWIVES' ACT, NEW ZEALAND.

The Annual Report, 1922, of the Director-General of Health, New Zealand, contains the following report on the Midwives Act, by Miss Hester Maclean, R.R.C., Director, Division of Nursing:—

During the year two examinations have been held under the Midwives Act; 129 candidates presented themselves, and 122 passed and are now on the Register. Fifty midwives were registered from Overseas.

The question of continuing to recognise the certificate of the Central Midwives Board is under consideration. The term of training is not equal to that given under the New Zealand Act, and as it is now recommended to lengthen that term of twelve months to eighteen months, it is still more unfair to our midwives to recognise terms of six months and less. Many of the older midwives arriving in the Dominion, and applying for registration, have undergone training for three months only. In spite of this the Central Midwives Board, England, has not agreed to reciprocal registration with New Zealand, on account of the fact that the number of lectures laid down to be given by the Medical Officer is not equal to that under the Board, ignoring the fact that the number laid down is doubled during the length of the term. (Note.—Since writing above the Central Midwives Board has agreed to recognise the training under the New Zealand Act as equivalent, and asks for reciprocity for all midwives registered under the Board. This is under consideration, and it is proposed to admit these midwives after making up a time equal to that required of New Zealand midwives, and passing the State examinations.)

Not nearly so many midwives from New Zealand desire to practice in England, as midwives from England come to practice in New Zealand, and, therefore, reciprocity is more important to the holders of the Central Midwives Board's certificate than to the State registered midwives of New Zealand.

#### CHILD WELFARE.

The Report contributed by Dr. F. Truby King, Director of Child Welfare, contains the following items:—

#### SECTION I.—GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

During the year steady progress in child welfare has been made throughout the Dominion. How far the idea of *doing the best for the child from conception to the end of school-life*—the reason assigned for establishing the Directorate of Child Welfare—has been given effect to may be inferred

from the following record of undertakings and work done during the past year:—

#### BOOKLET FOR HUSBAND AND WIFE.

For the first time in the world an attempt has been made by the State to supply to those about to marry, and to every married woman under thirty-five years of age, a small text-book addressed to husband and wife, exhorting them to do the best for the growth and development of their potential progeny, and describing in simple terms the main essentials for safeguarding mother and child and promoting their health and fitness.

There are some 92,000 married women in the Dominion under thirty-five years of age, and to nearly half of these "The Expectant Mother, and Baby's First Month" has already been posted; further, the Registrar-General has kindly undertaken the issue of a copy to every man about to marry, on his applying to the local Registrar for a marriage license. When the issue to married women has been completed there will be no further excuse for parental ignorance as to the simple primary essentials bearing on the health and fitness of mother and child, because every newly-married couple will be forewarned and forearmed through the Registrars. In addition, a small supply of copies of the booklet held in reserve will be issued to 40 nurses, hospitals, &c., as required.

(e) *Meetings for Midwives*.—Instructions are sent out by the Director-General of Health to all registered midwives in the Dominion, asking them to attend special lectures and demonstrations bearing on the pre-natal and post-natal care and safeguarding of mother and child. At these meetings, as in the foregoing, those attending have the benefit of conferring and discussing matters with a specially qualified nurse, who arranges for further practical demonstrations or advice if desired.

One can scarcely overstate the safeguard and boon it would be to mother and child if all the midwives—numbering between 1,500 and 2,000, registered and unregistered—to whom mothers, expectant and actual, turn for guidance and help during the most momentous and critical phases of life could be depended on to give uniform authoritative advice and assistance. Wrong advice is so often tendered and the wrong thing so often done that no pains should be spared to heighten the sense of responsibility and raise the standard of knowledge and proficiency among all those licensed or authorized in any way by the State to undertake the special care of mother and child before and after child-birth. The relationship of this to child welfare and the further lowering of the infantile-mortality rate is clearly brought out by studying the admirable charts and statistics bearing on mother and child published by the Government Statistician.

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