

The Midwife.

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

At the August examination of the Central Midwives' Board 595 candidates were examined and 465 passed the examiners. The percentage of failures was 21.8.

REPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

The fourth Annual Report of the Ministry of Health, 1922-1923, just published, contains the following reference to Midwives and Hospitals for Maternity Cases:—

MIDWIVES.

Some idea of the extent to which midwives are employed may be gathered from the fact that of the 782,266 registered births in England in 1921, no less than 419,655, or 54 per cent., were notified by midwives. The percentage was 48.2 in London, 61.3 in the County Boroughs, and 49.5 in the Counties.

Of the 51,565 women on the Midwives' Roll (England and Wales) on the 31st March, 1922, 12,442 gave notice of their intention to practise as midwives. 76.3 per cent. of this number are certificated, as compared with 73.4 per cent. in the previous year.

The aim of the Department is to secure in every district an adequate service of well-qualified and competent midwives, and this object is achieved in a variety of ways. In large centres of population there is generally a sufficient number of midwives practising independently, and no assistance is required from the Local Authority and the Department, except occasionally to make up the fee of an independent midwife to the ordinary fee of the district for some of the poorer women—*e.g.*, those who do not receive maternity benefit.

In some quarters of large towns, however, and in some of the smaller Urban Districts, it is necessary for the Local Authority either to employ a midwife directly, or to guarantee her a fixed salary, in order to provide an efficient service for an area in which a living could not otherwise be obtained. In sparsely populated districts it is usually impossible for a midwife to maintain herself, owing to the small number of cases within her reach, and the service is generally supplied by midwives employed by Nursing Associations and engaged also in district nursing, and frequently also in health visiting, school nursing, and other health services. A considerable sum is paid annually by way of grant, either directly to Nursing Associations or indirectly in aid of Local Authorities' contributions towards the cost of this service.

The services of a trained midwife are now available for some 73 per cent. of the rural population of England. Owing largely to the financial strin-

gency of the present time, only 122 new District Nursing Associations were started during 1922, while 53 of the existing Associations ceased work; but it is hoped that with improving circumstances this rate of increase will soon be augmented, and that the proportion of rural areas still inadequately served may be reduced.

HOMES AND HOSPITALS.

At the end of the year under review the total number of maternity beds in Hospitals and Homes known to the Department was 1,879 in 128 Homes (67 municipal and 61 voluntary). This shows some increase upon the number of beds at the 1st January, 1922, *viz.*, 1,675. These figures relate solely to institutions for maternity cases only; they do not include Poor Law accommodation or maternity wards in general hospitals. Homes for mothers and babies now number 100, containing beds for 1,334 mothers and 1,288 babies. There are also 34 Homes for children under five (including Residential Nurseries), with accommodation for 855. There are 39 Hospitals solely for children under five (including observation wards) with 636 beds, and 24 Convalescent Homes with 397 beds for mothers with babies or for children under five.

It is well known that there are a number of small institutions for the reception of maternity cases, which are run as profit-making concerns, and are not under the supervision of Local Authorities or of the Department. Complaints have been received from time to time that the conditions in some of these institutions are unsatisfactory. Powers have been obtained by Local Acts for requiring the registration and inspection of Lying-in Homes in their respective areas by the London County Council, the Middlesex County Council, and the Town Councils of Liverpool and Manchester. The Plymouth Corporation Bill of this Session contains similar clauses. The question of introducing legislation to make these provisions general is under consideration.

JOINT NURSING AND MIDWIVES COUNCIL (NORTHERN IRELAND).

Notice is hereby given that the Midwives Examination will be held in Belfast on October 9th and 10th. Entries must be lodged not later than two weeks before the date of the Examination

M. C. POOLE, Registrar.

AN "AMATEUR BABY."

A Greek father tiptoed up to the door of our premature nursery and whispered to a nurse:

"Can I see my amateur baby?"

Which, considering the workmanship on these unfinished mites, isn't such a bad break, after all.—*Bulletin of New York Nursery and Child's Hospital.*

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