

The Midwife.

MIDWIVES AND MATERNITY HOMES BILL.

In the House of Lords on May 17th, the Order of the Day for the Second Reading of the Midwives and Maternity Homes Bill having been read, the Lord Privy Seal, the Marquess of Salisbury, stated that the Bill to which he was going to ask their Lordships to give a Second Reading was in the hands of a Private Member in another place, but it had the full assent of His Majesty's Government in its present form, and it had been thought better that they should undertake it in their Lordships' House as a Government Bill.

Lord Salisbury then reviewed the working of the Midwives' Act, which he said had been a great success.

His Lordship explained the Amendments proposed, with which our readers are already familiar, viz., that an unqualified woman must not act as a midwife except "under the direction and personal supervision of a duly qualified medical practitioner," except in case of sudden or urgent emergency.

The next amendment provides that a midwife who has been exposed to infection due to no fault of her own shall be entitled to compensation. No option is left, as at present, to the Local Supervising Authority.

The third gives power to Local Supervising Authorities to allow expectant mothers to insure against the possibility of having to pay a doctor's fee by paying a moderate insurance fee.

The next provision was, Lord Salisbury said, for the reduction of the enormous Roll of Midwives. "Huge numbers," he said, "are on that Roll who do not practise at all, and we are very anxious to bring it within a reasonable limit. Accordingly, an ingenious provision is inserted under which the full Roll is printed only once every five years, while the names of the actual practising midwives are printed every year, so that in the smaller Roll you are able to find the names of all who are really operating."

A final provision of this part of the Bill was that which provides a Badge for Midwives.

In regard to the second part of the Bill, dealing with the Registration and Inspection of Maternity Homes, Lord Salisbury explained that these provisions were really required, especially in the case of the less reputable Homes. He moved that the Bill be read a second time.

The Archbishop of Canterbury asked for additional safeguards to be inserted in relation to Homes technically superintended by qualified medical practitioners, and referred to the precautions at present taken in London under the L.C.C. (General Powers) Act, and said he should call attention to the point on the Committee stage, in the hope that by that time the matter might be further considered.

Viscount Haldane expressed general sympathy with the Bill but doubted whether there was a necessity for imposing further restrictions on persons who act as midwives. He feared it might operate hardly in remote parts of the country where "even a panel doctor" could not be got.

Viscount Knutsford very much hoped that the noble Marquess would not press his amendment excluding hospitals and institutions under Government Departments and local authorities from inspection.

The Marquess of Salisbury promised to take these three points into consideration before the Committee Stage, and the Bill was then read a second time and committed to a Committee of the whole House.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

The Annual Report of Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital for 1925, just issued, states that it is a great satisfaction to the Committee to be able to report that the Mortgage on the Hospital Building of £8,000 has been paid off, and they express their most grateful thanks to all who contributed to this Fund.

During the year 160 Pupil Midwives entered for the examination of the Central Midwives' Board and only 3 failed, the percentage of failures thus being 1.8, whereas the percentage of failures over the whole country was 21.4—a record of which the authorities of the hospital may well be proud, and which nurses contemplating taking training in midwifery should note.

The new Regulations of the Central Midwives' Board increasing the period of training for Midwives came into force recently, and all candidates now received for training are subject to these rules. The fees for training have been revised, though the increases made are not proportionate to the increase in the period of training. The number of applicants has fallen off, but it will probably be some months before it will be possible to estimate with any degree of accuracy the financial result to the Hospital of the new Regulations.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

At the April Examination of the Central Midwives' Board, 919 candidates were examined, and 717 passed the examiners. The percentage of failures was 22.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD FOR SCOTLAND.

The Examination of the Board held simultaneously in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen, has just concluded with the following results:—

Out of 148 candidates who appeared for the Examination 134 passed.

Of the successful candidates 18 were trained at the Royal Maternity Hospital, Edinburgh, 40 at the Royal Maternity Hospital, Glasgow; 6 at the Maternity Hospital, Aberdeen; 15 at the Maternity Hospital, Dundee; 13 at the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute, Edinburgh; and the remainder at various recognised Institutions.

ADEQUATE INSTRUCTION IN FUNDAMENTALS OF MIDWIFERY

The Eleventh General Conference (Interim) of the Royal New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children, held at Dunedin in December last, the Report of which is just to hand, approved a suggestion previously made by Mrs. Marshall Macdonald, and warmly supported by Sir Truby King, that it is highly desirable that facilities be provided as soon as possible in connection with the hospitals of the Dominion, for enabling Nurses in their fourth year's training to be given adequate instruction in the fundamentals of midwifery and child welfare, and that they be required to devote reasonable time and attention to acquiring the main essentials of these transcendently important subjects.

Sir Truby King said that the fourth year was really a super-added year. A nurse could learn her profession in three years. The matter had already received the attention of Hospital Boards and local authorities, and they would like, if possible, to carry it out. It seemed to him preposterous that nurses should not have some knowledge of such fundamental subjects as the birth of a child, and the care of it during the first month of existence. Most general hospital nurses knew nothing about child birth, and nothing about the care of a baby, and it was deplorable that such conditions should exist.

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