

The Midwife.

MIDWIVES AND MATERNITY HOMES BILL.

On Wednesday, August 4th, the Midwives and Maternity Homes Bill received the Royal Assent.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

At the July Meeting of the Central Midwives' Board the Secretary submitted a statement of the observations made on the Resolutions passed at the recent Conference between Members of the Board and Representatives of Local Supervising Authorities, and it was agreed that the observations (as amended) be approved and that they be conveyed to the Local Supervising Authorities in the form of a letter approved by the Chairman.

The Standing Committee reported that it had carefully considered and now submitted alterations in the Rules which would become necessary as the result of the passing into Law of the Midwives and Maternity Homes' Bill, 1926, and for other reasons. It was agreed that the alterations be approved and that they be submitted to the Minister of Health for approval.

QUARANTINE FOR MIDWIVES.

At the same Meeting of the Central Midwives' Board, a letter was considered from the Hon. Secretary of the Kingston Nursing Association, suggesting that there should be an extension of time of quarantine in the case of midwives who have been in contact with cases of puerperal septicæmia.

The Board decided to reply "that the suggestion of the Kingston Nursing Association is contrary to the principle of the Board, that, in matters of septic infection, time as such is of no importance; that mere extension of time is no obstacle to infection, and that, if disinfection is efficient, time is no additional safeguard.

"It, therefore, is unable to fall in with the suggestion of the Kingston Nursing Association."

CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD FOR SCOTLAND.

At a meeting of the Central Midwives' Board for Scotland for the Hearing of Penal Cases—Dr. James Haig Ferguson in the Chair—it was reported that Certified Midwife No. 2615, Margaret Allan or Stewart, 195, Paisley Road, Glasgow, had been found guilty of procuring abortion, and sentenced to penal servitude, and it was resolved that the Secretary be directed to remove her name from the Roll of Midwives and to cancel her certificate, and, in addition thereto, in terms of Section 8 of the Midwives' (Scotland) Act, 1915, to prohibit her from attending women in child-birth in any other capacity.

QUESTIONS OF IMPORTANCE TO MIDWIVES.

Several questions of importance to Midwives were discussed at the Representative Meeting of the British Medical Association at Nottingham.

ANTENATAL WORK AND THE MIDWIVES ACT.

It was proposed by Dr. T. R. Davies on behalf of South-West Wales:—

That the Council be instructed to consider the advisability of pressing for the amendment of the Midwives' Act, 1918, in order to secure that local authorities be made responsible for payment for antenatal work.

It was decided to refer the matter to the Council for consideration.

USE OF PITUITRIN BY MIDWIVES.

Dr. J. Hudson proposed for the North of England branch: That midwives should not be allowed to use pituitrin under

any circumstances, on the ground that pituitrin was a potent drug which should not be in the hands of women with six months' training.

Dr. Lyster said he wished the Representative Body would persist in sending up such recommendations to the Midwives' Board as in time they would produce their effect. The attitude of the Board was that the midwife was taught and accustomed to use certain drugs in her training, and therefore she should be able to use them in her practice. She had to enter them in her register, so that the extent to which she used them could be ascertained. This would be satisfactory if there were any organised and systematic inspection of midwives, but, in fact, it was most imperfect and perfunctory, and afforded little or no protection to the public.

Dr. Bone was of opinion that the only way to produce an effect was to get information as to how extensively pituitrin was employed and find some case or cases where danger or damage had resulted from its use. (Apparently therefore instances of such cases are not at present available.)

Dr. P Hamill proposed:—

That the words "except in case of grave emergency and after medical assistance has been summoned" be substituted for the words "under any circumstances."

The amendment was lost, and the motion carried. We regret that the amendment should not have been carried. The experience of many years of the Central Midwives' Board cannot be ignored, and Dr. Hamill's proposal safeguards the position.

Parliament permits certified midwives to practise independently, they often do so far from medical help, and, if a midwife has in her hand a drug which she has been taught to use, and has reason to believe may save life, in our view she should not be debarred from doing so.

No woman, unless she is a trained nurse, may henceforth practise midwifery unless she has had twelve months' training.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

At the Half-yearly Meeting of Governors of Queen Charlotte's Hospital held recently (Mr. A. H. Pott, presiding) it was reported that the new Operating Theatre was practically finished and would shortly be opened. The number of abnormal cases needing operations had increased so largely in recent years that an Operating Theatre had become essential. An outside fire escape staircase had also had to be provided in connection with the Theatre at considerable expense. The Ladies' Association were contributing £500 towards the amount still required, and other donations had been received but a further amount of about £500 was needed.

The Committee were taking active steps for an extension of the Hospital which was greatly needed in order to cope with the increasing number of patients (in the first six months of the year nearly 1,000 patients were admitted to the Wards). These patients came from all parts of London and from many districts beyond.

A LOW BIRTH RATE.

Dr. Porter, the Medical Officer of Health for Wood Green, which has a very low birth rate, states in his Annual Report that the low birth rate is not altogether to be deplored. He writes: "What we are losing in quantity is being made up in quality, for it is much more desirable that a few healthy children are born than a number of weaklings, who are not only a misery to themselves, but a burden on society."

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