

The Midwife.

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

The Report of the Work of the Central Midwives' Board for the year ending March 31st, 1925, just published, states:—

MIDWIVES ROLL.

On March 31st, 1925, the Midwives Roll contained the names of 59,791 women, a nett increase of 2,636 on the total number appearing on the Roll for the previous year. There is a decrease of 3 in the new names added to the Roll after Examination as compared with the corresponding figures of last year.

Of the total number of those on the Roll, 41,812 have passed the Board's Examination and 9,371 have been admitted in virtue of prior certification under Section 2 of the Midwives Act, 1902. Five hundred and fifty-six midwives holding the Scottish and Irish Certificates have also been admitted to the English Roll under Section 10 of the Midwives Act, 1918. The trained midwives are consequently 51,739 in number, and the untrained 8,052, the respective proportions being 86.5 per cent. and 13.5 per cent., as against 85.5 per cent. and 14.5 per cent. in the previous year, when the number of trained midwives on the Roll was 48,846 and the untrained 8,309.

ANNUAL RETURNS FROM LOCAL SUPERVISING AUTHORITIES AS TO PRACTISING MIDWIVES.

The Local Supervising Authorities returned the names of 15,882 midwives as having notified their intention to practise in 1924. This total comprises with 15,505 in 1923, 14,921 in 1922, 14,312 in 1921, 13,859 in 1920, 12,885 in 1919, and 12,564 in 1918.

PENAL CASES.

During the year 35 midwives were dealt with by the Board under its penal powers to answer charges of malpractice, negligence or misconduct.

TRAINING OF PUPIL MIDWIVES.

In the Report of the Board for last year it was stated that, with a view to improving the training of women in the office of midwife with the consequent lessening of mortality and disability among the mothers and babies of the Nation, the Board had resolved that it was desirable to increase the length of midwifery training, and that it had submitted to the Minister of Health for his approval certain Rules on the subject.

The Board is pleased to state that during the year under review the Minister of Health has approved the new Rules as to training, which will have the effect of increasing the midwifery training to twelve months except in the case of certain trained nurses (more particularly referred to in the Board's Rules) who will only be required to undergo a six months' course of training.

In addition to the minimum number of 20 cases which have to be personally delivered and nursed by the pupil midwife during the course of her training, the pupil will in future be required to witness at least ten labours before the personal delivery of cases is commenced, and also to have conducted an ante-natal examination of at least 20 pregnant women.

Further, as regards cases to be personally delivered and nursed, five of these at least will have to be delivered and

nursed in an institution, and of the remaining fifteen, at least five will have to be delivered and nursed in the patient's own homes.

The number of lectures which must be attended before sitting for examination is increased from 20 to 30, and these lectures must extend over a period of at least four months instead of three, as hitherto.

The new Rules will apply to all candidates entering for any examination of the Board after that of April 20th, 1926, except that any candidate who has failed in April, 1926, or previously, may re-enter for examination not later than April, 1927, without undergoing the additional training.

Not only has the Board taken steps to increase the scope of the pupils' studies and enlarge the time to be devoted to them, but it is adopting measures to ensure that the teaching itself shall be more efficient. To this end, it is endeavouring to secure, wherever possible, that lectures shall be centralised and that large classes for lecture purposes shall be held.

The experience of the Board has been that small classes do not provide the necessary stimulus to the lecturer, and that they tend not infrequently to become coaching or demonstration classes. As regards coaching or demonstration, it is, of course, desirable that the classes shall be small, but these classes have to be carefully distinguished from lecture classes, which come in an entirely different category.

The policy of the Board is also against approving training in any institution which does not have at least fifty midwifery cases per annum. An institution which has less than that number could not possibly provide sufficiently continuous experience and frequent impressions to be of much value to the pupils. Only in an institution where cases are numerous, with the concomitant quick succession of cases and the presence of an obstetric atmosphere, can the practical training be regarded as satisfactory.

The Report concludes with a reference to the great loss it has sustained by reason of the fact that Professor Henry Briggs, the Lady Mabelle Egerton, and Miss Rosalind Paget have ceased to be members.

MONTHLY MEETING.

The Monthly Meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held on January 7th at the Offices of the Board, 1, Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, Westminster, S.W. Sir Francis Champneys, Bart. (Chairman) presided.

The correspondence included a letter from Captain Damant, thanking the Board for its expression of sympathy on the occasion of the death of Mrs. Brian Wilson, and a letter from Dr. J. Chisholm, thanking the Board for appointing him an Examiner at the Liverpool-Manchester Centre.

Dr. Jervis was appointed to represent the Board at the Congress of the Royal Sanitary Institute, to be held in London in July next.

The application of Midwife Janet Lilian Bailey for approval as a teacher was granted, and the applications of the following Midwives were approved subject to conditions:—Midwives Rosa Barnard, Lellen Butler, Isabella Green, Florence Eleanor Hardy, Lilian Anne Jolliffe, Caroline Woodger. The application of Midwife Agnes Divine was approved subject to a satisfactory report from Local Supervising Authority.

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