

The Midwife.

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

The Report on the work of the Central Midwives Board for the year ending March 31st, 1928, has recently been issued through His Majesty's Stationery Office (price 6d. net), from which we extract the following items:—

Midwives Roll.—On March 31st, 1928, the Midwives Roll contained the names of 60,923 women, a decrease of 2,555 on the total number appearing on the Roll for the previous year. There is an increase of 177 in the new names added to the Roll after Examination as compared with the corresponding figures of last year.

The great decrease in the number of the names appearing on the Roll is due to the exercise of the powers of clearing the Midwives Roll conferred on the Board by Section 3 (2) of the Midwives Act, 1926.

Of the total number of those on the Roll, 48,933 have passed the Board's Examination, and 9,250 have been admitted in virtue of prior certification under Section 2 of the Midwives Act, 1902. The names of 716 midwives holding the Scottish and Irish Certificates also appear on the English Roll under Section 10 of the Midwives Act, 1918. The trained midwives are consequently 58,899 in number, and the untrained 2,024, the respective percentages being 96.6 and 3.3, as against 89.4 and 10.6 in the previous year, when the number of trained midwives on the Roll was 56,770 and the untrained 6,708.

As has been pointed out on former occasions, the percentage of trained midwives who practise as such is relatively small, and this percentage may be estimated at 22.6 of the trained women on the Roll. Of the untrained, 68 per cent. are in practice, though frequently to a small extent only.

The total number of midwives practising during 1927, as appearing by the returns made by Local Supervising Authorities, is 14,479, of whom 13,103, or 90.5 per cent., are trained and 1,376, or 9.5 per cent., untrained.

Annual Returns from Local Supervising Authorities as to practising Midwives.—The Local Supervising Authorities returned the names of 16,610 midwives as having notified their intention to practise in 1927. This total compares with 16,436 in 1926, 16,282 in 1925, 15,882 in 1924, 15,505 in 1923, 14,921 in 1922 and 14,312 in 1921.

Training Institutions and Homes.—There are 193 Institutions and Homes in England and Wales at which Midwives may be trained, of which 67 are Poor Law Institutions. There are also certain Training Institutions in Scotland and Ireland whose pupils are eligible for admission to the Board's Examination on presenting the prescribed Schedules of Training duly certified by the respective Secretaries of the Scottish or Irish Central Midwives Boards or by the Registrar of the Joint Nursing and Midwives Council, Northern Ireland, as having been conducted in accordance with the Rules of the English Board.

Of the Midwives practising in 1927 and who have been trained in Institutions there were 9,435 who had received their training in non-Poor Law Institutions and 668 in Poor Law Institutions.

Private Training Teachers and Lecturers.—In addition to Training Institutions and Homes, 66 practising midwives are approved as Teachers and 97 registered medical practitioners hold the special approval of the Board as Lecturers.

In the last report issued by the Board attention was

drawn to the great assistance which was being rendered by some of the Universities in the country in connection with the delivery of lectures to pupil midwives.

In that report it was stated that Birmingham University had expressed its willingness to undertake the delivery of lectures to pupil midwives in Birmingham and the neighbourhood, and the Board is glad to be able to say that during the year that University has commenced its courses of lectures which are proving of great value to those pupils attending them.

The Board is pleased also to say that University College, Leicester, has during the year undertaken the responsibility of arranging courses of lectures for pupil midwives in Leicester.

Examinations.—The number of candidates entering for the Examinations during the year under review was 2,712 as against 2,683 in the preceding year, an increase of 29.

Of the 2,669 candidates who completed their Examination 2,223 passed, the corresponding figures for the year ending March 31st, 1927, being 2,636 and 2,046.

The percentage of failure was 16.8 as against 22.4 the previous year.

GENEROUS GIFT TO THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL.

Mr. Albert Levy, treasurer of the Royal Free Hospital, Gray's Inn Road, London, has contributed £50,000 to the fund for rebuilding the hospital's maternity department and for research into the causes of maternal mortality and of invalidity. Mr. Levy has made this gift because he has long felt the urgent necessity of improving the midwifery service throughout the country. He attaches special importance to the training of women students in this branch of medical work, and while fully appreciating the most excellent teaching now provided by the hospital in its maternity department, hopes and believes that the additional facilities that will be provided will help forward the cause he has so much at heart.

THE STOCK EXCHANGE AND THE MATERNAL MORTALITY PROBLEM.

Members of the London Stock Exchange have subscribed a sum of £3,500 for building, equipping and partially endowing a Stock Exchange bed at Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital. A Committee has been formed under the chairmanship of Mr. A. McLaren Niven, which includes Brig.-General Percy Weston, Mr. Langley Smithers, Mr. John Govett, and Mr. Arthur R. McNaught. Nominees of this Committee will participate in the Hospital's maternity services.

A similar movement has been initiated among other important groups, including the Bankers, the Master Builders, the Paper and Pulp Industry, and the Laundry and Allied Trades. The latter movement is being sponsored by Sir Marshall Hays, L.C.C., Chairman of London United Laundries, Ltd., and Mr. J. Elles Brown, President of the Society of Laundry Engineers and Allied Trades, Ltd.

The association of important financial and industrial undertakings with the maternity services of Queen Charlotte's should be a great step towards solving the problem of maternal mortality by increasing the number of women who are able to receive institutional treatment, a course which the Minister of Health recently strongly recommended.

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