

# The Midwife.

## THE QUEEN'S LOVE FOR BABES.

The Queen has presented a layette to Mrs. J. T. Wigan, officer in charge of Danbury Park War Emergency Maternity Hospital, Chelmsford, to be given to the mother of the thousandth baby to be born there since September 3, 1939.

## THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

At a meeting of the Central Midwives Board, held at the Board's offices, on Thursday, January 14th, the Secretary presented the Analysis of Training for the year 1942; First and Second Examinations; Report of First Examination; Report of Second Examination; Midwife—Teachers' Certificate Examination; also the Report of Part 2 of the Midwife—Teachers' Certificate Examination, held in December, 1942. Other important business was transacted.

## SHORTAGE OF MIDWIVES.

The shortage of midwives is a national disaster, but from publicity given to the subject it would appear that there is a vast amount of ignorance on the subject. For instance, writing in the *Manchester Guardian*, Dr. Henry H. MacWilliam, the Medical Superintendent of the Walton Hospital, Liverpool, states: "The midwives wish to emphasise their peculiarities and to separate themselves from their fellow nurses, although the popular tendency is for more confinements to be conducted in the maternity departments of the great general hospitals. In such departments midwives work in close association with nurses who hold either special qualifications, and the folly of pretending that a midwife is not a nurse is so obvious that the suggestion is never made."

That appears an extraordinary statement. Nursing and midwifery are two distinct professions, with separate curriculums of training, examination and control—women expert in one are often totally unsuited for the other—although we are of opinion that the Registered Nurse should make the most efficient midwife. Many dislike the work, and having obtained the Certificate as a midwife, never practise; whereas the woman who likes midwifery, and many do, is the only type who make expert practitioners, and they are worthy of all praise.

Dr. MacWilliam would have merged the powers of the Central Midwives Board into those of the General Nursing Council in 1919, when the Nurses' Registration Acts were passed.

The fact is that midwifery is an important branch of medicine—not necessarily of nursing.

## NANNIES ON WHEELS.

### For "Blitzed" Children in Britain.

Children who may be made homeless in certain blitzed areas of England will be visited by "Nannies" on wheels.

There are three cars which form a mobile infant welfare unit. Equipped with everything from a cooking stove to a new-born baby's first garment, "Nannie I" is the maternity van with complete accouchement equipment. "Nannie II" the technical van for dispensing and emergency feeding of mothers and infants, and "Nannie III" for spares and supplies. Presented to the nation by a famous firm of chemists, they are staffed by three State Registered Nurses (one of them a certificated midwife), five nurses who have had a short infant welfare course, and a male orderly-cum-mechanic.

When the unit goes into action, a tent annexe provides

ward accommodation, and is fixed up with portable cots and beds.

Should there be any lull in bombing attacks, the unit is centred at a provincial town in the south of England, and goes round the outlying villages not so well served with clinics as the big cities. Under the supervision of the regional Medical Officer of Health, the nurses make house-to-house visits, set up war nurseries for evacuated children, and help to create new day nurseries.

The mobile unit, the first of its kind, is expected to be the forerunner of a maternity and infant welfare service to outlying industrial and rural districts.

*The South African Nursing Journal.*

## ABERDEEN PROGRESS IN MATERNITY NURSING.

Consideration is being given by Aberdeen Town Council to the introduction in Aberdeen of the section of the Maternity Services (Scotland) Act, prohibiting unqualified persons acting as maternity nurses for gain.

It was stated by the convener of the Public Health Committee that the Council had municipal midwives in residence in the city, and in addition midwives meantime staying at the Maternity Hospital had been allocated areas in the East End. They, therefore, felt that the supply of trained midwives was adequate.

The idea behind the prohibition of unqualified persons—handywomen without training—is to raise the standard of maternity services to the highest level possible to bring down the death rate among mothers and babies at child birth.

## MATERNITY RELIEF FOR EUROPE AFTER THE WAR.

Two women, a doctor and a trained nurse, are helping to make plans for maternity and child welfare relief in Europe after the war.

They are Dr. Dorothy Taylor, Senior Medical Officer for Maternity and Child Welfare in England and Wales, and Miss Pye, who had wide experience in relief work among mothers and babies in Poland and Austria at the end of the last war.

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee on Medical Services has just been held in London. It was agreed that doctors and nutrition experts should work in closest harmony to consider what vitamin and mineral supplements will be required in the emergency period following hostilities.

## HELP FOR MOTHERS, POST-NATAL HOMES.

Mrs. Winston Churchill, Chairman of Fulmer Chase Maternity Hospital for the wives of officers, supports the plea made in *The Times* for facilities for young mothers, so that they may enjoy a post-natal home at the end of the fortnight's treatment in the hospital after childbirth. A far-seeing philanthropist came to the aid of Fulmer Chase Hospital and provided a roomy house nearby where patients can prolong their stay, learn to look after their babies and regain strength. Mrs. Churchill pleads for post-natal homes in connection with all maternity hospitals, especially for young mothers with their first baby, and considers it an essential part of maternity and child welfare work. We feel sure the public will support this suggestion, especially for the wives of men fighting for their country and the welfare of the world at large.

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