

The Midwife.

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

In reply to inquiries, the Central Midwives Board issued a brief survey of its excellent work for the year ended March 31, 1944, which, on the whole, will be found very encouraging. It opens with the statement that the Midwives continue to render magnificent service to the community, and, indeed, in war time no service can be of more value. The increasing birth rate, and the shortage of staff, both medical and nursing, have caused continued pressure on the maternity service of the country. The thanks of the Board are due and expressed to practising midwives, and to the teaching, administrative and nursing personnel of its approved training schools for the maintenance of the high standards of midwifery work and training.

The numbers of midwives qualifying between September, 1943 and March 31, 1944, was 1,169—practically all were required to practise.

On March 31, 1944, the Roll of Midwives contained the names of 68,859 women, being 1,747 more than at the end of March, 1943.

The number of candidates presenting themselves for Midwife and Teacher's Certificate Examination, continues to increase, and is an indication of the high value attached to the certificate by training schools and midwife teachers. Approximately 63 per cent. of approved training institutions now have a person holding this qualification on the staff. Approved courses in preparation for the examination were held in London, Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield.

Compilation of a register of midwives qualified to give gas and air analgesia continues, and so far approximately 2,400 midwives are known to hold the qualification.

Comparing the Board's accounts for 1943 with those for 1942, the total income was higher by £1,328, and total expenditure was higher by £1,244. The increases were due mainly to examination receipts and expenditure, the former being larger by £968 (including midwife-teacher's examination fees, £166), and the latter by £985 (including midwife-teacher's examination expenses, £139).

THE MOTHERS OF THE NATION.

We are pleased to note that the Government is giving serious thought to the welfare of the mothers of the nation, and that those who need help during their confinements are to have it if possible.

It is not always possible for the birth to take place otherwise than at home, and the circular recently issued from the Ministry of Health that a supply of sheets for expectant mothers who are being confined in their own homes will be available. It is understood that midwives are often hampered by the lack of the necessary provision of sheets.

It has now been agreed that women holding the R.B.2 expectant mother's ration book, will be eligible to purchase utility sheets on Priority Dockets if the midwife booked for the case certifies that the woman is genuinely in need of additional sheets. Only a limited number of priority sheets will be available, and it will be appreciated therefore that the certification must involve a real knowledge of the circumstances of the case. In most cases, one pair will probably be sufficient, but in no case should more than three sheets be allowed to any purchaser.

The Minister suggests as the most suitable procedure that the Priority Dockets should be distributed by the Welfare Authorities to applicants presenting to them the

certificates issued by midwives. It will, therefore, be necessary for Welfare Authorities to make the scheme known to midwives.

Every Welfare Authority is urged to give this scheme a trial in its area, thus providing, in suitable cases, a welcome addition to the special facilities already available for expectant mothers.

OBSTETRICS AND GYNÆCOLOGY.

From the U.S. Office of War Information is issued a Medical Supplement of War Information on Obstetrics and Gynæcology of a very informative nature. From it one can keep in touch with valuable items of information in the progress of these sections of medicine and surgery.

PENICILLIN TREATMENT OF SULFONAMIDE RESISTANT GONOCOCCIC INFECTIONS IN FEMALE PATIENTS.

Forty-two adult female gonorrhœal patients who did not respond to at least two courses of sulfathiazole were treated by the authors with various amounts of penicillin. Two additional infected patients were also given penicillin because they were sensitive to sulfonamides. Forty-three women of the total 44 promptly became bacteriologically negative after treatment with penicillin and remained negative during the follow-up period. Only one of a group of nine patients showed a relapse following a total dosage of 50,000 Oxford units of penicillin; she responded to an additional amount of 100,000 Oxford units.

The bacteriologic reversal from gonococcus positive to negative took place as a rule within 12 hours following the termination of therapy. A total dosage of 75,000 Oxford units of penicillin appears to be satisfactory in the treatment of sulfonamide resistant gonorrhœa in the adult female. This therapy may be completed within a period of six hours. A child aged five years with a sulfonamide resistant-gonococcal vaginitis became bacteriologically negative after a total dosage of 40,000 Oxford units. No toxic effects due to the administration of penicillin were observed.

(Cohn, Studdiford and Grunstein: *Journal of the American Medical Association*).

HUMANITY TO BE CONGRATULATED.

As we are going to press the news has flashed over the Atlantic that our good friend Mr. Franklin Delano Roosevelt has been elected President of the United States of America for a fourth term of office. Humanity is to be congratulated.

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