

# The Midwife.

## CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

The report of the work of the Central Midwives Board to March 31, 1947, has just been issued.

It tells of a year of continuous activity and plans to catch up with projects held up during the war years.

### Roll of Midwives.

There were 74,219 names on the Roll of Midwives at March 31, 1947, being 1,972 more than at March 31, 1946. There is no doubt, however, that this number is considerably in excess of the number of midwives holding the Board's certificate. Seventeen thousand, and ninety-five midwives notified their intention to practise in the year ended December 31, 1946, in accordance with section 10 of the Midwives Act, 1902. This is the highest number of notifications since 1940, and represents an increase of 415 on the total for 1945. The number of practising midwives has been increasing, steadily, if slowly, since 1942 when the figure was 15,615. It is perhaps difficult to judge whether the increase which has now been maintained for five years reflects a change of outlook on the part of qualified midwives as to the attractiveness of the actual practice of midwifery as a career. It is fairly certain, however, that the increased stability which has resulted from improved salaries and conditions of service has been an important contributory factor.

The requirement in the Employment of Women (Control of Engagement) Order, introduced in September, 1943, that newly qualified midwives must practise for a year, had a marked effect on the number of notifications from newly qualified midwives. This requirement was withdrawn in June, 1946, so that it is not possible to say whether the increased number of midwives in the earliest age group who notified intention to practise in the years 1943-46 will be maintained in the future.

As the total number of midwives qualified prior to 1939 declines, so the annual diminution in the number actually in practice from this age group will decrease, but for the next few years an average decrease of 500 per year may reasonably be expected. The years immediately following 1939, when the length of training for pupil midwives was doubled, resulted, as was expected, in a temporary decline in the number of newly qualified midwives. This decline has had a direct effect on the number of midwives in the earlier age groups who are now practising.

The proportion of state registered nurses enrolled is approximately 90 per cent. of the total enrolments and, assuming an annual enrolment figure of 1,600 midwives, it may be expected that some 700 state registered nurses and 100 non-state registered nurses will be added to the number of practising midwives annually.

### Training of Pupil Midwives.

The numbers of pupil midwives entering first and second period training institutions during the year ended March 31, 1947, were the highest since the introduction of the present training and examination rules in 1939.

Of the 4,747 total candidates at the First Examinations during the year ended March 31, 1947, all but 211 were state registered nurses.

Of the 2,155 total candidates at the Second Examinations during the year ended March 31, 1947, all but 221 were state registered nurses.

### Midwife Teachers' Diploma Examination.

Examinations were held for Part I of the Midwife Teachers' Diploma in July, and for Part II in July and November, 1946.

The total number of midwives possessing this qualification is now 263. In addition, 35 passed the teachers examination organised by the former Incorporated Midwives Institute

(now the Royal College of Midwives) some years ago and are recognised by the Board. There are, also, 16 who have obtained the diploma awarded by the University of Bristol, the course of preparation and examination for which is conducted independently but which is recognised by the Board as an equivalent qualification.

About 60 per cent. of the midwives who are responsible for the theoretical and practical teaching of pupil midwives both in first and second period training schools hold the Midwife Teachers' Diploma.

The obstetricians and midwives who have been acting as examiners at various examinations for both Part I and Part II of the Midwife Teachers' Diploma examinations have commented frequently on the poor standard of candidates presenting themselves for test. The high percentage of failures is an indication both of this standard and of the Board's intention to maintain a high standard for intending midwife teachers. It feels that the quality of the training given to pupil midwives depends more than anything else upon the midwife teacher's knowledge of her subject, and her aptitude for and approach to the subject of teaching. The efficiency of the midwifery service is therefore in direct relation to the number and quality of the teachers.

### FIRST EXAMINATION.

11th February, 1948. From 2 to 5 p.m.

1. What is meant by malpresentation of the foetus? Discuss the complications to which malpresentations may give rise.

2. How would you recognise from antenatal examination:—(a) an occipito-posterior position; (b) a breech with extended legs?

3. Describe the pathway through which the fertilised egg passes in order to reach the uterus. What may happen if anything obstructs the passage of the fertilised egg into the uterus?

4. What is the puerperium? What are the main changes taking place in the mother during this time?

5. What would lead you to suspect that a baby had sustained an intra-cranial hæmorrhage during its birth? Outline any treatment which may be indicated.

6. In what ways may a midwife help a woman during the course of a normal labour?

### AMERICAN TRIBUTE TO MINISTRIES OF FOOD AND HEALTH.

#### Lasker Group Award.

A Lasker Group Award for 1947 was presented by the American Public Health Association to the British Ministries of Food and Health "for the unprecedented programme of food distribution in Great Britain" during the war, "with resulting improvement in the health of the people." It is now on view at the Ministry of Health headquarters in Whitehall.

These Lasker Awards, which take the form of statuettes of the "Winged Victory of Samothrace" provided through the generosity of the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation, are made either to individuals for their achievement in the field of medical research and public health administration, or to groups for outstanding work or research, where it is impossible to single out any one individual. This is the first Award to be given to a foreign country.

Sir Wilson Jameson, Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health, attended the 75th annual meeting of the American Public Health Association at Atlantic City last October to receive the award on behalf of the two Ministries.

The presentation was made by Dr. George Baehr, Chairman of the Lasker Awards Committee and President of the New York Academy of Medicine.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)