

## THE MIDWIVES ACT.

During the last year there have been two examinations of pupils trained in the State maternity hospitals, the Medical School Maternity Hospital, the Linwood Refuge, the Alexandra Home, and the Townley Maternity Hospital. Sixty-three candidates came up for examination, and fifty-five passed and are now registered as midwives.

Six free pupils have been trained and are practising in various parts of the country: It has been proposed by one Hospital Board to subsidize the midwife who has agreed to practise two years in a country place in return for her free training. This is a fair thing, as she can then afford to wait until she has built up a sufficient practice. In some places this might at first be difficult.

It is a complaint from the country districts that the trained midwives remain in the towns where already the people have ready access to medical assistance as well as hospital treatment, but on the other hand doctors in town complain that there are not enough of the trained midwives and frequently it is impossible to get one. This must surely be remedied in a short time, as so many are added to the register each year. The former complaint is not entirely true, as a fair proportion of the pupils trained do settle in the country, and a good many have established nursing-homes in the smaller towns in which from two or three to six patients are received at one time. These midwives nearly all work under medical practitioners, the fact that they largely depend on the support of the doctors contributing to this. If, however, they are to be the assistance to the larger class of women that it is desirable they should be, they must by degrees exercise the full power conferred by their certificates—that is, assume the function which in older times and the middle ages was exclusively left to women—to act as accoucheuses, only calling in the physician in case of need. To be of much service in the backblocks district nursing it is essential that the nurse-midwife should so act, and she must accordingly recognize her responsibilities.

The midwives throughout the country have been visited by the two Inspectors of Midwives during the year. It has not been possible to see all of them, owing to long distances and women sometimes being away from home, also to some having changed their addresses and failed to notify the Department. A great improvement in the midwifery bags and outfit of the women was noticed, and many were glad to see the Inspectors and had many inquiries to make as to the proper methods of working. The scattered nature of the population and the great difficulty of gathering together any number of women has made it almost impossible to do much teaching by lectures, although an attempt was made, but individual teaching was much appreciated.

The number of suspensions on account of septic cases was not large. Ten women were taken off the register on account of death, or at their own request. Five women were prosecuted for acting as midwives though unregistered. Many have been warned for the same reason.

The number of midwives from overseas who have been registered is nineteen. There are now 1,097 on the register, 415 trained and 682 untrained.

The reports of the several maternity hospitals which follow show an increase in both indoor and outdoor work—in all 1,346 patients being treated. In the four St. Helens Hospitals there had only been two deaths—one admitted moribund, the other from eclampsia.

## THE PRIVATE HOSPITALS ACT.

During the year the private hospitals, with one or two exceptions in very distant places, have all been visited and inspected, some more than once.

Many of the licensees find a difficulty in complying with the regulations in regard to the keeping of the register of patients. In some cases it is their own fault, in others a few of the doctors raise objections to entering and signing the particulars required. This objection has almost entirely been overcome, but still they appear to find difficulty in keeping the register at all up to date.

During the year fourteen new houses were licensed, sixteen gave up their licenses or allowed them to lapse, and two were transferred to a new holder. There are now, of private hospitals,—

Total number licensed	..	..	..	..	..	198
For medical and surgical cases	..	..	..	..	..	43
For medical, surgical, and midwifery	..	..	..	..	..	34
For maternity only	..	..	..	..	..	117
Medical and maternity	..	..	..	..	..	3
Surgical and maternity	..	..	..	..	..	1

## REPORTS ON THE STATE AND OTHER MATERNITY HOSPITALS.

*St. Helens Hospital, Wellington.*

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Matron: Eleanor B. Brown.

From the 1st April, 1911, to the 31st March, 1912, 174 cases were confined, 147 children were born, and there were 14 still-births. There were no maternal deaths, 1 death of infant. 83 patients were attended in their own homes, 83 babies were born.

The new hospital is almost ready for occupation, and it is hoped to move into it within a few weeks. It is intended then to induce patients who will be the better for some ante-partum treatment and rest to come into the hospital for some weeks. Patients from the country will also be encouraged to come in good time and wait. The accommodation will be sufficient and comfortable, the surroundings pleasant.