

12. The committee desires to stress the importance of the use of ante-natal clinics, and in private practice the serious importance of ante-natal examination. It cannot be too widely known that already ante-natal clinics have been established in each of the seven St. Helens Hospitals in New Zealand, and also at the maternity hospitals or wards under the control of Hospital Boards. An extension of these establishments, more especially as a function of the ordinary public hospital, is necessary, and the committee is pleased to recognize the fact that local hospital authorities are sympathetic to the cause of the further development of this work. The Health Department urges all pregnant women to seek skilled advice during the latter months of pregnancy at ante-natal clinics wherever available, or at the hands of the ordinary medical adviser. Such examination should enable the medical man to detect many abnormalities, and consequently avert dangerous complications.

Concluding Remarks.

Before bringing this report to conclusion we desire to strike a note of reassurance. Childbirth is a normal physiological process, and to the healthy woman in healthy surroundings is attended with very small risk. Furthermore, there must not be undue alarm because of the statistics. It must not be overlooked that under the international "Bertillon" system of classification which is in use in New Zealand, and which has as its basis the maternal mortality-rate per thousand live births, our statistics of maternal mortality include not only deaths resulting at or after childbirth, but also those occurring during the whole course of pregnancy, and considered as essentially due to that condition.

Lastly, the committee strongly believes that if the preventive measures indicated in this report be adopted in this country, the reproach of an excessive maternal mortality under which New Zealand at present labours will early be removed.

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Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,000 copies), £7 15s.

By Authority: MARCUS F. MARKS, Government Printer, Wellington.—1921.

Price 3d.]