

deal very fully with medical issues arising out of their work in this sphere. The problem of maternal welfare received special prominence during the year, arising out of the appeal by Dr. Doris Gordon of the New Zealand Obstetrical Society for funds to endow a chair of obstetrics at the Medical School of the Otago University. This appeal was very successful, a sum of £31,700 being raised. I understand a Government subsidy will be payable on this amount.

#### HOSPITALS.

The report of Dr. Shore, Director, Division of Hospitals, will be read with interest. It is some seven years since the Department had a Director, Division of Hospitals, and Dr. Shore comes into this work with the enthusiasm generated by his new responsibilities. He will doubtless look upon our hospitals in a new light. Dr. Shore stresses the fact that, without sacrificing our high standard of efficiency, more economy in our hospital administration might very well be exercised. That is perfectly true, and especially just now when the Hon. the Prime Minister has fearlessly told the country the true state of affairs as regards our finances.

Appended to Dr. Shore's report is a list of the institutions of the Dominion established since 1914. By this it will be seen that though a number of maternity hospitals have been established in that period only eight hospitals proper have been opened during the last sixteen years.

In March last a conference of members of Hospital Boards and of the British Medical Association was convened by the Department. The resolutions of this important conference are duly set forth by Dr. Shore, and, if given effect to, as I hope will be the case, the medical service of our hospitals should be put on a more harmonious and substantial footing. It is the ardent desire of the Hospital Boards Association, the British Medical Association, and this Department that these happy ideals may soon be brought into being.

The amalgamation of the Wairau and Picton Hospital districts under one Board, known as the Marlborough Hospital Board, is a specially noteworthy achievement during the past year. The Minister is to be congratulated on bringing about this amalgamation, for which I had unsuccessfully strived for this last twenty years.

It is a pity that successive Governments have not given more encouragement to the St. Helens system. Where Hospital Boards can easily get the money for maternity hospitals the Department cannot. I need hardly say that I do not blame any particular Government for this unsatisfactory state of affairs. It is the system that is to blame, it being the practice of any Government to turn down application for institutions which under similar circumstances would be readily approved by Hospital Boards. I hope that this will not again affect our St. Helens Hospitals at Christchurch and Dunedin. The former is indeed, as I have stated, in a very unsatisfactory state, and it would be most discouraging not only to the Department, but to the Matron and nurses concerned, if the erection of a suitable St. Helens for Christchurch is again refused.

Information with regard to hospitals and institutions under the control of Boards will be given in the appendix to this report to be issued after the Secretaries' returns come to hand.

#### SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS.

Included in the appendix is a report on the dysentery outbreak in the Auckland District; further results of investigations into the problems of still-births and neo-natal deaths; a survey of physical education in the Auckland schools; a study in comparative health of Maori and pakeha children; and a survey of the menstrual function of training-college students and high-school girls. A valuable contribution to our knowledge as to the incidence of goitre in school-children in relation to the amount of iodine in soil and water in certain districts of the North Island of New Zealand by Dr. Shore, of this Department, and Mr. A. L. Andrews, of the Dominion Laboratory, was published by this Department in conjunction with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

#### SCHOOL MEDICAL WORK.

The report of the Director of Schools, Dr. Ada Paterson, will be read with satisfaction by those specially interested in the health of our New Zealand school-children.

#### DENTAL HYGIENE.

In the retirement of Mr. T. A. Hunter as Director of the Division of Dental Hygiene the Department loses an officer who has rendered outstanding service. It is ten years since the present scheme of dental treatment of school-children was inaugurated, and in spite of the magnitude of the task and the obvious difficulties presented the Director has, by his sound and tactful administration, achieved excellent results. The best wishes of the Department go with Mr. Hunter in his well-earned rest from official responsibility. In Mr. Saunders, who has been associated with this work for a number of years, the Department has an able successor to Mr. Hunter.

#### NURSING.

The Director's report outlines the work of the Nurses and Midwives Registration Board, and special reference is made to the post-graduate course for nurses. Miss Bicknell presents an interesting summary of a visit to the International Council of Nurses Conference at Montreal, at which conference she represented the nurses of New Zealand.