

The two boroughs have much the same population, and Ohakune, being on the Main Trunk line, is more accessible to some of the outlying townships.

At the present time patients from the Ohakune side of the district have to come to Raetihi for hospital attendance, and the doctor from Ohakune has to travel to Raetihi to attend his patients.

The Committee, while sympathetic with the Board's desire to concentrate on one reasonably large unit at Raetihi for economy in working and better staffing, feels that in maternity work nearness to the patient's home and nearness to the doctor of the district are important considerations, and that in this particular case the whole district would be better served by having a maternity home of some description both at Raetihi and at Ohakune.

Although the distance between these two centres—eight miles and a half—does not seem great, public communication services are by no means frequent, and other transport is costly. Under such an arrangement the district nurse would probably be called upon to do much less midwifery in the home and might well assist in taking the ante-natal service to the outlying homes.

Maori Requirements.—There are about four thousand Maoris resident in the counties served by the Wanganui Hospital Board. At Ratana there is a population of 664 Natives and there are several other fair-sized pas in the Wanganui neighbourhood. There are also Maori communities of considerable size at Raetihi and Pipiriki.

There is the skeleton of a Maori maternity service such as the Committee recommends. Both at the Wanganui maternity annexe and at the Raetihi Hospital Maori patients are treated acceptably, and an increasing number of Maoris are seeking admission.

In both cases the only difficulty has been that of somewhat limited accommodation. At Wanganui and at Pipiriki are stationed district nurses to Natives, who visit the various pas and give a considerable amount of ante-natal supervision. There is good co-operation between these nurses and the hospitals at Wanganui and Raetihi.

Both these nurses were firm in their advocacy of hospitalization, and indicated how, by gaining the confidence of the Maoris, it was possible for them to educate the Maoris to the idea of entering hospital.

The Committee sees no great difficulties in the way of gradually extending this service to meet the full Maori needs.

Summary and Recommendations.

(1) *Wanganui.*—The accommodation in the present public maternity hospital (Jessie Hope-Gibbons Hospital) is overtaxed, and to meet future needs the Committee strongly recommends the building of a new maternity annexe rather than the extensive alteration of the existing building. In the event of a new hospital being built it is recommended that it be "open" to the medical practitioners of the city.

(2) *Marton.*—The provision for those requiring public assistance for maternity-hospital attendance is not satisfactory.

The position should be met—

(a) By the provision of a public maternity hospital at Marton; or

(b) By an arrangement, acceptable to all those interested, for the treatment of such patients in the existing private hospital.

(3) *Taihape.*—There is some lack of provision for those requiring public assistance for maternity-hospital attendance, and the Committee recommends that one or other of the courses advised for Marton be adopted here also.

(4) *Ohakune.*—After full consideration of the alternative the Committee is of the opinion that the needs of the whole district would best be served by the establishment of a small maternity hospital at Ohakune as well as at Raetihi.

(5) The Committee recommends the extension of the Maori maternity service already in evidence in this district, with hospitalization for confinement and ante-natal supervision by district nurses in the homes of the Natives.

31. PALMERSTON NORTH HOSPITAL BOARD DISTRICT.

This important and progressive district has the coast for its western boundary, the line extending from the mouth of the Rangitiki River southward for a distance of forty miles, and including the estuary of the Manawatu River. From the coast the district runs inland in a north-easterly direction, its total length being about ninety miles, and its width varying from ten to twenty miles. The neighbouring districts are Wanganui and Hawke's Bay in the north, Wellington in the south, Wairarapa, Dannevirke, and Waipawa on the east. The district contains several small but thriving towns, the chief town, Palmerston North, being a busy and flourishing centre. Sheep and dairy farming is the main industry. Roads are good throughout the district and, with the exception of Foxton, which is on a branch line, all the chief centres are connected by the main railway-line.