

CONSTITUTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF COMMITTEE.

IN accordance with the decision of Cabinet, a special Committee was appointed on 4th August, 1936,—

- (1) To inquire into and report upon the incidence of septic abortion in New Zealand, including—
 - (a) The incidence among married and single women ;
 - (b) Whether the rate of incidence has increased during recent years ;
 - (c) How New Zealand compares with other countries in this respect :
- (2) To inquire into and report upon the underlying causes for the occurrence of septic abortion in New Zealand, including medical, economic, social, and any other factors :
- (3) To advise as to the best means of combating and preventing the occurrence of septic abortion in New Zealand :
- (4) Generally to make any other observations or recommendations that appear appropriate to the Committee on the subject.

The following were appointed members of the Committee :—

Dr. D. G. McMillan, M.B., Ch.B. (N.Z.), M.P., Chairman.
 Mrs. Janet Fraser.
 Dr. Sylvia G. Chapman, M.D., D.G.O. (T.C.D.).
 Dr. Thomas F. Corkill, M.D. (Edin.), M.R.C.P. (Edin.), M.C.O.G.
 Dr. Tom L. Paget, L.R.C.P. (Lond.), M.R.C.S. (Eng.).

REPORT.

The Hon. the Minister of Health, Wellington.

SIR,—

The Committee set up by Cabinet to inquire into the various aspects of the Problem of Abortion in New Zealand has the honour to submit herewith its report.

HISTORICAL AND INTRODUCTION.

Since the rise in the death-rate from septic abortion in 1930, the Department of Health, the medical profession, and women's organizations and societies have shown great concern regarding the problem. The Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of the New Zealand Branch of the British Medical Association conveyed to the Prime Minister a resolution passed at the meeting of its executive held in Wellington on 12th March, 1936, wherein it begged the Prime Minister to consider the advisability of setting up a Committee of inquiry to investigate this matter.

This recommendation having been favourably considered, the following Committee was appointed :—

Dr. D. G. McMillan, M.B., Ch.B. (N.Z.), M.P., Chairman.
 Mrs. Janet Fraser.
 Dr. Sylvia G. Chapman, M.D. (N.Z.), M.B., Ch.B. (N.Z.).
 Dr. T. F. Corkill, M.D. (Edin.), M.R.C.P. (Edin.).
 Dr. T. L. Paget, M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.).

Although the immediate purpose of this inquiry was to investigate the problem of septic abortion, it at once became apparent that this matter was so inextricably bound up with the subject of abortion in general that all aspects would require consideration.