

MAORI CONDITIONS.

The Maori population is concentrated mainly at Tirohia and Waitoki, between Paeroa and Te Aroha. Maoris resident in the Plains district are situated nearer Thames. It was alleged that Maori patients are not taken at Paeroa Hospital, and are obliged to travel nineteen miles to Thames, an outcome of the unsatisfactory state of affairs mentioned elsewhere. No ante-natal facilities are provided for them at Paeroa. At Thames they enjoy full maternity facilities and attend at the clinic along with other patients. The district nurse visits Maoris in their homes, and gives ante-natal instruction to many who are confined at home by Maori methods. She tries to persuade patients to go to hospital for confinement, and an increasing number follow this advice.

Summary and Recommendations.

The Committee recommends—

- (1) That steps be taken at an early date to improve the accommodation of the ante-natal clinic at Thames.
- (2) That the public maternity facilities, including ante-natal attention, at Paeroa should be properly developed and made known to the public.

12. WAIHI HOSPITAL BOARD DISTRICT.

This small district is an old-established mining centre. It occupies the eastern half of the County of Ohinemuri and contains only one town of any size, Waihi, with 3,916 inhabitants. Waihi showed a population increase of 2.35 per cent. during the ten-year period 1926–36, due to recent increased activity in the gold-mining industry.

WAIHI.

Hospital Facilities.—There is no maternity annexe at the public hospital, which takes in only indigent maternity cases at the rate of about three per annum. A private home deals with about thirty-five cases yearly. This home is the private residence of the owner, and its equipment does not give sufficient maternity facilities for the whole district. Consequently nearly two-thirds of the confinements in the district are conducted in the patients' own homes, which in many cases are unsuited for the purpose.

Ante-natal Care.—The large majority of confinements are attended by doctors, who also give ante-natal supervision to the patients. There are no public ante-natal facilities.

Maori Conditions.—Maoris are subject to the same difficulties as Europeans in this district. There does not seem to be any specific Maori problem.

Summary and Recommendations.

A maternity annexe of five or six beds would be a decided asset. The Committee inspected certain unused rooms at the public hospital which were suggested as suitable for such an annexe. While by no means ideal for the purpose, these rooms would, if properly equipped, constitute a distinct improvement on the existing facilities. Whether the cost of adapting these rooms would not be greater in the long-run than that of building a small and up-to-date annexe is a matter demanding consideration.

13. COROMANDEL HOSPITAL BOARD DISTRICT.

The rugged character of this district, which is coterminous with the county of the same name, precludes any great concentration of population or any extensive farming activities. Coromandel, the principal town, has 844 inhabitants, and all interests in the district are on a very small scale. The total rural population is 2,635 and increased by 24.94 per cent. during the 1926–36 intercensal period.

COROMANDEL.

Public-hospital Facilities.—The general hospital provides four maternity beds under conditions which are highly unsatisfactory to staff and patients alike. There is no labour ward, patients being confined in a bed in the corner of the maternity ward. No nursery being available, attention to infants also has to take place in the general ward. To the discomfort and inconvenience thus caused to patients is added the great difficulty of maintaining proper separation of the maternity and general services, and the consequent increased risk of infection.

There are no private facilities in Coromandel.

Recommendations.

A separate labour ward and nursery, with adequate sanitary conveniences, are urgently needed. Plans have been drawn and were shown to the Committee, it being stated that tenders would be called as soon as the plans have been approved by the Board.