

WAIPAWA.

Public-hospital Facilities.—The Rathbone Hospital of six beds is controlled by the Hospital Board, and is the principal maternity hospital of the district, cases coming from Waipukurau and from outlying districts. At times the hospital is overcrowded, and it is considered that a definite arrangement with the private hospital at Waipukurau would help to prevent this. Sedatives are given in cases attended by doctors.

Private-hospital Facilities.—There is no private hospital in Waipawa.

Intermediate Facilities.—These are provided by the Rathbone Hospital. Single rooms are available at a moderate fee, and attendance by private doctors is allowed.

Abnormal Cases.—Provision is made at the Rathbone Hospital for those that are suitable, other cases being admitted to the Waipukurau General Hospital. These facilities are sufficient.

Ante-natal Care.—Private patients are attended by their own doctors, who report that hitherto there has been marked unwillingness on the part of patients to avail themselves of this service. They are now, however, gradually becoming educated to the necessity of proper supervision. Apart from private attendance, facilities for ante-natal care are deficient in the district, patients who are not being confined by a doctor receiving no ante-natal care whatever. No ante-natal charts are kept at the Rathbone Hospital. The establishment of a more efficient service has been recommended by the Medical Superintendent of the Waipukurau Hospital, who is in charge of both institutions.

District Services.—No district services are at present available. A previous district nursing scheme on a partly voluntary basis collapsed owing to failure of subscriptions.

Provision for Unmarried Mothers.—Unmarried mothers are received into the Rathbone Hospital on the same terms as the married.

Maori Conditions.—The number of Maoris residing in the district is 590. No difficulty is experienced in admitting Maoris to the Rathbone Hospital, and they come in considerable numbers. Isolation facilities being adequate, any skin-conditions can be treated in the hospital, and relations between Maoris and pakehas in this district are particularly friendly. It was suggested that a district nurse, employed by the Board to keep in touch with Maori maternity cases at Porongahau and Herbertville, would be very helpful, the doctors in these areas finding that a considerable difficulty in ante-natal work arises from the fact that Maori patients often conceal their pregnancy until a late period. It is suggested that a Maori nurse of the right type might be the most suitable for this work.

Rural Districts.—Takapau is served by an efficiently run private hospital of two beds, the charges being £5 5s. per week. Ormondville and Norsewood are visited by a doctor twice weekly for ante-natal advice. Patients in outlying districts suffer considerably from neglect in this respect by reason of the distance.

Summary and Recommendations.

Hospital facilities are, on the whole, adequate in this district, though the Rathbone Hospital tends to be overcrowded at times. Ante-natal services leave much to be desired, and early attention to this matter would be of great benefit to the women of the district. The Committee, therefore, makes the following recommendations:—

- (1) That the Waipawa Hospital Board be urged to enter into a definite agreement with the licensee of the private maternity hospital in Waipukurau regarding attendance of indigent cases resident in the neighbourhood. This would save patients the five-mile journey to Waipawa in cases of emergency, and would assist in preventing overcrowding at the Rathbone Hospital.
- (2) That an improved system of ante-natal care be inaugurated at the Rathbone Hospital to ensure that all patients, whether doctor-attended or not, receive medical attention at least twice during their pregnancy. Owing to the difficulties created by distance, the Committee is of opinion that a branch clinic at Waipukurau would be of great assistance to many patients. The keeping of accurate records is regarded as an important part of the work of the clinic.
- (3) That a district nurse be appointed and equipped with a car to give ante-natal care to patients in outlying districts. Since the ante-natal problem in rural areas is largely a Maori problem it is felt that a well-trained and sympathetic Maori nurse would be suitable for this work. The Committee is of opinion that the nurse should be maintained and controlled by the Hospital Board, and does not favour district services run on a voluntary or partly voluntary basis.

23. DANNEVIRKE HOSPITAL BOARD DISTRICT.

From Herbertville on the coast the district extends inland to the Ruahine Range. Its shape is roughly triangular, the counties of Woodville and Dannevirke forming the base of the triangle and the small County of Weber its apex. The only towns of any considerable size are Dannevirke with 4,385 inhabitants and Woodville with 1,031. The total rural population of the three counties is 7,500. During the ten-year period from 1926 to 1936 an increase of 6·37 per cent. in the population of Dannevirke County has been offset by a decrease of 0·24 per cent. in Woodville and 11·27 per cent. in