

The Committee was informed that the Nelson Hospital Board had placed the sum of £2,500 on their estimates for the construction of a maternity hospital at Takaka, but that no further action had been taken in the matter. It was also ascertained that the Nelson Hospital Board has in hand a bequest of approximately £1,200 for the erection of a hospital at Takaka.

Domiciliary Services.—What has been said of the Collingwood district applies equally to the Takaka district; the needs cannot be met by any system of domiciliary attention.

Recommendations.

The Committee is convinced that a public maternity hospital is urgently needed at Takaka, and recommends that steps should be taken by the Nelson Hospital Board to ensure its speedy provision.

Owing to the position existing in Takaka the Committee is convinced that satisfactory public provision can only be made in this way. It is therefore recommended that the bequest of £1,200 should be used, and that a new three-bedded maternity hospital, with provision for the temporary admission of an accident case, be erected at Takaka on a site approved by the Department.

An alternative proposal put forward by members of the Hospital Board for the establishment of a maternity hospital at Onekaka to serve both Takaka and Collingwood districts was regarded by the Committee as entirely impracticable. Whatever the future of Onekaka, it is at present in no way a suitable centre for either area and there is no doctor resident in the locality.

MURCHISON.

There is a suitable private maternity and general hospital in Murchison with four maternity beds and taking about thirty-five cases a year. The nurse in charge has maintained this service for many years, at times under circumstances of exceptional difficulty.

A subsidy of £250 per year is granted by the Nelson Hospital Board, in return for which all cases must be admitted. The fees are £4 4s. per week.

When there is a doctor resident in the district practically all cases are doctor-attended, but when there is no resident doctor, which is occasionally the case, the nurse conducts the cases on her own and uses ether on the mask for anæsthesia. Sedatives are used when the doctor is attending.

Summary.

As indicated above, the Committee is of the opinion :—

- (1) That the Nelson Maternity Annexe should be conducted on the "open" principle and that it should be enlarged to meet the increased requirements, consequent upon that change of policy.
- (2) That arrangements should be made by the Board by which any maternity patients for whom the Board is responsible shall have the right to be attended by their own medical attendant in the hospitals at Brightwater or Richmond, the Board being responsible for a reasonable amount of the fees.
- (3) That the Board should without further delay provide maternity hospital accommodation at Collingwood and Takaka.
- (4) That the subsidy to the medical practitioner at Murchison and the provision of proper housing accommodation should be definitely regarded as the responsibility of the Board and the control removed from the Murchison County Council.
- (5) That the subsidies to the Motueka Hospital should be increased and the position regarding those patients unable to pay the fees should be more clearly defined.

35. BULLER HOSPITAL BOARD.

The Buller Hospital Board district is that of the county of the same name and covers an area of 1,951 miles with a population of 10,380. It extends to the boundary of the Nelson Hospital Board district in the north; on the west is bounded by the sea; on the south by a line running from Perpendicular Point round the Paparoa Range to the boundary of the Inangahua County; on the east by the Inangahua and Nelson Hospital Board districts.

The capital of the county is Westport (4,241), and there are also Denniston (717), Granity (558), Millerton (552), and Karamea (780).

The principal industry is mining, with a certain amount of sawmilling.

WESTPORT.

The Kawatiri Maternity Hospital, which is owned and conducted by the Buller Hospital Board, provides twelve beds. The present building was purchased some years ago and has been remodelled. The number of cases confined last year was 145, and the average number of daily occupied beds 5.9. The hospital is staffed by a Matron and three trained obstetrical nurses.