

maternity hospital at Hokitika, or elsewhere, for patients awaiting their confinement, considerable hardship was imposed on those earning moderate salaries or wages. The cost in some cases would be £12 for transport and £12 for attendance in a maternity home, with possibly waiting-time in addition. If the hospital facilities at Wataroa and Bruce Bay mentioned above are provided, the necessity for this expenditure will seldom occur, but when it does, in exceptional cases, the Committee considers that the Hospital Board should be ready, in the cases of those who cannot afford it, to meet these expenses itself.

39. NORTH CANTERBURY HOSPITAL BOARD DISTRICT.

The area served by this Board includes the City of Christchurch, Port Lyttelton, the Banks Peninsula, and a wide belt of mainly level country extending about fifty miles inland from the coast towards the foothills of the Southern Alps, about thirty-five miles south to the Rakaia River, and about 130 miles north to the Clarence River, beyond Kaikoura. The total area is 8,767 square miles. The whole district is well roaded and there are no difficulties of access. Christchurch urban area has a population of 132,282 (including New Brighton Borough, 5,233, and Lyttelton Borough, 3,188). In the ten-year period 1926-36 there has been an increase of 10.66 per cent. in the population of Christchurch City, an increase of 16.62 per cent. in that of New Brighton, and a decrease of 12 per cent. in Lyttelton.

The city population is representative of the business and professional interests associated with the centre of a big farming community, in addition to which there is a large industrial element.

The population of Lyttelton is largely engaged in the activities associated with the shipping of the port.

The area outside Christchurch urban district includes some sixteen small counties with a total population of 32,000. There are no large towns, the main centres of population being Kaikoura (1,338), Cheviot (342), Rotherham (324), Hanmer (542), Waikari (397), Amberley (542), Rangiora (2,621), and Kaiapoi (1,578) to the north; Darfield (492), Oxford (959), and Springfield (372) to the west; Akaroa (670) and Little River (442) on Banks Peninsula; and Leeston (879) and Lincoln (644) to the south.

There has been comparatively little increase in the population of this area in the ten-year period, some slight gains in the northern counties being offset by losses in the southern counties.

The population is essentially a farming one. There are woollen-mills at Kaiapoi and freezing-works at Belfast, and at the present time a considerable number of men are engaged on public works, notably on the railway towards Kaikoura and on the Lewis Pass Road.

CHRISTCHURCH CITY.

Public-hospital Facilities.—Public-hospital facilities are at present provided by a St. Helens Hospital under the direction of the Department of Health, and by the Essex Home, an auxiliary hospital controlled by the North Canterbury Hospital Board.

St. Helens Hospital.—The St. Helens service is in great demand, but the present hospital of fifteen beds, inadequately housed in a most inconvenient, old, converted building, is unable to meet the needs. The method of administration is similar to that of the other St. Helens Hospitals. The hospital is a "closed" one, and is under the medical care of a part-time stipendiary Medical Superintendent, who is an obstetric specialist, and three assistant obstetricians, under whom the standard of work, in spite of all difficulties, has been raised to a very high level.

Normal cases are attended by the midwife staff, and the members of the medical staff are called to abnormal cases. Caesarean sections are performed by the medical staff at the hospital.

The use of sedatives has been considerably extended in the last few years. Syrup of chloral, seconal, and chloroform by the Murphy inhaler method are used in "no-doctor" cases, and other methods of anaesthesia are used when a doctor is present.

The hospital is a training school for both maternity nurses and midwives.

A well-organized ante-natal clinic is attached to the hospital, and there is an extern department doing district work. There were seventy-seven district cases last year, the largest district practice of the four St. Helens Hospitals.

An average of 330 cases has been attended as in-patients in the last five years, with 376 cases last year.

The average number of occupied beds was 13.9.

Essex Home.—The Essex Home has seventeen beds and cares for about 280 cases per year, of whom about thirty are unmarried mothers and the remainder women of limited means. The average number of occupied beds for the past year was 10.8. It was originally opened as a home for single girls, but, with the establishment of other institutions doing work of a similar nature, there was accommodation to spare, and the North Canterbury Hospital Board therefore decided to make provision for destitute women. The need for this branch of work has gradually lessened, and the Board has added a separate brick building designed as a maternity hospital. In this there