

annum is given by the Board ; the lessee is responsible for the upkeep of the whole of the hospital except the building itself, and all indigent maternity cases must be admitted.

The staff consists of the midwife in charge and one maid.

The local medical practitioner sends practically all his maternity cases to this hospital and also attends indigent cases therein free of charge.

The hospital fee is £4 4s. per week.

Representations were made to the Committee that the subsidy was not sufficient.

RAKAIA.

Rakaia also has a cottage hospital, owned by the Ashburton Hospital Board and leased to a registered midwife. There are four maternity beds and two beds for emergency general (non-septic) cases. A subsidy of £250 per annum is given by the Board, and all indigent cases must be admitted. The number of maternity cases averages thirty a year. The hospital fees are £4 4s. per week. The staff consists of the midwife in charge, a trained nurse, and two domestics. There is one medical practitioner in the district, who attends all indigent cases free of charge.

The doctor does all his own ante-natal work. Sedatives are generally used.

Recommendations.

The Malvern Hospital, in so far as the building and equipment is concerned, does not by any means comply with modern requirements, and the Committee strongly recommends the building of a modern maternity annexe, near the Ashburton Hospital, to take its place. It is suggested that the hospital should be open to all doctors as at present, but that one of the local medical practitioners should be appointed as medical officer to the annexe for attendance on indigent cases.

It is recommended that consideration should be given to the opening of this hospital as a training school for maternity nurses, instruction being given by the medical officer.

The Committee understands that consideration is being given to the possibility of using the bequest of the late Miss Chalmers for this purpose.

The Committee considers that the salary of the Staff Sister at Malvern Hospital might be raised, and that the subsidies paid to the lessees of the hospitals at Methven and Rakaia should be increased.

When these hospitals were administered by the Board the annual cost was between £600 and £700. In view of this fact the present subsidy does not appear to be an adequate one to meet the costs of maintenance and to give a reasonable remuneration for the services rendered.

41. SOUTH CANTERBURY HOSPITAL BOARD DISTRICT.

The boundaries of this district are the Rangitata River about thirty miles north of Timaru, the Waitaki River about fifty miles south, the sea-coast on the east, and the ranges to the west.

Timaru, the principal centre, has a population of 18,800 and has increased by 12·16 per cent. in the period 1926–36. Other centres are Temuka (1,896), Winchester (479), Geraldine (957), Fairlie (1,041), Waimate (2,314).

The population of Timaru is representative of business and professional interests, associated with a substantial population of retired farmers. The town is also a very popular summer holiday resort. The eastern portion of the district is rich agricultural country and the higher levels are devoted to sheep-raising. The district is very well roaded, and there appears to be no transport or telephone difficulties.

TIMARU.

Public-hospital Facilities.—Public maternity hospital facilities are provided by the South Canterbury Hospital Board in a fifteen-bed maternity block. Last year 169 maternity cases were attended, giving an average of 7·7 occupied beds. This block is shortly to be replaced by a new maternity wing.

The hospital is of the "closed" type, under the administrative control of the Medical Superintendent of the Timaru Hospital, with a visiting obstetrician in charge and a resident house surgeon acting under him. A doctor is present at all confinements. In normal cases the house surgeon attends, but in abnormal cases the visiting obstetrician is called or, in his absence, the Medical Superintendent.

Sedatives are used according to medical instruction, and since a doctor is always in attendance a satisfactory degree of anaesthesia can be given in all cases.

The hospital is a training school for maternity nurses.

During the last twelve months it has been possible to have a medical student in residence and to give him the opportunity of delivering a number of maternity cases under supervision.

The hospital fee is £4 4s. per week. Provision is made for unmarried mothers who apply for help, and the Board appears to have an excellent social service committee which makes recommendations regarding indigent cases.