

Berkeley, and other authorities, the most important points for consideration are the quantitative estimation of urea and non-protein nitrogen in the blood, and the evidence given mainly by Fouchet's test on blood-plasma as to hepatic function. From these tests an obstetrician may be guided as to the correct line of treatment to be adopted for the toxæmias of pregnancy. This work has yet to be developed in the ante-natal clinics, but already results have been obtained which conclusively prove the value of the tests, and that it is only by means of co-operation between the obstetrician and biochemist that one can hope to gain knowledge in the study of deranged hepatic renal function.

The report of the Medical Research Council on the investigations at the several centres throughout Great Britain into the causes of dead-birth and neo-natal death has recently been issued. It is interesting to note that our findings confirm the findings of the Medical Research Council, who show that the most common causes of foetal death are complications of labour and toxæmias of pregnancy (including under the latter term only albuminuria and eclampsia), and they show that at least 85 per cent. of the deaths due to complications of labour should be preventable by adequate ante-natal supervision. They also state that ninety-nine still-births out of a total of 465 were due to breach of transverse presentations, that with adequate care should be almost entirely preventable. Further, it is remarked that the infants lost through the complications of labour are often just the healthiest and best developed, and therefore those which the country can least afford to lose.

In a modest way our figures are necessarily taken from a small number, but entirely support the above statements. I cannot express my opinion better than in the following words taken from the above-mentioned report:—

“If ante-natal supervision were effectively used by all pregnant women many deaths such as are shown in this report would not occur, and such deaths might even be eliminated in certain of the classes considered. Such a state of affairs can, however, hardly be expected until the teachers in the medical schools and the teachers of midwives, as also the leaders of the numerous women's organizations, are convinced of the need for, and the scope of, ante-natal supervision. . . . It can hardly be doubted that much could be accomplished without additional cost if closer co-operation were established.”

STERILIZED MATERNITY OUTFIT.

The maternity outfits sterilized for patients attending the ante-natal clinics have proved a great assistance to medical practitioners and midwives. In order that the outfit may be available for women in the rural districts as well as those in the towns who are unable to attend a clinic, I suggest that outfits be made up by women's organizations, sterilized at local hospitals, and made available through central agencies for distribution to physicians, midwives, or mothers in poor circumstances. Detailed instructions for making the packages could be formulated and made available to any person interested. In addition a letter could be sent out to every registered midwife giving her a description of the package and the method by which it might be obtained in her community.

IMPORTANCE OF ANTI-NATAL RECORDS.

It would be an advantage if all ante-natal clinics would send to the Department of Health a copy of their monthly reports, as the proper tabulation of records through pre-natal clinics is essential to the knowledge of the causes, and the prevention of maternal and infantile deaths and morbidity. Such records are necessary for the study of the health of the individual, as well as a benefit to public health. Our object is to make complete records of the health of the individual even before birth. This is a stable foundation for the health registration of the individual, and all subsequent health-supervision should be based on this first and most important record, which antedates birth and extends through the most dangerous periods of life.

SOCIAL SERVICE.

As stated by the Director, Division of Pre-natal Clinics, Detroit Department of Health, “The health of the individual depends largely on his social and economic status. To secure health in pregnancy and healthy progeny these conditions must be known, and, when necessary, aid must be given to secure them. For this purpose, social service is necessary.”

The need for social service in connection with ante-natal work in New Zealand is great. Very frequently a mother is unable to take the necessary rest and care that is required, with the result that her resistance to infection is lowered and muscle-tone diminished, producing the unnecessary suffering and danger of a long and tedious labour, which is detrimental to both mother and child. In order that ante-natal work may be efficient, there is urgent need that co-operation be extended by those carrying on ante-natal work to every social-service agent which may help the expectant mother. Every assistance should be given such agencies as Mothers' Help Societies, which are of great value in protecting and promoting the health of mother and child during pregnancy. It is of interest to note that according to the Glasgow maternity and child-welfare scheme a rest-home for expectant mothers is maintained and mothers' helps provided at a small charge. Similar help would be greatly appreciated by New Zealand mothers. In the poorer districts it is often impossible for an expectant mother with a large family to carry out the instructions she receives at the clinic, and to take sufficient rest in the last few weeks of pregnancy, so that she may be physically able to bear and nurse her infant without undue strain upon herself or danger to the child. For this reason there can be no doubt that the establishment of rest-homes for expectant mothers by women's organizations would be one of the greatest benefits to the community, and would be an important factor in the reduction of maternal and infant mortality.

In conclusion, I desire to place on record my sincere thanks for the co-operation afforded me by the Plunket Societies, and St. John Ambulance, and to the tutor sisters in ante-natal work, Plunket nurses, and ante-natal nurses for the much valued help that they have given me.