

of general practitioners are on the obstetric list, but that a large part of their involvement is in partial care, which does not include responsibility for the delivery. There is much detail about the inter-relationship of these facts which is not known, nor indeed are we certain that all these changes are for the better. We know there is a great deal of variation in the pattern of services from place to place, but the information about 'what happens where' is patchy. This survey should help to fill many of the blanks.

The questionnaire which has been designed to harvest so much information is lengthy and detailed. It will be completed by midwives, but its reliability will depend on ready access to *all* the relevant records. There is no problem about hospital records or the records kept by midwives. The records of general practitioners are not always so freely available. That they shall be available at all depends on goodwill and a spirit of co-operation. It is hoped that all doctors will appreciate the need for this and will want to ensure that the part they play in the service is being recorded. The more knowledge we have the better equipped we shall be to plan for the future. It will certainly help this College in its discussions with other bodies on the place of the general practitioner in maternity services.

The 1958 survey was carried out rapidly and expeditiously but it took many years to digest and publish the results. This caused a great deal of frustration, and gave rise to the obvious comment that the information was out of date before it was available. This time the analysis will be by computer. A pilot survey was undertaken in four widely-scattered areas last summer. Detailed tables of results were available within a matter of weeks, and this augurs well for the survey itself which is now planned to take place in the week beginning 5 April.

Please give this survey your support, by providing any information that you are called on to supply, and perhaps also by trying to enlist the co-operation of colleagues who may be apathetic, or even opposed to this exercise because they have not appreciated its objectives or its potential benefits.

Warrington.

P. O'BRIEN.

Representative of the R.C.G.P. on
The National Birthday Trust Fund
Steering Committee.

Health centres: Building on sand?

Sir,

Usually it is gratifying to have one's work quoted by other authors, but this is not so if one is misquoted. Dr Ruth Cammock has stated in her article that my report suggested that about 10 per cent of patients will use a car even when the distance is less than a mile. In fact it is made quite clear in the text and in the summary that 25 per cent of those travelling less than a mile came by car, a considerable difference. The 10 per cent she quotes is the number of patients attending by car from less than a mile as a percentage of all the patients attending (from any distance and by any means).

Worcester.

M. HUTCHINSON.

Another glimpse of South Africa

Sir,

After reading the description of his visit to South Africa by Dr Kuenssberg in your last issue (Jan 1970, p. 57), I thought it would add a little more to the description if your readers were told that coloured doctors and nurses who have had the same training and sit the same examinations as their 'white' colleagues do not receive the same rates of pay. They receive a lower rate of pay because they are coloured.

I like the one sentence in his glimpse. "... The single racial universities have serious problems."

It reminds me of the arguments that preceded the abolition of slavery, 1834. "I sit on a man's back, choking him and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am very sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all possible means—except by getting off his back."

London, N.W.3.

HARRY N. LEVITT.

The College Journal

Sir,

My three partners and I, all college members have discussed the *Journal* and we find that we agree that it was a much more worthwhile publication when it was issued bi-monthly. As a monthly journal, it runs the risk of being filled with statistics and re-hashes of subjects already covered by other medical journals. Quarterly publication would lead to greater selection of articles. There is so much reading matter for the general practitioner to peruse these days that there is a