

The observer of modern manners cannot fail to notice the lack of respect which is emerging in relation to women. We feel that unless respect for motherhood is inculcated, particularly in the rising generation, there will be a definite disincentive to rear families. Even such small things as special carriages for women and children on our railways may reduce to some extent the strain of travelling with young children. The mothers of our country are entitled to the maximum respect. At the risk of repetition, we would emphasize also the necessity for providing adequate holiday homes for mothers with children where they can feel completely at home without the constant fear that the other guests are resenting their presence.

Some comments were made as to the necessity for sex education in schools. This is a very controversial question on which experts express differences of opinion. Primarily we feel that this is the responsibility of parents, but we are conscious of the fact that very many parents neglect this obvious parental duty. On the other hand, unless formal teaching of adolescents is in the hands of experts it tends to become crude and fails to fulfil the purpose for which it is designed. We are inclined to approve of the suggestion made by some witnesses that medical officers with special qualifications in this field should be made available to the senior scholars of secondary schools in the Dominion. It may be possible for this to be undertaken by School Medical Officers. We do not think that mere blunt information as to sex problems is all that is required. The problem of moral and spiritual education should be the fundamental motive in any approach that is made. Practically all witnesses who appeared before us, including witnesses representing the Christian churches, were agreed that the basic factor in the present lack of appreciation of national responsibilities was definitely associated with a lack of a proper appreciation of the place which the home and the family should have in the nation. We think the churches have their responsibilities as well as the educational authorities in the training of the young people of the nation. Undoubtedly a materialistic approach to life must essentially weaken the moral fibre. We therefore recommend that a definite educational approach be made to this very important national problem, not so much in the direction of a crude drive for more children, as in a training in the national and family responsibilities with a view to producing a better approach to this question.

II. AGRICULTURE

Our previous conclusions are that at the moment there would appear to be very little scope for any major expansion of the agricultural population of the Dominion.

We make this statement because we have shown in earlier sections of this report that there is very little land available and suitable for settlement remaining in the Dominion.⁽¹⁾ Further, there are applications from some eight thousand returned soldiers to settle on the land, and this will absorb considerably more than the present unoccupied and suitable land. On the other hand, as pointed out by the Department of Agriculture, there is some scope for the smaller type of truck farm in the production of the small fruits, vegetables, and suchlike commodities.

We were somewhat concerned with the statement by the Under-Secretary for Lands that a full and adequate knowledge of land which could be made available for settlement was not in the possession of the Department. We strongly commend the proposal by the Under-Secretary that an immediate survey should be made. The fact that for a very large proportion of the returned servicemen who propose to settle on the land existing farms will have to be bought does not mean any real increase in settlement, but rather the displacement of people already on the land. Some witnesses suggested that some second-class land could be made available for closer settlement, given proper cultivation and adequate scientific management. We are unable to comment satisfactorily on this proposition, but we think it is a matter which should give the Government very serious concern. It would appear that it is

(1) See Part I, Chapter IX, pages 51-2.