

cases the explanation is to be found in the desire, from whatever cause, to be freed from the responsibilities of parenthood. Undoubtedly a better attitude towards parenthood and the raising of children would do much to counteract the tendency to resort to illegal methods of avoiding children. As we have stated earlier in this report, the whole question is undoubtedly bound up with the moral and spiritual standards of the community. If these can be raised, either by an active educational campaign, both with the young and the more mature, or by any other means whatever, the seriousness of this evil will decline. We desire to commend the strong stand of the churches of all denominations on this particular issue. We were impressed with the sincerity of the representatives of the various religious denominations who appeared before us. The Health Department in its active propaganda, and possibly in the future in co-operation with the Education Department, may be able further to impress upon the public the evils of this particular nefarious trade.

The present criminal legislation is, we think, sufficiently drastic to cope with the problem. The Police Department, which is charged with the prosecution of offenders, is under a very grave handicap in that it is frequently difficult to amass sufficient evidence to guarantee a conviction. In many cases the only evidence available is that of an accomplice, and juries in New Zealand, as in other parts of the world, are very loath to convict offenders on the evidence of an accomplice in the crime. An educational programme which tended to raise the moral tone of the community, and which aimed directly at emphasizing the moral, spiritual, and national evils of this practice, would of necessity have a very beneficial effect in raising the ethical standards of our people. This, in turn, would make itself apparent in the approach made by members of our juries to the deciding of cases involving charges of abortion. By such means we could reasonably expect an improved and much more effective enforcement of the law.

In conclusion, we desire to endorse in general the report and conclusions of the 1937 Committee.

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