

chivalrous relations which should subsist between the sexes. Those who are unfortunate enough to contract disease incur a punishment so terrible that they deserve our pity and our succour, always provided that they seek skilled treatment and refrain from any conduct likely to communicate the disease to others. The man or woman who negligently or wilfully does anything likely to lead to the infection of any other person is a criminal, and should be treated as such.

To bring about this healthier state of public opinion much might be done by the various Churches, by the Press, and by all who are in a position to influence the thoughts of others. It is a duty which should be shared by all—it cannot be left entirely to the Government, to Parliament, or to the medical profession. If a healthier atmosphere were created for the proper consideration of this subject, instead of the unwholesome fog of prudery in which it has been enveloped in the past, a great deal will have been gained.

One result of the mistaken policy of reticence which has prevailed is to be seen in the fact, already mentioned, that children are allowed to grow up either in ignorance of sex physiology or with perverted ideas due to the want of proper instruction. Nearly every witness who spoke on the subject before the Committee agreed that such instruction would come best from the parents, but there is also practical unanimity among those who gave evidence that very few parents are capable of giving such instruction in the right way, and the vast majority are unwilling to attempt it. In these circumstances our chief hope for the future seems to lie in an endeavour to educate the children in such a way that they, the parents of the future, may be enabled to deal justly with their own children in this vital matter. Nevertheless, the Committee would be failing in their duty did they not point out that all parents have a serious responsibility to their children which they cannot evade without laying themselves open to grave reproach. It is probable, as one of the witnesses remarked, that “nothing they could do for their children’s happiness in life would be of equal value to the outlook which they might give to their children upon this matter. Apart from any possibility of moral ruin or disease, such an outlook would colour the whole mature life of their children in respect to what is probably the foundation of the greatest human happiness—namely, home relationship.”

The Committee recommend that the Department of Health be asked to prepare a suitable pamphlet to assist those parents who desire to instruct their boys and girls on this subject. It is also suggested that where parents feel themselves unable to undertake the necessary instruction, the family doctor should be asked to talk to the boys. Instruction to the girls should certainly come from the mother, but failing this a little wise counsel and advice from a woman doctor should be secured.

In regard to the teaching of sex hygiene in schools some interesting evidence was given to the Committee by Mr. Caughley, Director of Education, Mr. T. R. Cresswell, Principal of the Wellington College (speaking on behalf of the Secondary Schools Association), and by some of the women doctors and others who were good enough to attend as witnesses.

Mr. Caughley stresses the point that it is not mere knowledge of physiology that will meet the case. He considers that the most important thing of all is to establish in the minds of the children noble ideals with regard to infancy and motherhood. Lessons in connection with the care of all birds and animals for their young, with the love and devotion of parents for their young, with all that is beautiful and tender connected with the homes of animals and birds, would establish a kind of reverence about everything that is connected with birth. He deprecates mechanical, systematic, and consecutive instruction in the mere facts of sex hygiene, for even the fullest knowledge on this subject is known to have very little deterrent effect in the temptations of life. He would rather aim at creating the right atmosphere in a school, such as would make any coarse or unworthy mention of any of these matters in the hearing of a child appear more or less repulsive, and would in general enable him to put in its proper setting any knowledge that might come to him from various sources.

Mr. Cresswell gave the Committee an extremely interesting *résumé* of the answers to a *questionnaire* which he addressed to the head of every secondary school in the Dominion. He suggested—(1) That a determined public effort should be made to rouse parents to a sense of their responsibility in regard to this matter by means of broadcasted pamphlets, and that they should be furnished with simple, specially written leaflets to assist them in giving instruction to their children; (2) that sex hygiene be made a compulsory subject in all training-colleges, the instructors being specially qualified doctors; (3) that regular courses of public lectures be delivered in suitable centres; (4) that teachers, and especially physical instructors, be encouraged to stress the value of physical fitness to pupils collectively, and, where need is indicated, to have private talks with individuals; (5) that teachers be advised to take every opportunity during lessons in hygiene, physiology, botany, &c., to give children a sane and normal outlook on sex matters.

Incidentally it was suggested that girls’ schools suffer somewhat through being staffed almost exclusively by celibate teachers. “The knowledge and sympathy of a real mother would,” it was urged, “be invaluable to many girls in our secondary schools. Does it seem a trivial suggestion that in every girls’ school there should be one honoured official, the ‘school mother,’ a sympathetic motherly person whose duty it should be to get into personal touch not only with individual girls but also with individual parents?”

The views expressed by the Swedish Committee of Experts in Medicine and Pedagogy are well worthy of quotation: “It is illustrative of the broad view taken by the committee of their task,” says the *British Medical Journal*, “that they deal with the education of the child from the time it learns to speak and address inquiries as to how it came into the world. The committee look forward to the time when parents will be so enlightened that they will not tell their children silly stories about babies being brought into the home by storks, but will give a simple account which the child in later years will not discover to be mendacious. The committee hope that the child, who is gradually taught more and more about sex hygiene as it passes from one school grade to another, will eventually become a parent wise enough to instil in the next generation a frank and healthy