

family is in itself a valuable contribution to education and to the training of responsible citizens, appears to be at a discount, and many parents now consider that advantages which can be *given* to a child as a result of family limitation outweigh the natural advantages of a large family in which the children develop initiative through companionship.

(b) *Housing*.—This constitutes an acute problem in crowded city areas. In many cases houses which are past repair and already condemned form the only shelter for a growing family. Ordinary domestic and hygienic conveniences are often lacking. Where a family is able to pay for better accommodation, difficulties frequently arise owing to the unwillingness of landlords to accept tenants with children, and, as the demand for houses exceeds the supply, landlords are able to pick and choose. The lack also of suitable cottages on farms for married couples with children probably has a considerable influence on the limitation or avoidance of families and leads to a premium being placed on childlessness because married couples without “encumbrances” can more easily obtain employment. This is an aspect of the problem that should receive earnest consideration.

(c) *Domestic*.—Lack of help in the home even by those who can afford it is a factor of very great importance. This applies especially to country life, where a woman’s whole physical energy is taken up by attention to domestic matters and often also to farm-work, to the detriment of family life. The following is an account given to one witness by a farmer’s wife, describing an average day’s work:—

“ Rise 4.30, have cup of tea—wife to shed, set machines, hubby to bring cows—start milking 5 a.m., hard going to 8 o’clock; wife returns house to get breakfast, also see to children and cut lunches for them to take to school. Hubby feeds calves, fowls, and ducks, then breakfast. Load milk on express, harness horse, away to factory mile away—get whey return. Now 9 o’clock, wife has machines down and washes, hubby hose down shed. Drive whey down to paddocks and feed 40 pigs, returns, unharness horse, wash cart down, yoke team to plough, disk, &c. Wife to start housework about 10 o’clock, dinner at 12.30 to be ready, or taken down to paddocks (if harvesting 3 or 4 men are working). Usual times fencing, repairing sheds, fixing yards, besides other farm duties till 3.30—afternoon tea—children given something to eat on returning from school. Husband and wife to sheds again 4 till 7. Hubby washes machines, feeds calves, &c., wife in meantime has returned house, washed children and put to bed before sitting down to her tea at 8 o’clock—by time washed up is 9 o’clock—too tired to do anything else but crawl into bed.”

The lack of adequate playing-areas, kindergartens, and other means of employing the time of the pre-school child outside the home is a matter that was brought before the notice of the Committee as another of the domestic difficulties. This is one of the factors preventing that amount of leisure which is necessary for the well-being of the mother.

(d) *Cost of Confinement*.—This was stressed particularly by country witnesses. Where a woman is beyond the reach of medical attendance and has to travel a considerable distance to hospital this adds materially to the cost of the confinement. To some women even moderate hospital and medical fees are prohibitive, and the problem is rendered more difficult still by the necessity for providing extra help in the home or on the farm during the wife’s absence. It was, however, rightly pointed out by one witness that the fees paid to an abortionist and the economic waste due to subsequent ill health would in many cases more than pay the expenses of an ordinary confinement.

(2) FEAR OF LABOUR AND ITS SEQUELÆ.

This was referred to by several witnesses, some of whom cited cases from their own experience. An erroneous idea seems to be prevalent among certain sections of the laity that the total abolition of pain during labour is possible for every patient. The fear that such relief will be withheld has been suggested as a cause for women seeking the abortionist. It would seem, however, that, with the increasing knowledge of methods of pain-relief in labour, more extensive ante-natal and post-natal care, and the cultivation of a more normal psychological outlook