

The assistance is required not merely at the time of confinement, but also during the much longer period of the rearing and the education of the family.

A general extension of the maternity allowance under any national health scheme would afford some immediate financial assistance.

Income-tax exemption for children, however generous the scale, would not benefit these badly circumstanced cases, for already they are below the income-tax limit.

It would appear that further financial provision would have to take the form of a direct children's allowance.

It is suggested that this might be put into effect by amending the present Family Allowances Act to provide that—

- (1) The amount be increased ;
- (2) The permissible income-level be increased ;
- (3) That, where given, the allowance be in respect of all the children in the family ; and
- (4) That the age-limit of the children be increased to sixteen.

*Domestic Assistance.*—Equally important is the provision of domestic assistance, and here we are faced with a problem of the greatest difficulty—a national problem which is affecting women in all walks of life and of which this is but one aspect.

In many farming districts it is clear that lack of domestic help is a greater burden to the harassed mother than even financial stringency.

Many admirable efforts are being made to give assistance in this direction—in the country by the housekeeper plans of the Women's Division of the Farmers' Union and other organizations, in the cities by the Mothers Help Society and similar agencies.

Extension of such system is highly desirable, and the possibility of their organization on a much larger scale with Government subsidy well deserves consideration.

In many cases these efforts are limited as much by lack of personnel as by lack of funds.

Alternatively, we suggest—

- (1) That the Government should inaugurate and recruit a National Domestic Service Corps of young women agreeable to enter the domestic-service profession :
- (2) That the recruits be guaranteed continuity of employment and remuneration as long as their service was satisfactory :
- (3) That they undergo whatever training is considered desirable at technical school or otherwise :
- (4) That they agree to perform service wherever required by the Domestic Service Department, which Department shall ensure that the living and working conditions are up to standard :
- (5) That the service be made available to all women, and that first consideration be given to expectant mothers, mothers convalescent after childbirth, and mothers who have young families, and that the service be either free or charged for according to the circumstances of each case.

Again, realizing the fact that many of the considerations involved in this question of domestic help are beyond the scope of this Committee, we recommend that a full investigation should be made of the whole matter.

*Obstetrical Aid.*—As for obstetrical help, we believe that the position is in the main adequate and good.

As far as the larger centres are concerned, no woman, however poor her circumstances, need lack complete ante-natal supervision, for which no charge is made, and proper confinement care, at most moderate cost, in the St. Helens Hospitals or the various maternity annexes of the public hospitals ; where the mother is actually indigent, free provision is available through the Hospital Boards or St. Helens Hospitals.

The country mother in certain districts is, however, much less well placed, although the Health Department through its district nurses, maternity annexes, and subsidized small country hospitals is trying to meet the need.