

(3) CONTROL OF ABORTION AMONGST THE UNMARRIED.

The evidence before the Committee indicates that, while this is not the major problem, it is, nevertheless, an important one.

Obviously, the main cause is a looseness of the moral standard, and the remedy must be educational.

It is not the province, nor is it within the capacity of this Committee, to make detailed recommendations on this matter, but we would urge upon all those concerned—the educational authorities, religious bodies, the various youth movements and women's organizations, and individual parents—the importance of enlightened education of the young in the matter of sex problems.

One factor of great importance we believe to be the widespread use of contraceptives amongst the unmarried.

It might, at first thought, seem likely that the use of contraceptives, however reprehensible, would tend to diminish the incidence of abortion.

But we believe that actually this is not the case: there is reason to think that many young women, relying on undependable methods of prevention, are tempted, and then, finding themselves in misfortune, resort to some method of abortion.

It is our opinion that not only is immorality encouraged by the indiscriminate sale of contraceptives, but, indirectly, criminal abortion has increased amongst the young.

For these reasons above all we are convinced that there should be a determined effort to suppress the indiscriminate sale of contraceptives.

While realizing the great practical difficulties, we believe that much could be done.

In particular, we believe that some effective measures could be devised to control the distribution of that type of contraceptive which is mainly used in these circumstances.

We recommend the consideration of the licensing of the importation of certain contraceptive goods.

We urge that the sale or distribution of contraceptives should be restricted entirely to registered practising chemists, doctors, hospital departments or clinics, and that their sale by other persons should be illegal and subject to severe penalty.

Evidence placed before the Committee showed that a profit up to 300 per cent. was being made on contraceptive appliances.

We recommend that the restriction on the advertisement of contraceptives should be more rigidly enforced, and particularly that the promiscuous advertisement and sale of contraceptives by "mail order" agencies should be made illegal.

We recommend that it should be made unlawful to supply contraceptives to young persons.

Difficulties and possibilities of evasion are of course obvious, but, nevertheless, similar restrictions have been applied with at least some measure of success in other directions.

We would also appeal to the Pharmaceutical Society and to the individual chemists, since the responsibility rests so largely with them, to co-operate most earnestly in this matter.

With regard to abortifacients, the recommendations we later make apply with even greater force to unmarried women.

Several witnesses, speaking on behalf of women's organizations, advocated the introduction of women police for the guidance and protection of the young in places of public resort.

Reference to the effect of alcohol on moral restraint has already been made.

The second big consideration is the care of the unmarried woman who is in trouble.

It has been suggested that if there were a more tolerant attitude towards such girls many who now resort to abortion would be prepared to go forward and face the future.