

The Committee recommends that in cases where no telephone is available in isolated areas, public telephones be installed, if necessary in private residences, and so situated that no resident of a district is at a distance of more than five miles from a telephone.

It is also urged that Postmasters or others having charge of small country exchanges be requested to make adequate provision whereby the exchange may be made available on holidays and during the night in case of necessity.

C. DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE.

In every part of the country visited by the Committee the problem of domestic assistance was found to be of paramount importance. Lack of adequate help in the home is a difficulty which affects all classes of the community in both town and country, and there can be no doubt that in many cases it acts as a powerful deterrent to child-bearing. Further, the incessant round of domestic work and anxiety regarding household affairs play havoc with the physical and mental health of many women. Frequently the lack of domestic assistance causes much greater distress to the overburdened housewife than actual financial stringency, and it is evident that this problem is an urgent one.

REASONS FOR THE SHORTAGE OF DOMESTIC HELP.

Domestic work as practised in many homes in this country is little more than a round of endless and uninteresting drudgery. Work must begin at an early hour in the morning and continue until late in the evening, with often not more than one half-day, and perhaps two evenings, of freedom during the week. There is no free time at the week-end, with the exception of the afternoon and evening on alternate Sundays, and restrictions on personal liberty are harrassing to many women who adopt this means of livelihood. Lack of consideration and sympathetic understanding on the part of householders towards their domestic assistants is not infrequently a cause of the latter refusing to remain in domestic service.

Young women and girls, therefore, are scarcely to be blamed if they turn from so unattractive a prospect to one of the many other avenues of employment which are now open to them. Work in a factory, shop, or office may be hard and exacting, but the compensations of personal liberty, shorter hours, and complete freedom during week-ends and evenings lead many women to prefer this life to a subordinate position in the home of strangers.

For some reason, which is difficult to assess, the domestic worker is often looked down upon and made to feel that her position is an inferior one, instead of being accorded the respect and consideration which are due to every *bona fide* worker from the community in which he or she works.

The manageress of a well-known and justly popular domestic registry office recently volunteered the information that the opening of a large new store in the city had almost completely depleted the personnel from which her supply of domestic workers had previously been drawn.

It is thus evident that the whole question of domestic assistance demands immediate and thorough investigation.

ATTEMPTS TO MEET THE SHORTAGE OF DOMESTIC HELP.

It would be difficult to praise too highly the efforts of certain women's organizations to deal with this grave problem, at the same time placing the matter of domestic service on a better footing. In country districts the Women's Division of the Farmers' Union, by means of an admirable voluntary organization, endeavours to send working housekeepers to families where, by reason of illness, the mother is compelled, for the time being, to relinquish household duties. Preference is given to expectant mothers and those about to enter hospital for confinement. The women employed are responsible and experienced individuals capable of taking entire charge of a household in an emergency. A reasonable salary is paid and the housekeepers find no lack of employment. Every effort is made to meet all requests for help, but lack of personnel is a serious drawback. This excellent service is an example of genuine mutual aid, and a very real asset to the domestic life of this country.

The more recently formed Townswomen's Guilds are endeavouring to perform a similar service for women in the towns, and labour under difficulties similar to those experienced by the country women's organizations.

Smaller organizations, such as Mothers' Help Societies, operate in certain localities with great benefit to the community. They also, however, encounter almost insuperable difficulties in obtaining sufficient helpers.

Certain religious and charitable institutions having the care of orphaned girls give them excellent training in domestic work. On reaching a certain age the girls enter domestic service, though still remaining under the care of the institution. While in many instances this is a most valuable form of service, the numbers provided are too small materially to affect the problem as a whole.