

15. Considering the many evils arising from imperfect digestion and weak nutrition, do you consider that State inspection and care of the teeth of school-children are desirable?
 Yes; but I do not believe that dental treatment will go more than a very short way towards remedying the evils complained of. The essential cause is constitutional weakness, from absence or deficiency of breast-feeding in infancy, and similar allied reasons. The present system of education is not the best to qualify girls for motherhood, both from a physical and a mental point of view. Also, the employment of girls and women in offices, shops, and factories does not conduce to their efficiency as mothers, nor to the welfare of their families. If the mothers were normal the children would cease to be abnormal. Constitutional degeneracy cannot be cured by a tooth-brush.
16. Do you consider that the birth-rate, being now far lower than it was twenty years ago, arises from—(a) physical weakness in modern women? (b) women engaging in industrial occupations? (c) overwork or disease on the part of the men? (d) limitation of families for economic reasons?
 (a.) Physical weakness in women is already answered. (b.) Industrial occupations also. (c.) Not from overwork in men. I have never seen men overworked in New Zealand except in official positions. As to disease, I need only refer you to Dr. Batchelor's address to the Society for Promoting the Health of Women and Children, which states that "In large centres in the Old World reliable authorities have estimated that some 90 per cent. of respectable married women who are admitted into special wards for diseases of women in large hospitals are suffering from the effects of venereal diseases. I am convinced it is no overestimate to state that fully 50 per cent. of decent married women who enter the women's ward of the Dunedin Hospital do so as the result of these diseases." This is often due to latent and unsuspected gonorrhoea of old standing in their husbands, contracted previous to marriage, and supposed to have been long since cured. The seeds of the disease lurk insidiously in the system so long that it cannot be pronounced cured without special methods of examination, which must be repeated at intervals for several months, and very few men will submit to this. Sometimes sterility results, and often the health of the mother and child are affected. (d.) Families are often limited for economic reasons. One is probably the increased cost of living, but a much more general reason is the great difficulty of obtaining domestic help. The book-learning imposed on girls turns them against housework. It gives a quite different direction to a girl's ideas and aspirations, and makes her look down on domestic work as drudgery.
17. Do the difficulties attending maternity cases in the backblocks influence married couples towards work in towns?
 I do not think maternity troubles have so much influence in that way as the desire to obtain better education for children and greater facilities for placing them in business.
18. Can you suggest any means for diminishing the cost of living without prejudicial effect on health?
 First, I would enable landlords to recover rents. Surely 2s. 6d. or 5s. a week would be a fair order for a Magistrate to make against the wages of a man earning from 50s. to 70s. a week. Next, I would substitute domestic economy and cooking for much of what is now taught to girls over twelve years of age.

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