

## SUGGESTED REMEDIES.

In the report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Abortion Problem reference was made to this matter, and it will not be out of place here to quote verbatim from the section of that report dealing with the question of domestic assistance :—

“ 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 systems is highly desirable, and the possibility of their organization on a much larger scale with a subsidy from the Government 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 will 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 of the matter should be made.”

The Committee fully endorses the suggestion of the Committee of Inquiry into the Abortion Problem, but realizes that certain factors other than those mentioned merit consideration, some of which are briefly indicated here :—

- (1) Domestic work should never be allowed to fall to the level of dull and monotonous routine. Personal interest in the home life should be encouraged in the domestic staff by the development of activities, such as gardening, handwork, &c.
- (2) The accommodation of the domestic staff should be not merely hygienic, but as pleasant and attractive as possible. This can be achieved at very little extra cost to the householder.
- (3) There should be facilities for a reasonable degree of privacy.
- (4) Hours of work should be reasonable, and the worker’s time when off duty should be entirely her own. The pursuit of outdoor activities should be encouraged.
- (5) The relationship between the employer and the domestic worker is of first importance. An attitude of sympathy and interest on the part of the employer will often gain the loyalty and co-operation of a worker where indifference or intolerance will have the opposite effect.

The Committee is confident of the good will of all sections of the community in an endeavour to solve this major problem of modern life, and urges that no effort should be spared to place the service of the home on the footing which it merits.

## 15. ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS.

Modern maternity care of the standard rightly regarded as necessary in New Zealand cannot be cheap. Whether it be hospital service or full-time domiciliary nursing attention, the expenses are necessarily considerable. The only cheap service is a no-doctor district midwife system with the nurse attending daily and not living in the home ; this, the Committee is convinced, is not generally acceptable in New Zealand.

The Committee gave close attention to the question of costs throughout its investigation.

It is satisfied that the fees charged in the public maternity hospitals are by no means high for the service given ; this is clearly proved by the fact that they rarely cover the cost per patient in these hospitals.

The provision of even the minimum facilities and equipment necessary for carrying out the recognized aseptic and antiseptic technique ; the addition of an ante-natal service requiring extra facilities and extra staff ; the payment of nurses in training who previously received no remuneration ; the increase in staffing necessitated by shorter hours ; a much-developed teaching syllabus and a standard of care which calls for closer supervision of the patients—all these factors have added greatly to the hospital costs.