

The Forum

BABIES FIRST NEED IN BABY WELFARE

(To the Editor.)

Sir: Mr C. H. Webster, in his paper on Youth Welfare, is raising that important question of our falling birthrate. With all his sentiments, opinions and suggestions on the matter we are bound wholeheartedly to agree.

Whilst taking no exception to anything said so far by Mr Webster, I would like to point out that full social security is by no means the biggest obstacle to an improvement in our falling birthrate. Were it so, how could the 1860 birthrate be 42.6 per 1000 and the 1939 only 17.6 per 1000? There can be no doubt that in the 60's our standard of social security was lower, our maternity hospitals practically non-existent, baby bonus and health centres only dreamed about, and yet . . . the birthrate was 240 per cent higher!

I'd like to suggest to Mr Webster that were economical reasons the biggest obstacle to raising the birthrate, our wealthier people would be blessed with the largest families.

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It seems to me that there are quite a number of influences on our birthrate, each perhaps as important as social security.

To mention a few: Popular use of contraceptives; a materialistic view on marriage; ease of divorce; marrying late in life. and, perhaps above all, a lack of respect of dignity, of reverence, if you please, to those most sacred relations in our life, which are being perpetually degraded and derided by certain classes of books, pictures and papers.

The first condition of baby welfare is that there must be babies. If we are to increase our birthrate we must firstly stamp out those pernicious influences on the mentality of our youth. Then, given a sound moral training of our youth, our birthrate will take care of itself.

Yours, etc.,
J. ORLOV.

Carool.