

disease could draw their attention to the formation of this society and put them in touch with Mrs Elizabeth Segall, 116 Loudoun Road, London, N.W.8.

Lichfield.

J. D. W. WHITNEY.

Use of vitamin D

Sir,

Little is known of the effects on the infant of large therapeutic doses of vitamin D given to the mother during pregnancy. I have been able to follow the development of children born to a mother with postoperative hypoparathyroidism who was treated with large doses of calciferol during pregnancy and have found defects in two of them. It is tempting to attribute the abnormalities to the toxic effects of this vitamin but I have, as yet, no proof.

Further cases are difficult to find as unphysiological doses of vitamin D are only likely to be given in pregnancy for hypocalcaemia and certain metabolic bone diseases. I should like to hear from any of your readers who know of pregnancies during which large doses of vitamin D have been given so as to compare my experience with theirs.

1 Fleethall Grove,
Stifford Clays,
Grays, Essex.

R. N. HERSON.

The pathology of family life

Sir,

Dr J. Tudor Hart¹ is mistaken when he imagines that, in my address "the pathology of family life",² I proposed to replace the Registrar General's classification of social class by some new subjective classification of my own. All classifications arrange social classes or groups in order of rank and I was discussing the criteria which society uses to 'rank' the familial attitudes characteristic of social classes.

When Dr Hart asks whether I think living from an unearned income 'represents' a high degree of independence and responsibility he invites me to make a personal value judgment. What really matters is not whether the order of rank I described conforms to his values or to mine but whether it reflects the values commonly held by the society in which we live. It is a fact that a large unearned income endows a family with a high degree of financial independence and that society expects such a family to accept a high degree of financial responsibility for its own affairs. Moreover, independence and responsibility are not only financial. Educational advantages confer a degree of independence and impose corresponding responsibilities. The status attached to certain occupations, paid or unpaid, can have the same effect but, even if society today values a purely