

My days are lumbered

AS I lumber through the final days of pregnancy, I am making resolutions. Naturally, I am resolving never to get pregnant again. But mainly, I am resolving to treat every pregnant woman I meet for the rest of my life with compassion. They need it.

There are a number of things I have promised myself I will never say to a pregnant woman, especially one whose baby is about to emerge. The list should be displayed wherever pregnant women are being noticed, and there should be painful penalties for uttering any of these statements. Like death.

Firstly, I resolve never to say to any pregnant woman: "That far on? You don't look it."

This suggests to a woman whose due date is imminent that she is going to be overdue — the last thing any woman wants to be by the time she's got that far.

Neither will I say: "Isn't it here yet?" or "Still there, eh?" when a pregnant woman answers the phone. There is nothing amusing about a baby not having arrived on time. Not when you've been up all night with insomnia, an eternally full bladder, and the last book in the house you ever thought you'd get round to reading — a study of Senegalese puberty rites from a jumble sale.

I will never say to a woman whose baby is due any day: "But you haven't even dropped yet!"

This suggests expert knowledge which is likely to throw the pregnant woman off the nearest cliff. It makes her doubt that her own doctor is right. The books say that many babies' heads don't engage till labour is started, but a pregnant woman is apt to forget the comforting things she has read. She sees herself being three weeks overdue at least. That is eternity.

A variant of this is: "Oh, don't take any notice of your due date. They're *always* at least three weeks overdue. Especially first ones."

A good one, from women who are mothers already, is: "Breastfeeding, eh? Your tits will get saggy and droopy like mine."

A pregnant woman is secretly cherishing a belief that she will, at some future date, be physically desirable again. She even half believes she may feel sexual lust again herself. She cannot imagine that either will be possible with saggy or droopy tits.

This goes, usually with statements like: "Oh, you *never* get your figure back! I put on two inches round the waist for every one of mine."

A pregnant woman has spent the last couple of months in hand-me-down maternity garments. Every morning when she opens the wardrobe her heart sinks. She wants



to make a bonfire of everything she's worn during that time. The thought that she may not fit her pre-pregnancy clothes any more is devastating. It's the noose or the razor blade, that's all there is to it.

In the last two weeks of pregnancy, when you are looking on the bright side, you may brag that you've at least had no stretch marks. This is the cue for: "Oh, but it's not over yet."

You can live without that. When the absence of stretch marks is the only bright spot on the horizon, it's sadistic to snuff it out.

When pregnant women complain, justifiably, in the last days of their pregnancy, I promise never to say: "It'll be worse when it gets out! That's when the *real* problems start."

A pregnant woman does not wish to believe that she has endured 40 weeks of discomfort only to have her future written off to more misery.

And I will never utter the variants of that statement, which go: "Get your sleep while you can ..." and, for the same reason, "Go out while you can ..."

I promise to have something positive to say about having babies, even if I have to resort to my imagination.

I will never remark on any plans the couple have to do with bringing up their child, unless it's to be supportive. Pregnant parents have enough to worry about without being told that they must keep the baby in the room with them at night, or that

they must not; that they must give the baby a dummy if it screams, or that they must not; and I will avoid the subject of colic altogether. No one wants to imagine a colicky baby when they're in this condition, especially with the prevalent theory that, like just about everything else, the mother is to blame for it.

Other unhelpful things to talk about in late pregnancy are diet and exercise. If a woman has got this far without obeying what seems to you to be axioms of diet in pregnancy, it's too late to do anything about it. Keep your mouth shut about the wonders of vitamin E, black strap molasses and raspberry leaf tea. Why make a pregnant woman feel guilty? She's lucky enough if she can hold any food down, anyway.

Bright remarks about exercise in late pregnancy tend to come from idealists who've never been pregnant. They should be gagged. It is impossible to imagine the peculiar things that happen to cause pregnant women discomfort when they walk any distance at all. It is definitely not imaginary. When you need help turning over in the bed, the last thing you want to hear is bright-eyed theories about 10-mile walks. Especially when you need to pee every 10 minutes.

The last thing I promise is to allow pregnant women to be as unreasonable as they like. They deserve it.

ROSEMARY McLEOD

WHEELCHAIRS

Our range includes **SELF-PROPELLING WHEELCHAIRS**, an extensive range available to meet the individual requirements.

PORTABLE ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIRS
10 models, for use in both the home and on outings and other aids for the disabled. Commodes, Hoists, Walking Frames, Helping hands.

New lightweight self-propelling model now available.

Manufactured by
W. A. THOMPSON & CO LTD
Write to PO Box 61-005 Otara or phone 27. 45-759 for free catalogue



FIRST RANKING SECURED DEBENTURES

15.5%

Per annum for 30 months

Term	Rate P.A.
3 months	11.75%
6 months	12.75%
9 months	13.00%
12 months	14.50%
24 months	15.25%
30 months	15.50%
3 years	15.50%
4 years	15.00%
5 years	15.00%

Applications will proceed only on the form issued with the Prospectus which is available from:-

- Any member of a N.Z. Stock Exchange.
- The Brokers to the Issue, Jordan, Sandman, Smythe & Co., P.O. Box 887, Auckland.
- F & P Dealer Rentals Limited, Koru Towers, Pakuranga Town Centre, Pakuranga.

F & P Dealer Rentals Limited, P.O. Box 14-505, Auckland 6, Telephone 569-009.

Please send me a copy of your Prospectus:-

NAME:

ADDRESS:

NZLR99