

POPULATION

Man Must Learn Wisdom in Use of Borrowed Powers

American Philosophical Society in Special Population Session Considers Motives Behind Family Limitation

UNLESS man can learn wisdom to match his cleverness in harnessing the forces of nature to his own ends, he is in for major trouble. Such was the warning given to the American Philosophical Society, by Dr. Alfred J. Lotka, president of the Population Association of America.

Dr. Lotka pointed out that of all animals man is the only one that has been able to harness natural forces on a large scale to increase the power of his own muscles and personal internal chemistry. He used a unique means for measuring this artificial increase of man's physical powers: the amount of carbon dioxide discharged respectively from our own breath and from our chimneys. We breathe into the atmosphere about half a billion tons of this gas a year; in the same period our chimneys belch forth some three billion tons.

Since man's requirements for just staying alive are relatively inelastic, this great expansion in his productivity has gone largely into providing conveniences, luxuries and leisure.

"This in itself would be no hardship," commented Dr. Lotka, "if in times when such a situation arises, the relative leisure thereby occasioned were evenly distributed. Actually, we know only too well that such even distribution does not take place, that the result is a state of affairs when a section is busy and another section is idle."

Greater Problem

Man's maldistribution of goods and leisure, however, presents far less of a problem than does his recently discovered ability to control his own rate of reproduction, in Dr. Lotka's opinion.

"Once reproduction is brought under arbitrary control," he said, "superlative importance is lent to the desire for progeny. Statistics, correctly interpreted, show only too plainly that in this most important of all adaptive urges, modern civilized populations are deficient. And there are other maladjustments of human aims and endeavors, which, in the pres-

ent state of man's powers, destructive as well as constructive, threaten to rock the very foundations of civilized humanity."

How to induce human beings to use wisdom in the application of the vastly extended physical powers they have won, Dr. Lotka admitted to be an exceedingly difficult problem. Knowledge depending on the senses is easily passed on and desires originating in the senses are easily understood and satisfied. But matters of taste are not so easily transferable. Dr. Lotka hinted at the possibility of chemical control of mass reactions through the use of beneficent drugs, but he did not develop this point. A second means of control which he suggested is through mass suggestion.

Riddle of the Sphinx?

"We may well ask," said the speaker in conclusion, "Has an immature human race stumbled upon a dangerous toy? Are we children playing with a loaded gun? Shall we grow up in wisdom be-

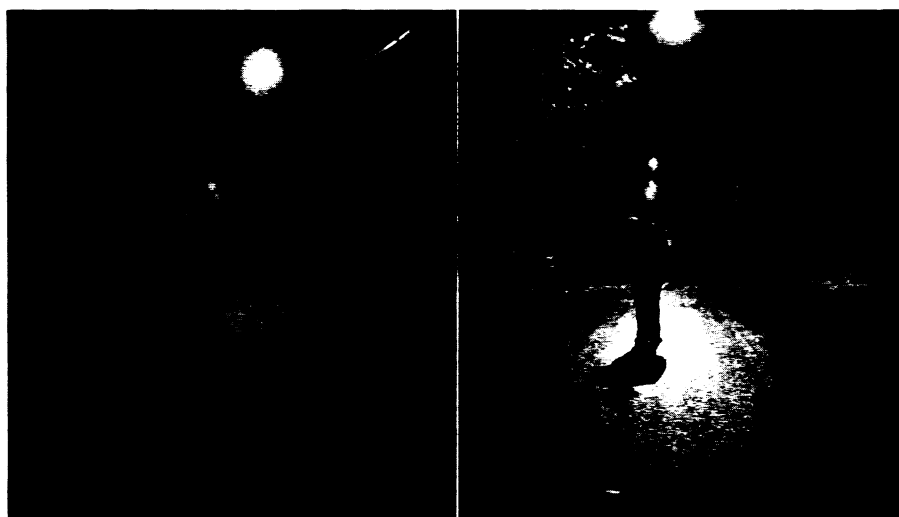
fore tragedy engulfs us? Is this the riddle of the Sphinx, to fail in which means destruction? Or may we perhaps look forward to an era of an awakening in wisdom, commensurate with the rocket-like ascent in knowledge? Should this come about, then Utopia, from a dream, would become a real presence."

Not Childless by Choice

DESPITE spread of birth control practices, childless women do not remain permanently without offspring through their own choice. Even though they may have used contraceptive methods to postpone the arrival of children, through prudence or necessity, they have no wish to deny themselves motherhood altogether.

This was stressed in a paper presented by Clyde V. Kiser of the Milbank Memorial Fund technical staff. Mr. Kiser obtained statements from 291 childless women who had been married ten years and were less than 40 years old when married.

Among these, three-fourths stated that they had never used birth control methods at all, and only 14 per cent. had used such methods regularly and constantly. Furthermore, approximately two-thirds of the group stated that their failure to have babies had been a disappointment to them, and 57 per cent. stated that they had actually consulted physicians to learn the cause of their childless condition.



BEFORE AND—

AFTER

The pedestrian in the picture on the right shows up clear and sharp in the motorist's view. He is no longer lost in shadows as in the picture on the left. This new lighting system is adding to the safety of Greensburg, Pa., called "best lighted" by Westinghouse who took the photographs.

Birth Control Motives

BBETTER understanding of the motives impelling potential parents to deny themselves children through birth control methods must be obtained if population management is ever to be seriously attempted with any hope of success, declared Dr. Warren S. Thompson, director of the Scripps Foundation for Research in Population Problems, at Miami University.

"If the economic motive is the chief motive leading to the practice of contraception, it must be distinguished from necessity since the birth rate appears to be lowest in the comfortable and well-to-do classes," Dr. Thompson pointed out. "If the time should come when the community would like to exercise control over the birth rate, it cannot do so intelligently unless the motives which actually lead to the practice of contraception have been studied carefully.

"Until it is clearly known why such a large proportion of the population prefers families too small to insure reproduction, it will not be possible to take measures to change this situation if it is desired to do so.

Dr. Thompson stated that he expected the high birth rate in industrially backward countries like China to continue high, and expressed the opinion that efforts to increase the birth rate in certain European countries apparently are having some effect.

Fewer Widows Nowadays

MEN and women marrying nowadays can do so with better assurance than their parents and grandparents had, of not being left mateless before their time, Mortimer Spiegelman of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's statistical bureau told the meeting.

"The general improvement in mortality in the last century has resulted in an appreciable reduction in the chances of widowhood for both man and wife," said Mr. Spiegelman. "A married man under age 50 today is less than half as likely to lose his wife by death in the course of the year than he would have been one hundred years back; for wives, a corresponding benefit of the same magnitude extends only up to age 40.

"Since the family is the social unit through which the growth of the population may be influenced, the notable reduction in the chances of widowhood at the young ages of married life, apart

from other factors, has, to some extent, enlarged the potentialities for population increase."

Farm Birth Rate Falls

BIRTH rates have long been notoriously lower in industrial urban areas than in the country. But even in the country there is a differential between the prosperous, money-crop type of farming and the poorer, less well organized type of agriculture where people raise a larger proportion of their produce for their own direct consumption.

SOCIOLOGY

Marihuana Smoking Seen As Epidemic Among the Idle

Morals Lowered by Drug Which Induces Unpremeditated Acts of Violence; Does Not Improve Playing of Swing

THE ancient Oriental vice of marihuana smoking has swept over this country and Russia like an epidemic, leaving a trail of murders and other crimes, child-addicts and heroin addicts and reaching a stage where drastic measures are now needed to eradicate it.

A striking picture of the grave situation, ranging from early European experiments with hashish of the "Count of Monte Cristo" variety, to the case of a youth in Tampa, Fla., who while under the influence of marihuana massacred his entire family, is given by Prof. Robert P. Walton of the University of Mississippi School of Medicine, in his book, *Marihuana: America's New Drug Problem*.

"Swing" band players, of whom large numbers are said to use marihuana, are all wrong if they think it improves their playing, Prof. Walton points out. They may think they are playing better when they use marihuana, because the drug increases sensitivity to sound, gives a keener appreciation of rhythm and timing, and releases inhibitions. Judged by objectively critical means, however, "the standards of the performance are no doubt lowered," Prof. Walton says, adding that most serious orchestra leaders agree with this opinion.

Temperament, social conditions and intimate contact with other marihuana addicts are the chief factors in the spread of the vice, according to Prof. Walton. The Kentucky pioneers, he points out, cultivated hundreds of tons of hemp,

The more prosperous commercial farmers tend to have fewer children, stated Conrad Taeuber, agricultural economist of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. In general, the farm population shows the same kind of inverse relationship between prosperity and birth rate that is found elsewhere: the poorer the parents the more children they have. Negroes have larger families than whites; poverty-stricken white farmers in the arid West have more children than prosperous white farmers in the East.

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from which are made marihuana cigarettes, also known as "reefers" and "muggles," without, so far as the records show, indulging in the use of marihuana.

By contrast Prof. Walton sees the custom of marihuana indulgence "expanding among the idle and irresponsible classes of America and Russia" as it has maintained itself for centuries "among the more dissolute populations of the East."

Very few deaths have resulted from marihuana indulgence.

Among the serious aspects of the situation are the unpremeditated acts of violence resulting from loss of complete control of judgment and restraint while under the influence of marihuana; general lowering of morals and restraint following continued use "of this vicious dissipation"; increase in premeditated burglaries, hold-ups and other crimes as a result of a bolstering of courage by use of the drug.

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● Earth Trembles

Information collected by Science Service from seismological observatories and relayed to the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey resulted in the location of the following preliminary epicenter:
Wednesday, Nov. 16, 10:54.6 p. m., E.S.T.

An aftershock of Alaskan earthquake of Nov. 10. Latitude 55 degrees north, longitude 158 degrees west.

For stations cooperating with Science Service in reporting earthquakes recorded on their seismographs see SNL May 21.