

POPULATION

City Population Decreases In Depression's Third Year

Lower Birth Rates and Restricted Immigration Make More Million-a-Year Gains Unlikely for United States

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CITIES as a whole decreased in population by over 400,000 persons during 1932 compared with little change in numbers during 1931, data gathered by the Scripps Foundation for Population Research indicate.

This is in great contrast to what occurred prior to the present depression. During each year from 1920 to 1929 the number of city dwellers increased by at least 850,000, the maximum gain being about 2,000,000 during 1923. Even during 1930 there was an increase of about 400,000.

Emigrants Exceed Immigrants

The decline in the city population during 1932 resulted partly from the continued slowing up of growth in the United States as a whole, and partly from an unusually large increase in the farm population. Births have been decreasing more rapidly than deaths in recent years, while the former excess of immigrants has changed to an excess of departures for foreign countries since 1930.

As a result the nation barely gained 800,000 in population during 1932 compared with about 1,200,000 during 1930 and over 2,100,000 during 1923.

At the same time, the farm population, which decreased by 1,450,000 from 1920 to January 1, 1930, increased by 1,000,000 in 1932 alone, according to a report of the Department of Agriculture. The only way the gain in the farm population could exceed that of the total population was by drawing on cities, for the nonfarm population living outside of cities probably increased by at least 200,000 during 1932, continuing the trend of previous years.

Eventual Return to City

Whether the city population as a whole will increase again when the depression is ended or whether the recent decrease will continue remains to be seen. With the birth-rate falling more

rapidly than the death-rate, the years of large growth in total population seem a thing of the past unless immigration restrictions are greatly modified; it is doubtful if the United States again will gain 1,000,000 inhabitants in any single year.

It is quite probable, however, that the farm population will not keep on increasing when good times return. Much of its rise in numbers during 1932 seems to have been due to the return to farms of persons who lost their jobs in cities, and more important, the remaining on farms of young people who in normal years would migrate to cities. With a pick-up in employment in urban areas the farm-to-city movement is likely to predominate once more, and most of the nation's increase in population to accrue to cities and their suburbs.

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CHEMISTRY

Alcoholized Gasoline Approved In Tests

ALCOHOLIZED gasoline, scheduled for large use in this country if the Clark-Dickinson-Shallenberger bill now before Congress is enacted, is not entirely a novelty in this country.

It has been given a test under a wide range of motoring conditions in sev-

eral sections of the country, most notably in the Midwest, where the states of Illinois and Iowa, as well as several private concerns, have made alcohol-blended gasoline available to several sample communities. Advocates of the pending legislation declare that the experience of many hundreds of motorists who have reported on their tests constitutes an almost unanimous endorsement of the alcoholized fuel.

A summary of reports of 1,327 customers, who gave their impressions of alcoholized gasoline on the scores of starting, acceleration, smoothness of operation, anti-knock, power and general motor performance, shows that over 1,100 of them considered the new fuel better than "straight" non-premium gasoline on starting, and that on all the other points over 1,200 agreed that the new fuel was superior. Most of the dissenting votes merely reported "no difference noticed"; hardly anyone considered the unblended gasoline better.

The farmers of the communities concerned are sufficiently interested in the project to be willing to pay a premium of two or three cents a gallon for alcoholized gasoline, provided the alcohol is produced from surplus grain, the report stated.

One driver in Peoria, Ill., who repeated a 128-mile road trip, using 10 per cent. alcohol gas, regular gas, and ethyl gas, found that with alcohol gas his fuel cost was 1.48 cents a mile; with regular gas 1.53 cents a mile and with ethyl gas 1.60 cents a mile; and this in spite of the fact that he was paying 18.6 cents a gallon for the alcohol gas, as against 14.6 cents and 18 cents respectively for the other fuels.

The tests were conducted for the most part on gasoline containing an added ten per cent. of alcohol, which is double the highest percentage contemplated

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