

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Social Inventions are Needed To Keep Pace With Science

President's Committee Declares for Stimulation of Social Sciences Without Limiting Mechanical Invention

DECLARING that social invention must be stimulated to keep pace with mechanical invention, but declaring emphatic opposition to any moratorium upon research in physical science and invention, a massive factual inquiry by President Hoover's research committee on social trends has just been issued.

Begun in September, 1929, the inquiry was conducted by hundreds of specialists in 29 fields ranging from population to government and society. Dr. Wesley C. Mitchell of New York was chairman and Dr. William F. Ogburn of the University of Chicago was director of research. Two volumes totaling 1700 pages now published by the McGraw-Hill Book Company will be followed by 13 volumes of special studies and supporting data. Rockefeller Foundation funds, not government support, financed the study.

The report lays great stress on the changes that have occurred in our civilization as the result of scientific discoveries and inventions.

Indispensable prerequisites of "a successful, long time constructive integration of social effort" are listed as:

"Willingness and determination to undertake important integral changes in the reorganization of social life, including the economic and the political orders rather than the pursuance of a policy of drift.

"Recognition of the role which science must play in such a reorganization of life.

Intimate Interrelationships

"Continuing recognition of the intimate interrelationship between changing scientific techniques, varying social interests and institutions, modes of social education and action and broad social purposes.

"Specific ways and means of procedure for continuing research and for the formulation of concrete policies as well as for the successful administration of the lines of action indicated."

First scientific and technologic devel-

opments instigate changes in economic habits and social habits most closely associated with them, such as factories, cities, corporations and labor organizations.

Then the family, government, schools and churches are affected. Somewhat later come changes in social philosophies and codes of behavior, although at times these may precede the others.

Epoch-Making Events

The report observes that the first third of the twentieth century has been filled with epoch-making events and crowded with problems of great variety and complexity. A few of these are:

"The World War, the inflation and deflation of agriculture and business, our emergence as a creditor nation, the spectacular increase in efficiency and productivity and the tragic spread of unemployment and business distress, the experiment of prohibition, birth control, race riots, stoppage of immigration, women's suffrage, the struggles of the Progressive and the Farmer Labor parties, governmental corruption, crime and racketeering, the sprawl of great cities, the decadence of rural government, the birth of the League of Nations, the expansion of education, the rise and weakening of organized labor, the growth of spectacular fortunes, the advance of medical science, the emphasis on sports and recreation, the renewed interest in child welfare."

With such events have come national problems urgently demanding attention and some of these points of tension are:

"Imperialism, peace or war, international relations, urbanism, trusts and mergers, crime and its prevention, taxation, social insurance, the plight of agriculture, foreign and domestic markets, governmental regulation of industry, shifting moral standards, new leadership in business and government, the status of womankind, labor, child training, mental hygiene, the future of democracy and capitalism, the reorganization of our governmental units, the use of leisure

time, public and private medicine, better homes and standards of living."

"Demagogues, statesmen, savants and propagandists have attacked these problems, but usually from the point of view of some limited interest," the report says.

The committee declares that it does not exaggerate the bewildering confusion of problems but merely uncovers the situation as it is.

"Modern life is everywhere complicated," the report states, "but especially so in the United States, where immigration from many lands, rapid mobility within the country itself, the lack of established classes or castes to act as a brake on social changes, the tendency to seize upon new types of machines, rich natural resources and vast driving power, have hurried us dizzily away from the days of the frontier into a whirl of modernism which almost passes belief."

Many striking statements and findings are contained in the report of President Hoover's research committee on social trends just issued. A few follow:

Church and family have lost many of their regulatory influences over behavior, while industry and government have assumed a larger degree of control.

We have the anomalies of prohibition and easy divorce; strict censorship and risqué plays and literature; scientific research and laws forbidding the teaching of the theory of evolution; contraceptive information legally outlawed but widely utilized.

Modern civilization rests upon power, upon energy derived from inorganic rather than human or animal sources.

Technical Gains Lost

Growing difficulties of mining in England have swallowed up the gains of technology and the output per worker in the coal mines is less than it was fifty years ago.

From the public point of view it is important that any change in economic organization undertaken in the interest of steadier profits and wages should also insure conservation by preventing waste of the resources.

As far as the energy resources are concerned, the heart of the conservation problem lies in preventing waste of coal, petroleum and natural gas.

About one-fourth of the cultivated land in the United States, chiefly in the southeast and southwest, has lost by erosion a third of its surface soil, and that from another quarter of the land a

sixth or more of surface soil has been removed.

There has been no increase in crop acreage for 15 years, nor in acre-yields of the crops as a whole for 30 years, yet agricultural production has increased about 50 per cent. since the beginning of the century.

The rate of population growth in the United States has long been declining but this fact has perhaps been obscured because of the size of the net increase decade by decade.

We shall probably attain a population between 145 and 190 million during the present century with the probability that the actual population will be nearer the lower figure than the higher.

A new type of population grouping is appearing: not the city, but the metropolitan community—a constellation of smaller groups dominated by a metropolitan center.

The motor age has brought "boom" suburban towns planted with as little planning as the "boom" towns which burst into existence in the railway age.

Men often commit criminal acts because of social conditions.

Crime fluctuates with the business cycle.

New chemical knowledge on the regulation, growth and functioning of the hormones may have astounding effects on personality and the quality of the population.

No End to Invention

More and more inventions are made every year, and there is no reason to think that technological developments will ever stop.

The world may find much use for talking books.

The production of artificial climate may become widespread.

An efficient storage battery of light weight and low cost might produce changes rivaling those of the internal combustion engine.

Opening channels of communication tends to produce uniformities of speech, manners, styles, behavior and thought; but this tendency is counteracted in part by the increasing specializations arising from the accumulation of inventions which bring to us different vocabularies, techniques, habits and thoughts.

Those who are acquainted with past experience anticipate that, while business will revive and prosperity return, the new wave of prosperity will be termin-

ated in its turn by a fresh recession, which will run into another period of depression, more or less severe.

Is it beyond the range of men's capacity some day to take the enhancement of social welfare as seriously as our generation took the winning of a war?

In the two years following 1929, the aggregate money earnings paid to American employees fell about 35 per cent. while the cost of living declined 15 per cent.

Unsuspected Merits

Not only is the housewife solicited to buy for two dollars down and a dollar a month a dozen attractive articles her mother never dreamed of; she is also told of unsuspected merits in products she has used all her life, which now come in new packages under seductive brands.

Our emphasis upon making money is re-enforced by the technical difficulties of spending money.

The population of three-fifths of the states remains more than half rural and by 1950 perhaps nearly half the states will still be more than one-half rural.

Women are employed in some 527 occupations; but they tend to concentrate in a few callings, for about 85 per cent. of the employed women are in 24 different occupations.

It has been said that some homes are merely "parking places" for parents and children who spend their active hours elsewhere.

About half of the nation's families live in rented homes.

Of the children of high school age, about 50 per cent. are now in school—evidence of the most successful single effort which government in the United States has ever put forth.

With shorter hours of labor a program of education for adults may be developed and become widespread, although at present the great enemy to adult education is the competition of amusements.

The church is legally separated from the state; it is not formally in politics, but it has taken interest in such problems as those of the family, marriage and divorce, the prohibition of the sale of intoxicating drinks, capital and labor relationships, crime, and many local community questions.

A comparison of the census records of 1920 and 1930 shows in general that artists of various kinds are increasing

more rapidly than the general population.

Recent trends show the United States alternating between isolation and independence, between sharply marked economic nationalism and notable international initiative in cooperation, moving in a highly unstable and zigzag course.

The tax bill of all the governments in the country in 1930 was ten and a quarter billion dollars, perhaps 15 per cent. of the incomes of the people. We spend about the same amount of money or more on recreation, approximately one-seventh as much on tobacco, and perhaps about one-fifteenth as much on cosmetics.

The almost omnipotent legislative authority set up at the outset of our national development has steadily lost to the courts on the one side and the executive on the other; and this process has gone on more rapidly than ever during recent years.

Shall business men become actual rulers; or shall rulers become industrialists; or shall labor and science rule the older rulers?

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ETHNOLOGY

Indians' "Hot Dog" Magic Conjures Up North Wind

AFTER A THAW comes in the late winter, up in the Big Woods of northern Canada, the Cree Indians of James Bay always want the north wind to blow, because then a crust will form on the snow, hampering the movements of the big game animals and making them easier to capture.

To conjure up a north wind they have many magics, says Dr. John M. Cooper, anthropologist of the Catholic University of America. Here are three of the many. The simplest consists in going out and swinging "bull-roarers" and other devices to make a loud, wind-simulating noise. A second magic, reputedly effective, is to strip all the clothes off a small boy and then send him forth naked to defy, like a young Ajax, not the thunderbolts of Zeus but the breath of Boreas.

But their third magic is the most spectacular, though admittedly a bit rough on the dog. The Indians carefully prepare a bunch of birch-bark ribbons, tie it to the tail of a dog, and then set fire to it!

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Remedies for baldness are among the formulas of ancient Egypt.