

POPULATION

War May Save China From Evils of Overpopulation

There, At Least, Malthusian Checks Are Truly At Work With Grim Reality, Population Expert Says

A WAR in China might be China's salvation, Dr. Frank W. Notestein, American student of population from Princeton University, told the International Congress on Population meeting in Paris. China is growing so fast that if violence does not check her numbers, the population will probably double in less than 65 years.

"China cannot stand such growth," said Dr. Notestein. "If it is not stopped by war and other violence, it will be by famine and disease. Here, at least, the Malthusian checks are a grim reality."

China, known to the world as a nation of antiquity, is today a nation of youth, Dr. Notestein said.

Old age is venerated in the Oriental countries, but men and women do not live to grow old there as they do in other parts of the world. In New Zealand, half the population live to reach the biblical standard of lifetime—three score years and ten. In China half of those coming into the world die before they reach the age of 28 years.

In the United States, 90 of each hundred babies born live to celebrate their tenth birthdays. In China, 40 per cent. die before they reach the age of 10. An American baby coming into the world may be expected to live to the age of 59 to 63. But the Chinese infant can hope only for a life of 35 years.

Yet despite this terrific mortality in childhood and early youth, China's peoples are not being wiped out. No one knows just how many people live in that vast nation. Various estimates of the total population range from about 350 million to more than 550 million, Dr. Notestein told the Congress. Of these uncounted hundreds of millions, probably about 80 to 85 per cent. live in rural regions.

Early Marriage

Marriage comes early with the Chinese. The family is as large as the farm can support.

"Virtually every one marries as soon as possible," said Dr. Notestein. "After age 30, the bachelor is rare and the

spinster virtually non-existent. Monogamy is the rule."

The average bride in China is a girl of 18, her groom is only 20. Contrast this with the average in New York State where the bride is 25 and the groom 29.

At the time of the first marriage, the age is still lower. More than half the boys taking their first wives are under 20 and in North China 12 per cent. are under 15. Of the brides on their first trip into matrimony, practically all (98 per cent.) are under 25, 81 per cent. under 20 and in North China 13 per cent. are under 15 years.

Much ado has been made lately in the United States over child marriages, yet in New York State, outside of New York City, marriages under 20 years of age constitute only 3 out of each hundred males as against the 54 per cent. in China, and only 30 per cent. of brides as against 81 per cent. in China.

Birth Rates High

Birth rates in China where practically everybody is married are just about double what they are in the United States, 38.3 per 1,000 population as against 18.9 in the United States. The rate is also higher when computed on the basis of the number of married women of child-bearing age; 131 per 1,000 in the United States against 207 in China.

This picture of birth and death in China is an optimistic one, Dr. Notestein warned, because of the fact that the time selected for the survey on which these figures are based was not one of those periods of famine, flood or scourge which are ever-recurrent in China.

"If, by some magic, it suddenly became possible to eliminate the mortality from 'preventable causes' of death, sober students might ponder long before utilizing that power," said Dr. Notestein.

"Observers are unanimous in the belief that the population of China is already redundant and that, with existing productive capacities, a large increase in the population can only take place at the expense of a serious decline in the

standard of living which is already pitifully low Hunger would accomplish what disease was prevented from doing. It is perhaps fortunate that any improvement in mortality rates will, if it comes, come gradually, and may be accompanied by a corresponding decline in fertility."

The survey reported by Dr. Notestein was conducted with the cooperation of the Milbank Memorial fund in connection with the China Land Utilization Study under the direction of the University of Nanking's Prof. John Lossing Buck.

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ASTRONOMY—PHOTOGRAPHY

"Tears of St. Lawrence" Can Be Photographed

CAMERA enthusiasts seeking new subjects may find one in August when the "tears of St. Lawrence" make their annual appearance, under particularly good circumstances. The "tears"



FINSLER COMET

This photograph was taken with the 40-inch reflecting telescope of the U. S. Naval Observatory on July 23 at 3:45 a. m. The short bright streaks are stars, appearing so because of their movement across the field as the instrument was kept trained on the comet. The longer trail is made by a meteor which happened to streak across the sky during the 20-minute exposure