

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-

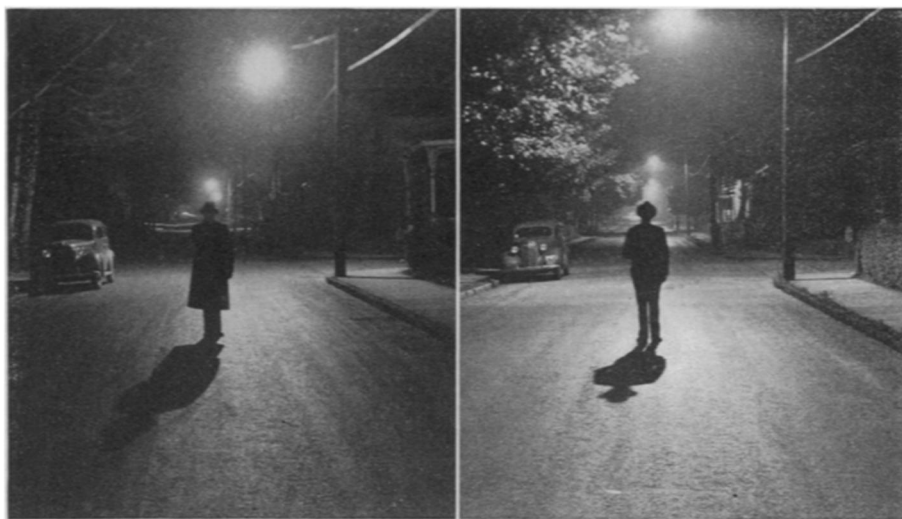
fore tragedy engulfs us? Is this the riddle of the Sphinx, to fail in which means destruction? Or may we perhaps look forward to an era of an awakening in wisdom, commensurate with the rocket-like ascent in knowledge? Should this come about, then Utopia, from a dream, would become a real presence."

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.