

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.