

POPULATION

Must Control Fertility

Asia's teeming millions must be controlled or millions of men, women and children will be doomed to death by starvation.

► THE TEEMING millions of Asia must control their fertility if they are to escape simultaneous vast increases in overall population and death by starvation of millions of men, women and children.

These were the conclusions reached by a panel of population experts at the Centennial Conference on Science, Technology and World Resources held by Northwestern University.

Scientific research, industrialization and other factors have led, in the Western world, first to a decrease in the mortality rate and then to a corresponding decrease in the birth rate. Before the birth rate fell, the experts said, there was a vast increase in the population of the West.

However, there are factors in Asia which may not make the pattern there the same. Asia's people now number perhaps three times as many as they did in the mid-seventeenth century.

"To assume a European type transition in mortality and fertility in the future would imply the industrialization and urbanization of the continent and the generation of populations three to six times as numerous as those that now exist before births and deaths were in balance at low levels," according to Irene B. Taeuber of the Office of Population Research at Princeton University.

But Dr. Warren S. Thompson, director of the Scripps Foundation at Miami University, warned that in the East, "only a slightly higher level of living and a modi-

cum of public health work" could send the population up in the next decades.

"The poverty-stricken and crowded peoples of these non-industrialized lands can be raised out of their misery only slowly, Dr. Thompson declared, "even with very liberal assistance from the West, and the factor which will do most to retard the alleviation of their misery is their own birth rate."

Miss Taeuber called for the application of scientific method to fertility and those social and psychological factors associated with it, as well as to mortality and the other components of a population balance.

Science News Letter, March 10, 1951

METALLURGY

Pinch of Arsenic Improves Lead Covering

► A "PINCH" of arsenic added to lead alloys used to cover underground cables carrying electric power gives longer life and greater strength to the alloy, according to a report issued by the University of Illinois. By a pinch is meant one-tenth of one percent of arsenic.

Hundreds of millions of dollars are invested in these underground electric cables. They vary in size up to three inches in diameter, and some carry as high as 130,000 volts. Lead is used for the covering because it is resistant to moisture and corrosion. Both tin-lead and copper-lead alloys are used.

These alloys, however, sometimes develop cracks due to expansion and contraction with changing temperatures. Costly repair work is then necessary because the insulating oil used in the cable escapes.

The arsenic-containing alloy not only adds strength to the electric cables but also permits heavier electrical loads because higher pressure can be used for the insulating oil within them. The benefit of arsenic in the alloys was determined in the university's engineering experiment station by Prof. Curtis W. Dollins.

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