

PUBLIC HEALTH

Hunger Conquest Sought

► THE CONQUEST of hunger by birth control is the only ultimate solution to the problem of adequately feeding the increasing population of underdeveloped countries, M. Willcox Perrin, chairman of the Wellcome Foundation in London, told the First International Conference on Science in the Advancement of New States meeting at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovoth, Israel.

The British authority advocated worldwide birth control as necessary if world population increases continue at the present rate. But until this solution has world-wide acceptance, he advised new methods and resources for increasing food supplies be exploited to keep up with present growth rates.

Changing dietary habits to provide a better balance between protein and carbohydrates would be one aid. Mr. Perrin said that greater utilization of the oceans as a food source also would vastly increase food supplies. Proper application of veterinary science would increase meat sources by raising the productivity of the animal population.

These are stop-gap measures and no substitute for a universally accepted plan for birth control, Mr. Perrin declared.

"Birth regulation" rather than "birth control" is the answer to the population problem advocated by Dr. M. C. Shelesnyak of the Weizmann Institute who said the population problem "is not limited to the population of man." It includes, he suggested, all animal life, "even microorganisms useful to man as well as to pathogens."

Birth regulation "allows for the concept of increasing where desired, as in the case of

livestock (food source); decreasing, as in the case of pest animals; or maintaining a specific level," the Israeli scientist said.

Effective regulation requires more understanding of the basic physiology of reproduction than is presently available. "Unfortunately, we are still lacking much of the basic information concerning physiological mechanism of conception," Dr. Shelesnyak said. "But since we know the areas requiring research, efforts in that direction, particularly from young scientists in the young states, should yield the necessary knowledge."

Opposed to birth control or "regulation" as the answer to the struggle against hunger, Dr. Josue de Castro of the University of Brazil said the applied knowledge of science and technology can eliminate the need for such control.

"We should not be frightened by the fact that each day in the world there appear 80,000 new mouths to feed, provided that they are matched by 80,000 brains to think and create and 80,000 pairs of hands to work and produce."

Dr. de Castro said science soon may make possible the use of sub-polar and even polar regions as well as the desert area. Food production could be multiplied 500 times by fertilizing and utilizing these large areas of land.

Questions from the newly created Asian-African nations to the lecturers made it clear that for them the conquest of hunger is an immediate and pressing problem; and they want an answer that can be productive now.

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GENERAL SCIENCE

Disease Retards Africa

► DISEASE has held back progress in Africa more than any other single factor, Prof. Saul Adler of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, told the delegates from 41 nations attending the International Conference on Science in the Advancement of New States at the Weizmann Institute.

African sleeping sickness (Af. trypanosomiasis) affecting man and domestic animals in the Dark Continent has limited and in some areas completely prevented the use of domestic animals. The African has had to depend on his own muscles.

Prof. Adler said sleeping sickness "is directly and indirectly responsible for a backward agriculture and malnutrition and occasional depopulation."

Advances in applied biology and medicine eventually will overcome "this formidable barrier of disease," the scientist predicted.

Control and eradication of diseases of man and domestic animals must be simultaneously associated with agricultural reform and increased food production if poverty and malnutrition are to be alle-

viated, Prof. Adler cautioned, because of the increase in population that invariably follows medical progress.

Dr. Walter C. Lowdermilk, an agronomist from Berkeley, Calif., also viewed the application of modern agricultural production and conservation as the main hope of developing the underdeveloped new nations.

Dr. Lowdermilk was the prime architect and supporter for the proposed Jordan Valley Authority that would have harnessed the waters of the Jordan so that arid areas in Israel and Jordan might be irrigated and made fertile. Israel accepted the plan, but hostilities between Arabs and Israelis have prevented Jordan's agreement.

He proposed a plan for making the best use of soil and water. Dr. Lowdermilk's program includes training the farmer in new methods adapted to his economic ability to support and carry them through; national resource surveys and research programs for local needs, and agro-industrial, nationally supported pilot projects confined to an area within development capacity

where the inhabitants have a community of interests in the project.

These projects, he said, also would serve as training centers to develop personnel who could then set up similar projects in other localities.

Prof. Lowdermilk said "Israel as a pilot plant for new states is most useful because it was an old and abused land which has been redeemed."

The conference was the project of Abba Eban, president of the Weizmann Institute.

Technical aid agreements between the Republic of Congo and Israel and between the State of Nepal and Israel resulted from the conference.

The Rev. Solomon Caulker, vice president of Fura Bay University in Sierra Leone, a British colony in West Africa, the oldest university south of the Sahara, said, "I would like to see our students coming to the Weizmann Institute."

Of the 122 official representatives, speakers and observers, 22 were leading scientists, educators and economists from the United States. A training program for future physics teachers was made available through the conference to African and Asian states by U. S. scientists.

Representatives from Africa, Asia, Europe, South and North America have endorsed a proposal by the Eastern Nigerian finance minister, Dr. S. E. Imoke, that this conference be an annual event.

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ZOOLOGY

Rare Amazon Longhair Sets Captivity Record

See Front Cover

► THE RED, LONG-HAIRED Uakari is a rare monkey from the upper Amazon basin that has set a record of five years in captivity in the National Zoological Park, Washington, D. C. This is longer than any Uakari is known to have lived in captivity.

The senior keeper for small mammals of the Park, Bert Barker, said that this monkey, which normally lives two-thirds of its life in trees, is difficult to keep in captivity. Two years is generally the maximum time the Uakari can be kept alive in captivity.

The keeper said this type monkey is very affectionate and has therefore been given a small companion, a squirrel monkey.

Today, this Uakari monkey, shown on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, is strong and healthy.

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AGRICULTURE

Corn Tasseling Time Should Be Watering Time

► FARMERS who produce top corn yields apply water when the corn begins to tassel, according to Gordon Hoff, an extension agronomist at the New Mexico State University. He said corn enters a particularly critical period when the tassels begin to show, and dry soil at this time may cause the pollen to fall before the silks appear, resulting in barren or partly-filled ears.

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