

Greatest College Chance

➤ THERE IS a one-in-three chance that an American child born in 1943 is now receiving a full-time higher education whereas the ratio for a British child of the same age is only one-in-12.

For a Canadian child, the chances are one-in-six; for the Australian, one-in-nine; and for the Russian, one-in-12, the same as for the British child, according to Sir Eric Ashby, Master of Clare College, Cambridge, who is president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

The number of degrees that are awarded compared with the number of students who enroll for degrees is about 85% in Britain, Sir Eric said. This is considerably higher than Canada with 66%, U. S. somewhere between 50% and 60%, and Australia with less than 60%.

Urging that there be greater investment in science for future advancement, Sir Eric said that the need was first for scientists, and second for a public opinion sufficiently well informed and enlightened to give financial support to scientists.

Education is the key to both of these prerequisites, he told the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Aberdeen, Scotland.

STATISTICS

Divorce Rate Half-Truth

➤ IT IS OFTEN said that one marriage in four today ends in divorce. However, like most sweeping generalizations, it is a half-truth at best.

True, there are 1.6 million marriages and 400,000 divorces a year in the U.S. today, but the "one in four" statement is an oversimplification.

One reason is that the 400,000 divorces to be granted during 1963 will not be to the couples getting married this year, but to couples married at times ranging from last year to half a century ago.

To get an accurate picture of the "mortality rate" for marriages of any year, one must compare the number of divorces now being given to couples married in that year with the total number married in that same year.

This total, which for the past 20 years averages only 1.3 million or so, is the figure which should be compared with the 400,000.

Although there is no way to predict how many 1963 marriages will end in divorce, it is possible to note trends and make an educated guess. Perhaps the most significant figure is the percentage of the total number of married couples in the U.S. getting a divorce each year.

At the moment, the figure is one in every 109, or about 0.9%. If this annual divorce rate stays constant, at today's level the average couple has about three chances in ten of divorce, assuming that they both live 40 years after they marry.

However, both the annual divorce rate and the average life expectancy change. The annual divorce rate was 0.8% in 1920,

The president warned against the danger of obsolescence in science and education.

"The present generation of students will still be employed in the year 2000," Sir Eric said, "but long before then their degrees and diplomas—at any rate in science, technology and the social sciences—will have become obsolete."

The only students who can be sure of escaping obsolescence are those very few who will themselves become innovators, he said. "Our investment in the rest—the great majority of our human resources—will inevitably be devalued by technological and social change. Measures to combat obsolescence, therefore, become of prime importance."

Sir Eric called upon universities to establish departments outside the regular courses to keep scientists, engineers and technologists up-to-date. He urged employers to release scientists on full pay for sustained full-time courses every few years.

Only continuous innovation, renewal and rebirth of the education and qualifications of our intellectual leaders will, in Sir Eric's opinion, suffice in the feverish 37 years remaining in this century.

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0.6% in 1932, 1.8% in 1946 and 1% in 1953. The average life expectancy has risen steadily, and will probably continue to do so.

An individual couple's chances depend on many factors. Blue-collar workers have a higher divorce rate than white-collar. Urban residents are more prone to divorce than rural, non-whites more than whites.

Remarriages have less chance of success than first marriages. And, as is well known, teen-age marriages are particularly prone to failure.

• Science News Letter, 84:157 September 7, 1963

STATISTICS

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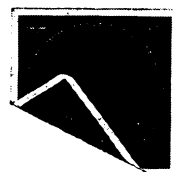
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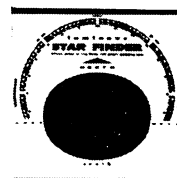


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