

behavioral sciences

SOCIOLOGY

Family law reform

Extensive reforms in family law, new grounds for divorce and repeal of all criminal abortion laws are among the recommendations that have gone out to state commissions dealing with the status of women.

The recommendations were made by the Citizen's Advisory Council on the Status of Women, a non-governmental group that acts in an advisory capacity to state commissions. It is headed by former Senator Maurine Neuberger, of Oregon.

The council believes that family law should change to reflect the reality of a partnership in marriage. At a financial level, this means new property rights for the woman; a 50-50 division of property earned during the course of the marriage is suggested. The council points out that even in eight states with community property laws the wife has no legal say in how money is spent. Texas, however, has reformed its law to give equal management rights to husband and wife.

The council also recommends that grounds for divorce should include desertion and one year's voluntary separation.

Other recommendations are: Alimony should not be used to redress wrongs; illegitimate children should have the same rights as others, and custody of children should be awarded to the best parent without automatic preference for the woman.

SOCIAL RESEARCH

Negative tax tested

Effects of the negative income tax are being tested on 1,000 New Jersey families. The three-year experiment, which began in August, will evaluate the social, economic and political effects on poor families of a guaranteed, adequate annual income.

The negative tax works inversely to normal income tax. Money is paid to families falling below the poverty line, according to their income level and number of dependents. Though controversial, the negative tax is being seriously considered as a more viable alternative than welfare to handling the financial needs of the poor.

Several different payment schedules, some more generous than others, are being tested in New Jersey with \$4 million in antipoverty funds. In one plan every dollar the family earns means a 50 cent reduction in negative tax. The traditional welfare system is to deduct all earned money, which, according to critics, reduces the incentive to work.

PSYCHOLOGY

The sound of beer

A Danish psychologist has advice on how to get the most out of beer: Harmonize it with sound.

It seems that each beer has its own best sound and that beer tastes best at the note of harmony. The problem for the average drinker, of course, is to find the right pitch. Kristian Holt-Hansen of Copenhagen University used 15 people to harmonize Carlsberg Lager and Carlsberg Elephant Beer.

When the taped sound was right, beer tasted "rich," "full-bodied" or "smooth." One subject felt warm and happy; another felt relaxed, others described a "total experience."

But when pitch deviated slightly above or below the note of harmony, the beer became "insipid," "watery," "bitter," "thin," "inane" and "stale like lukewarm water."

Beyond this range, harmony and disharmony fade away and taste and sound are experienced separately.

Dr. Holt-Hansen suggests that there is a point of cross-over where different senses join to create a single experience. In the brain the centers for taste and smell are located near hearing centers.

After testing 20 different samples, the psychologist is inclined to believe that each beverage has its own particular harmonizing pitch. But, as he points out in the latest issue (August) of *PERCEPTUAL AND MOTOR SKILLS*, finding that pitch is time consuming.

PSYCHOLOGY

Cool students of the '60's

Today's college students are more inhibited and over-controlled than those of the 1940's and 1950's, says Dr. Douglas H. Heath of Haverford College, Pa.

They are prematurely serious, prematurely committed to some profession or academic major. In addition, many seem to have skipped their adolescence if not their childhood, Dr. Heath believes. He bases his conclusions on study of personality tests given entering freshmen for the years 1944 through 1964.

In the intellectualized pursuit of knowledge, the cool student of the mid 1960's isolates himself from warm, tender feelings; he feels emotionally bankrupt, says Dr. Heath. Feelings of tenderness, faithfulness or devotion cause him anxiety, because their expression raises the specter of sentimentality or the threat of rejection by others his age.

Intellectualism expresses itself in a second way: Some 60 per cent of today's students believe their work would benefit the world, if given a chance, whereas only 45 per cent of earlier students thought so.

Dr. Heath suggests that loneliness may be a strong motive pushing students toward the hippie life. These changes represent, not maladaptation, but the constant pressure of society, Dr. Heath says in the Oct. 21 *MODERN MEDICINE*.

PSYCHOLOGY

Federal ban challenged

A group of prominent psychologists has protested a Federal riot ruling which prohibits the Departments of Labor and Health, Education and Welfare from paying wages or giving service to individuals convicted of riot activity. The prohibition, contained in the Appropriation Act for those departments and others will rule out much research on the inner city and stymie rehabilitation efforts, says the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.

"We believe that such a regulation is unacceptable. Persons convicted of crimes have paid their penalty," the society council stated.

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