

SOCIOLOGY—PUBLIC HEALTH

"Christian Front" Tactics Denounced to Conference

White House Conference on Children in a Democracy Hears of Needs of Youngsters for Health and School

STRONGLY denouncing the Klan, Silver Shirts, and "various so-called 'Christian Front' organizations which belie their name by deliberately stirring up race hatreds," a report on the plight of America's minority children led the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy meeting in Washington to plan ways of helping these child millions.

How many children in the United States fall under the handicap of being treated as minority individuals, even the conference, with its resources of tracing facts, could not be certain. Thirteen million children less than 16 years old are of some race or color other than the majority American pattern of white and native born. Somewhere between five and ten million of these children have problems fitting the modern world's definition of a minority group. The conference worded its own definition: "those subject to prejudice and discrimination whose members can be readily identified by physical and cultural differences."

Most numerous in minority groups are Negro children, but handicaps of discrimination are also felt from time to time, and from place to place, by young Indians, Mexicans, Jews, and some foreign-born, the conference was told.

Handicaps which beset the minority child are apt to be unequal chances for schooling, recreation, medical care, and economic advancement; varying degrees of social exclusion; and most frequent and serious—poverty.

Plea for Tolerance

A plea for greater tolerance and a warning to consider possible results to the United States' future if five to ten million children grow up lacking ordinary opportunities, and with the feeling that they are "different" and "inferior" was sounded in the report on the minority question studied by the conference.

The conference, numbering some 500 members, shaped up a final report and recommendations as to how the United States should improve conditions for all of its 36,000,000 youngest who need a

better start in life. Recommendations cover a wide range of needs of young Americans, including adequate schools, play facilities, shelter and security in the home, medical and health provisions, religious teaching, child labor regulations.

"Hard, uncomfortable facts" set forth for the conference to grapple with include such posers as these:

Not merely thousands, but millions of American children belong to families that live in distress or constant insecurity, trapped by economic circumstances from which they cannot escape without outside aid.

More than 26,000,000 people under 20 years of age live where there is no library to provide information and recreation.

One-half the children in the United States get no formal religious instruction, thus getting little or none of the "resources of religion."

One million of the 3,000,000 farm tenant families move each year. And many farm houses are "slum" structures.

Not in School

Nearly 1,000,000 children who are the right ages to be in elementary school are not in school. Hundreds of thousands of boys and girls in migrant, rural, and Negro families have school opportunities rated "deplorable or entirely absent."

In large areas, child workers are exploited in industry on farms, in factories, street trades, domestic service. Many do work that is hazardous or injurious to health.

There are still more than 50,000 deaths of infants each year, between two and twelve months of age, and many of these babies need not die.

Hundreds of thousands of children suffer from physical handicaps which might be corrected.

Problems of children not yet solved include some new to the United States in recent years. Boys and girls who support parents unable to get jobs create one topsy-turvy situation, leading to dis-

torted relations in family life. Smallness of modern families, and the dropping out of uncles, cousins, and aunts from the home circle, narrow down opportunities of young Americans to share their burdens and joys; and the small family does not always adjust to the greater emotional load. These are two random examples of many strange things happening to family patterns and affecting the growing-up years of the new crop of citizens.

But—"however far-reaching these changes, democracy still looks to the family as its foundation," the conferees confidently reported. Taking as a keynote, "the family as the threshold of democracy," a special committee of men and women interested in family problems discussed ways and means whereby a family can give children a good start.

Ways of smoothing out inequalities in chances for an education were discussed by another of the eleven groups into which the conference was divided. Few states parcel out their school funds so that districts with many children and little money get their share of good schooling.

The nation is concentrating most of its educational effort on groups having the fewest children, said a report on education. Farmers support 31% of the country's children on nine per cent of the national income. Educational inequalities have been brought to public attention for over 50 years; something more should be done about it, the meeting was told.

President Roosevelt joined the conference Friday evening, Jan. 19, in the historic East Room of the White House, when the final conference report was presented to him. (*Turn to next page*)

President Roosevelt Says:

"The steps we take today will determine how far we can go tomorrow, and in what direction.

"I believe with you that if anywhere in the country any child lacks opportunity for home life, health protection, education, or moral and spiritual development, the strength of the Nation and its ability to cherish and advance the principles of democracy are thereby weakened.

"I ask all our fellow citizens who are within the sound of my voice to consider themselves identified with the work of this Conference. I ask you all to study and to discuss with friends and neighbors the program it has outlined, and how its objectives can be realized. May the security and happiness of every boy and girl in our land be our concern, our personal concern, from now on."

—President Franklin D. Roosevelt, addressing the White House Conference.

Recommendations from these White House conferences on child welfare, of which this of 1940 is the fourth since 1909, will provide a yardstick for state and city officials and welfare groups, in their planning during the forthcoming decade.

Science News Letter, January 27, 1940

GENETICS

Cousins Recently Born Are Brother and Sisters

CHILDREN with two sets of parents, but brother and sisters, nevertheless. That is how the geneticist sees the case reported in New York of the three babies born to identical twin fathers and identical twin mothers.

Benjamin and Hyman Rubin, identical twins, married Sylvia and Ruth Reisman, also identical twins, according to this report. Now one couple are parents of identical twin girls and the other couple have a boy born just four days before.

The little boy is a cousin of the little girls, but is, genetically speaking, their brother. Since his father is identical in heredity to the father of the girls and since his mother is identical to their mother, he is exactly as closely related to them as though he had been born to the same parents.

This is no mere play upon words, but is scientifically accurate. For identical twins have their origin in a single egg cell. They have drawn exactly the same set of genes in the vital grab-bag of human heredity. So far as the traits they can pass on to their children are concerned, they are interchangeable.

Scientists reserve a special welcome for the birth of identical twins. The reason is that no scientific experiment can be completely satisfactory without the inevitable control. When one laboratory rat is fed a new drug or given a new serum, the effects can be judged only when another rat, otherwise like the experimental animal, goes without—when there is a “control.”

In educational or other experiments on man, the “control” is often missing. In the identical twin, Nature provides an ideal control—two human chicks from the same single mother egg cell. Two persons with equal potentialities.

In the Rubin babies, Nature has been more than generous and provided, in addition to this “control,” another in the form of another baby born of parents exactly the same genetically and at practically the same time.

Science News Letter, January 27, 1940

PUBLIC HEALTH

Health of Industrial Workers Protected by Examinations

Non-Compulsory Program Worked Out by State Industrial Commission in Wisconsin; Employer Pays

HEALTH of industrial workers in Wisconsin is being protected by a non-compulsory program of physical examination worked out by the state's Industrial Commission, Harry A. Nelson, director of the Workmen's Compensation Department of the commission, reported at the Second Annual Congress on Industrial Health. The congress was held under the auspices of the American Medical Association in Chicago.

The program represents the recommendations of labor organizations, employers, physicians and insurance companies. It is in no way compulsory. It includes standards and safeguards designed to meet the approval of both employers and employees.

In concerns adopting the program,

every employe is examined before employment by a physician selected and paid by the employer. Time lost from work by employes and transportation expenses in connection with the examinations are also paid by the employer. Following the pre-employment examination, periodic reexaminations are given at such times as the examining physician directs. The intervals between examinations depends both on the employe's condition and the type of work he is doing.

Conditions threatening the employe's health can be detected by such examinations in time, it is hoped, to ward off the health menace, either by appropriate treatment or by change in working operations and conditions at the plant.

Science News Letter, January 27, 1940

MEDICINE

New Infantile Paralysis Leads May Reveal Way It Spreads

Saliva Will Be Examined for Virus; Disease Spread Now Seems More Like Diphtheria Than Like Typhoid

NEW LEADS on infantile paralysis research make the eventual conquest of this crippling childhood plague seem excitingly near at hand. Research plans announced by Basil O'Connor, president, National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, show that scientists are following new trails in their search for ways of preventing the disease.

Saliva from mouths of infantile paralysis patients both before paralysis sets in and during the paralytic stage is going to be examined for the virus that causes the disease. The clue for this line of search comes from the recent discovery of the virus in sewage from localities that were gripped by infantile paralysis outbreaks. The virus was also discovered in the intestinal discharges of patients and of healthy persons who did not have infantile paralysis but who had been in

contact with patients. This proved the existence of healthy carriers of infantile paralysis, akin to the healthy carriers of typhoid fever.

How do the healthy carriers and the patients spread their germs to others? The saliva tests may give the answer to that question.

Infantile paralysis, it is now believed, spreads more like diphtheria than like typhoid fever. In infantile paralysis, as in diphtheria, there must be direct contact with a patient or a healthy carrier of the germs. In typhoid fever, water or food may spread the germs, which are discharged from the body with its waste matter.

If infantile paralysis germs, discharged with body wastes, were spread by water or food, scientists would expect everyone who used the same water and food sup-