

also established that the density decreased very slowly with distance from the center throughout the outer layer." He also

proposed that a large proportion of molecules is present in the atmosphere of these stars.

*Science News Letter, January 18, 1941*

## NUTRITION

## Nutrition a "Must" Item in Hemisphere Solidarity

### Tropical American Diets Lack Calcium and Vitamin A But Advice To Drink Milk Would Be Impractical

**F**OOD and nutrition should be a "must" item for consideration in a program for Western Hemisphere solidarity, Dr. George R. Cowgill, associate professor of physiological chemistry at Yale University, declared in a De Lamar lecture at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health.

Many of the dietaries in common use in tropical America are "far from satisfactory in several respects," Dr. Cowgill found from his own observations during two summers in Panama and other tropical American countries. Dr. Cowgill made his studies of the possibilities of nutritional research among the natives in Panama at the request of Dr. Herbert C. Clark, director of the Gorgas Memorial Laboratory.

Tropical American diets lack calcium and vitamin A particularly, Dr. Cowgill found. Advice to consume more milk to make up the calcium deficiency would be impractical, he pointed out, because a dairy industry is practically non-existent except in particular sections of tropical America.

The Mexican Indians use lime in removing the bran layer from the corn kernel and this results in addition of calcium to the final edible product, probably accounting partly for the splendid condition of the teeth seen in most of these people. Other tropical Americans might be helped to get more calcium in their diets by development of other similar uses for lime, Dr. Cowgill suggested.

Better returns on American capital invested in development of natural resources in tropical America are to be had from improvement, through food and other means, of the health of the local tropical laborers, Dr. Cowgill pointed out.

"If the purely humanitarian consideration of improvement in the health of all groups of people, regardless of locality, race, and other considerations, does not constitute sufficient reason for becoming interested in nutritional problems of tropical America," he said, "then I offer the one just stated which is related definitely to an enlightened self-interest and a matter of dollars and cents."

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## ANTHROPOLOGY

## Study of Apes Points Way Towards Better Human Beings

**H**ERE is a prescription for our ailing planet, wracked with wars and woes:

"What this world needs is better human beings: man, woman, and child, in every stratum of its population and in every country."

The doctor is Prof. Earnest A. Hooton, Harvard University specialist in anthropology, science of man.

"The world chaos of today is due to the debased intelligence of the mass of 'civilized' men and to nothing else."

So Prof. Hooton diagnoses the trouble in a new book of lecture essays provocatively titled, "Why Men Behave Like Apes, and Vice Versa" (*Reviewed SNL, this issue*).

Calling degenerate behavior the rule, not the exception, among human beings, this anthropologist says that man's biological fiber has rotted by indolence and inertia. If human beings did not stand on two feet, they would lose their erect posture, and the same principle of disuse can cause mental and physical faculties

to deteriorate, Prof. Hooton sharply warns.

Machines and charity get special blame from this critic of man's defects, who says that they cause this atrophy by making mankind idle. As he puts it, they "have made man into something less respectable than an ape through sheer atrophy of function."

Warfare is seen as another force dragging man down, and medical science is taken to task for keeping alive millions of diseased and disabled without sufficient knowledge to cure them.

Inferior human stuff lacking in moral stamina and intelligence—so runs this anthropologist's terrible description of the generation in Europe born after the great and weakening World War, and now struggling in coils of another war.

Pathologically suggestible is another term applied to post-war generations. This trait of willingness to believe without thinking is so sweeping Germany that Prof. Hooton says the whole



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nation seems in the grip of the mental disease paranoia.

In this serious state of man's affairs, the average person would not expect help from apes and monkeys. But in the zoo and animal laboratory anthropologists seek important basic information for understanding human behavior. Studies of these primates shed light on the extent to which body characters predetermine distinctive behavior.

Chimpanzees, whose personalities and habits have been studied most closely, have about the same keenness of sight, hearing, and smell as man, very similar emotional expressions, not nearly so much imaginative power as man, apparently. Chimpanzees show altruism by sharing food, they do social service work by cleaning and grooming one another. Chimpanzees vary widely in personality, from the lazy to the industrious, bright to stupid, bold to timid.

The great apes, says Prof. Hooton, all stand on the threshold of human behavior. He adds, perhaps they are wise in forbearing to enter.

If humans do not turn their boasted intelligence to biologically reclaiming man, civilization will perish, warns the anthropologist. Birth control and sterilization he rates helpful in man's biological salvation, but negative measures are not sufficient.

Vastly more important than eliminating the inferior, urges Prof. Hooton, is the need for medical, biological, and social scientists to join forces for intensive research. After perhaps a million years of life on earth, man still has not determinedly tried to find out what the human capacities in the individual are, and by what means individuals can be improved by better breeding.

Along with billions for defense, Prof. Hooton would have nations spend a few millions to find out how to improve the quality of the human organism.

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### In a Changing World

**E**CONOMIC and social problems faced by American farmers and ranchers are the main theme of the new U. S. Department of Agriculture yearbook, *Farmers in a Changing World*. (Reviewed, SNL, this issue) Hon. Henry A. Wallace, who was Secretary of Agriculture when the preparation of the book was started, and Hon. Claude R. Wickard, who had succeeded him in office by the time it was completed, both stress the fact that changes are still going on—all the more rapidly because of the new crisis in our national life that has arisen in the past few months—and that nothing in its chapters is to be taken as final.

Because of the strengthened trend toward national unification that has marked the coming of the crisis, unusual interest will attach to two chapters in the book's second section, "The Farmer's Stake in Greater Industrial Production," by Louis H. Bean, and "The City Man's Stake in the Land," by Arthur P. Chew. Mr. Bean calls attention to the strain placed upon the interdependence of industry and agriculture by their contrary behavior during depressions: in agriculture, production re-

mains essentially stable while prices decline heavily, whereas in industry prices remain essentially stable but production is drastically reduced. Yet cutting prices of industrial products will not tempt farmers to buy at such times; volume of agricultural purchasing, says Mr. Bean, is more likely to follow the farmers' cash income than the prices of commodities offered in his market. He calls attention to a "middle way" that has been proposed, involving simultaneous encouragement of private capital outlays and increasing public investment, together with an expansion of community consumption to supplement private consumption.

Mr. Chew looks closely at the urban problems created indirectly by distress on the land. Depressed agricultural prices force farmers to mine their soil in order to meet debt and tax payments; this in turn exposes the soil to erosion and reduces farm productivity and value, and thus a vicious downward spiral is started, that ends with the crowding of dispossessed farmers into cities to compete for jobs in overcrowded industries.

Absentee ownership of the land, as Mr. Chew sees it, is harmful to urban interests rather than beneficial to them, as might appear at first glance. Measures to restore and maintain operator ownership, he contends, will work for the long-range good of cities as well as of the farm population.

Other chapters in the yearbook look through the economist's spectacles on problems usually thought of primarily from the viewpoint of the natural sciences: soil conservation, forest resources, rangeland management, rural electrification.

Not all the opinions expressed in the book are in perfect agreement. Gove Hambidge, the editor, sees in this a healthy expression of democracy at work. He says:

"A certain unity of viewpoint will be evident throughout most of the book, but there are also a good many differences. The book does not represent official policy; it makes no claim to final wisdom; it simply explores agricultural problems, and the reader will sometimes find official policies treated with skepticism, controversial viewpoints defended, and things discussed that do not enter into any policy. It would have been possible to avoid such differences. But the great merit of democracy, we Americans believe, is that it not only permits but encourages the expression of different viewpoints."

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