

POPULATION

America Warned Against Axis Ideal of Huge Families

A Woman Should Do All Her Child-Bearing Before She Is 35; Should Have Not More Than Seven Children

WARNING American mothers against huge flocks of eight or nine children—such as Axis powers encourage—Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, obstetrician of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, told America how to attain greater efficiency in motherhood to build national strength.

"The nation should encourage the younger women to bear the children," said Dr. Guttmacher, addressing the conference on strengthening our population for national defense, called in New York by the Birth Control Federation of America.

For best results in producing healthy infants and reducing death and invalidism among mothers, Dr. Guttmacher advocated:

A woman should have her first baby after the age of 20 and before 25, if optimum results are to be expected.

On the same terms, she should finish her child-bearing career by the time she is 35.

"Purely from the medical point of view, omitting social and economic factors," he said, "it is quite safe for the normal woman to bear five children. She may even have six or seven, but it

is most unwise for her to have eight or more."

It is probably ideal, he added, if children are born 27 to 30 months apart.

Impressive data have become available in America within the past year, Dr. Guttmacher emphasized, which make it possible now to show the health hazards of producing a great number of children. In two investigations of childbirth records, one made by U. S. Public Health Service scientists in New York State, and the other by Dr. N. J. Eastman who surveyed over 45,000 cases at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, the same striking facts are disclosed.

Emphasizing these findings as "extraordinary," Dr. Guttmacher said that they show the birth of second and third babies to be attended by least risk of maternal death. Risk of bearing first and fourth babies is about equal. After the fourth child, danger increases with each birth, until having the ninth baby brings serious risk. Having a ninth baby is 330% more dangerous than having a third, Dr. Eastman reported. The Public Health investigation rates it even more serious—344%. This fact, Dr. Guttmacher added, was news. It "con-

firmed what a few iconoclastic observers had come to suspect."

Pronouncing the policy of encouraging large families inefficient from a national standpoint, Dr. Guttmacher pointed out that a woman who dies bearing a ninth child leaves probably six or more half-orphaned. Production of very large families is also a source of invalidism to mothers, and the infant death loss rises acutely as births reach the fifth child.

Summing up what he called "one obstetrician's attitude toward the problem of maternal health and the nation's strength," Dr. Guttmacher said:

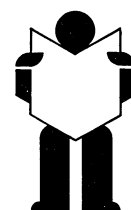
"The nation will not be strengthened by the wastage of haphazard pregnancy. It can be strengthened by efficient reproduction through selective pregnancy, selecting those in whom pregnancy is ill-advised and offering them the means of avoiding conception; selecting the young and fit to bear children and through education to make them realize the privilege and responsibility of planned parenthood."

Science News Letter, February 8, 1941

For Population Blues

PEOPLE of the United States were given a new prescription for routing the population blues when Dr. Halbert Dunn, chief statistician of the Census Bureau's vital statistics, advised a sharp change of viewpoint for turn-

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ing our population catastrophe into a glorious adventure.

Census returns confirm forecasts that the United States must prepare to deal with increasing numbers of older people and a slowed down birth rate, Dr. Dunn told the conference on strengthening our population for national defense.

Advising Americans to cease worrying over dire consequences of this trend, imagining empty school houses, unbearable taxes for pensions, huge unemployment and other oft-predicted calamities, Dr. Dunn said that the population problems can be solved without much trouble. The difficulty is, he explained, that "we insist on trying to solve these problems in the light of the economic and social structure of yesterday."

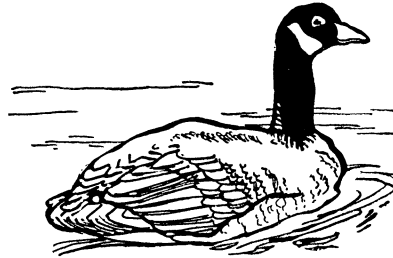
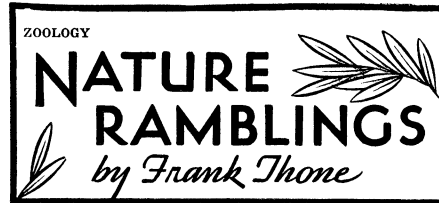
"The population problems cannot be solved," he declared, "unless we are willing to face the basic readjustments necessary. We must be willing to challenge every dictum which we have been reared to consider as unquestionable and which stands as a barrier. Such axioms as: the sacredness of human life, the right of the individual to have a baby, the right to own national resources personally, the sovereignty of a nation."

Suggesting that our population catastrophe might be changed into a glorious adventure, if we can change our viewpoint, the population expert declared:

"Perhaps we value our particular social structure too highly. Perhaps we cannot solve these problems with an economic system which has always seemed like a rock of Gibraltar to us. The real Gibraltar is now in danger. London is in flames. Yet from the wreckage, a new Britain is being reborn."

Science News Letter, February 8, 1941

Ten doctors of the Mayo Foundation are taking a civilian pilot training course to improve methods of giving *physical tests* to prospective fliers.



War and Wildlife

WILDLIFE in Great Britain is feeling the effects of war in numerous ways, states a note in the weekly journal, *Nature*.

Sand dunes and lonely islands along the coasts, suddenly given active human populations as Britons guard against invasion, have to that extent ceased to be desirable nesting places for wildfowl, which are either migrating elsewhere or suffering a decline in numbers. Inland, something of the same kind is occurring, as rural parks are tramped over by brigades of men in training.

Another thing that has disturbed wildlife has been the redistribution of British industry, especially the establishment of factories in rural areas, to make discovery and attack by the Nazi air raiders more difficult. This has driven many game birds and animals out of sanctuaries where they have hitherto been undisturbed. Added to this is the increased pollution of inland waters by factory wastes, in both old and new industrial areas, with considerable loss of fish life.

Breaking up of great estates has disrupted the pattern of game protection, since the old-time gamekeepers have

found their occupation gone. This has been intensified also by the home-guard demands made upon these usually middle-aged men, because of their familiarity with the terrain to be defended against possible landings of parachutists and their skill with small-arms. A result of this diversion of gamekeepers' attention has been the rapid increase in certain predatory bird and mammal species, such as owls, carrion crows, kestrels, foxes and otter, with a possible slower rise in numbers of badgers and ravens.

Changes in plant life may result from the devastation spread by mass bombing raids even in cities.

Science News Letter, February 8, 1941

CHEMISTRY

Dew Cause of Paint Failure Blamed on Sunshine

AUTOMOBILE owners are advised to garage their cars at night to preserve the finish, by Ralph J. Wirshing, assistant head of the general chemistry department of the General Motors Research Laboratories. This prevents dew from forming on the body, and dew seems to be an important factor in causing the failure of finish, he stated.

It has formerly been supposed, he declared, that ultraviolet rays in sunlight, the same ones that cause sunburn on human bodies, were mostly responsible for paint deterioration. However, carefully checked tests made over a period of several years in Florida, using a sunshine meter to gauge its intensity, revealed the curious result that worst failures occurred when there was least sunshine. Then it was discovered that failure was greater with exposure from midnight to noon than from noon to midnight.

This suggested that dew, followed by sunshine, was the offender, and confirmation was obtained when further tests were made with a "dew box" to produce it artificially. Rainfall, strangely, was found not to have the same effect as dew.

The research is being continued, Mr. Wirshing announced, and it is hoped to learn more of the exact mechanism by which the effect is produced, so that steps may be taken to prevent it.

Science News Letter, February 8, 1941

An archaeologist traces the concept of a Fuehrer or Duce back to 3000 B.C., when the superman admired in Persia was the *lion tamer*.

Preliminary figures on the *Soviet Union* census of January 1939 give a population of 170,467,000.

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