

Irish Population Decline

► IRELAND has a population problem in reverse.

Our youthful, vigorous President John F. Kennedy will visit a country whose people are not as productive as their farmland.

The Irish population has been declining since the potato blight in the 1840's. Not counting the leprechauns, the population was an estimated 3,000,000 in 1760. It jumped to 8,000,000 by 1841, and since that time has decreased to the 1760 level.

East Germany and North Viet-Nam are the only other countries with declining rates of growth. They owe their losses to emigration.

Emigration is only a part of Ireland's problem.

As its young people have left the Emerald Isle to seek better prospects in England and on the Continent, the marriage rate has sunk. There are, according to 1959 statistics, 5.4 marriages per 1,000 population—the lowest marriage rate in the Western world.

More than one-fourth of Irish women are still single at the age of 45. The average marrying age is 28. While a dim marital future drives women to other lands, poor

economic prospects send the young men off the farm.

After the devastation of the potato famine, farmlands were consolidated and the principle of primogeniture established. This meant that the oldest son, who would inherit the land, had to wait until his parents died before he could make a living for himself. The younger sons, inheriting no land under the system, had to leave to find jobs elsewhere.

The young people followed a pattern set at the time of the potato famine when emigration was the only alternative to disease or starvation.

Since that time, the population has never regained an upward rate of growth—despite the fact that Ireland is more than 90% Catholic and that its women, when they do marry, have more children than married women in Italy, France, Spain or the United States.

Now, at a time when overpopulation has become a major world problem, the Irish have a chance to make it their problem too. Small factories have been springing up in the countryside. With industrialization there are jobs for the young people and incentives to stay and marry in their homelands.

• Science News Letter, 83:367 June 8, 1963

GENERAL SCIENCE

News From Science Clubs

► MANY national and local organizations give opportunities for additional science experiences to students. The following have been reported to Science Clubs of America at 1719 N Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

The Brooklyn's Children's Museum in Brooklyn, N. Y., has formed the Junior Astronomical and Geological Societies for any interested students between the ages of 12 and 17. The only requirements are keen interest and curiosity about the stars and space or mineralogy, oceanography and other related fields of geology. Classes in telescope-making and use of the Museum's telescope or earth science laboratories, lectures and field trips are scheduled.

The South Shore Astronomy Society of Weymouth is conducting a free astronomy course and a telescope-making class at Bricknell Junior High School. For information, contact: John Nicholson, Director, 200 Winter St., Weymouth, Mass.

Branson High School's physical education department, Branson, Colo., cooperates with the school's Mu Alpha Mu Omega Science Club in holding a junior high and an elementary basketball game with a neighboring town. A pie auction is held between games. The science club receives all proceeds from the fund-raising activity to help finance their club program.

To facilitate a Specimen Exchange Program for teachers in the United States and elsewhere, Ward's maintains a file listing the names of those who wish to participate.

You may enroll by giving your name, school address, specimens you wish to obtain and those you could supply others in exchange. For information, write: Ward's Educational Service Department, P. O. Box 1712, Rochester 3, N. Y.

Projects in school conservation programs are featured in "Your Club Can Open the Door to Conservation Education," an idea-packet booklet, issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Club sponsors may obtain a free copy from the Forest Service, U.S.D.A., Washington 25, D. C.

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EDUCATION

New Learning Program For the Retired

► A PROGRAM of learning for learning's sake to meet the needs of the growing older-age group in the United States is being started by the newly established Oliver Wendell Holmes Association, New York.

The plan calls for retired professionals and laymen to get together and renew their contacts with the academic world of science, culture and public affairs.

The first of the educational institutes will be held this summer at Rensselaerville, N. Y., Dr. Kirtley F. Mather, Harvard University geologist and president of the new association, said. A series of pilot projects is planned.

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