

# NEWS DIGEST

## ◎ ◎ ◎ *Factors Influencing the Ratio of Children to Native-White Women in the United States*

THE editor regrets that due to the amount of material pressing for publication it has been impossible to include in this issue an article by Dr. Frank Lorimer of the Eugenics Research Association entitled, "Factors Influencing Ratios of Children to Native-White Women in the United States, 1900 and 1930." The article has already been distributed as a preprint to a limited mailing list and copies are available on request.

Dr. Lorimer's paper is a further discussion of problems raised by two earlier articles appearing in the *Bulletin*. One, by Edgar Sydenstricker,<sup>1</sup> on

<sup>1</sup>Sydenstricker, Edgar: A Study of the Fertility of Native-White Women in a Rural Area of Western New York. Milbank Memorial Fund *Quarterly Bulletin*, January, 1932, x, No. 1, pp. 17-32.

the basis of a study of Cattaraugus County, New York, suggested the possibility that the fertility of our native-white population might not be changing rapidly in areas in which the environment was not greatly changed. The other article, by Walter F. Willcox,<sup>2</sup> suggested that in those areas where the fertility of the native-white population had changed little, the lack of change was not due to an absence of declining fertility in the older native stock, but to the fact that such declines were masked when the entire native population was considered, by the recruiting of the native population from the children of the more prolific foreign-born population. It was suggested that this shift in composition of the native-white stock might account for the absence of a decline in the fertility

<sup>2</sup>Willcox, Walter F.: Changes Since 1900 in the Fertility of Native-White Wives. Milbank Memorial Fund *Quarterly Bulletin*, July, 1932, x, No. 3, pp. 191-202.

of the population observed in Cattaraugus County.

Dr. Lorimer points out that Professor Willcox's data are subject to further refinement. Professor Willcox had examined the ratios of children under five years of age with native-white fathers and mothers, to native-white married women of child-bearing age. But since the denominator of this fraction includes all native wives, the numerator should include all children with native mothers, and not simply those whose fathers were also native. Dr. Lorimer makes these corrections and finds that the fertility of the native-white population increased between 1900 and 1930 only in certain of the New England states, although it is "reasonable to suppose that the situation in some rural areas in New York, e.g. Cattaraugus County, is similar to the situation in northern New England."

In the case of certain states, Dr. Lorimer believes Professor Willcox's explanation, that the increase or relatively slight decline in fertility is due to the infiltration of foreign stock into the native population, is correct. But in the case of the three states of northern New England he believes it is not adequate. For these three states he shows

that even if one assumes that the foreign stock of the native population is exceptionally fertile, the fertility of the older native stocks would still have had to remain unchanged since 1900 in order to yield the ratios observed in 1930 for the entire native-white group.

He concludes, therefore, "that we are still confronted with a stabilized effective natality in the old native stocks in some rural areas, in the face of a sharp decline in natality in most parts of the country. Thus the census data reveal a situation which is essentially identical with that revealed by the special study in Cattaraugus County. . . . The outstanding significance of the data which we have reviewed seems to be that the natality of the native-white population in some sections of the United States may be approaching a fair degree of stabilization, but at different levels in different types of communities—with conspicuous differentials between rural-farm, rural-nonfarm, and urban groups in most localities."

◎ ◎ ◎ *The Relation Between Social Status and Fertility is Discussed*

"THE Bearing of the Differential Rates of Increase Among

Social Classes upon the Quality of the American Population" was the topic of discussion at a joint meeting of the Population Association of America and the New York branch of the American Statistical Association held at the Town Hall Club on May 12, 1933.

The leading papers were presented by Dr. Frank W. Notestein, staff member of the Milbank Memorial Fund, who discussed the relation between social status and fertility, and by Professor Frank Hankins of Smith College, who discussed the biological and environmental significance of differential fertility to the quality of the population. A discussion of these papers was led by Dr. Frank Lorimer of the Eugenics Research Association, Dr. Louis I. Dublin of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, and Dr. Earl T. Engle of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University.

Dr. Notestein called attention to the fact that the "lower" classes had long been more fertile than the "upper" and that the differences have been increasing since before the beginning of the century. At present, he said, the white-collar classes were not reproducing rapidly enough to maintain equal per-

manent replacement, but the unskilled laborer class and the agricultural population appear to be reproducing more rapidly than is required to maintain their numbers.

⊙ ⊙ ⊙ *Vaginitis Study in Bellevue-Yorkville District is Completed*

THE results of four and a half years' study of the prevalence and control of childhood vaginitis in the Bellevue-Yorkville district of New York City have just been made available under the title, "Cervico-Vaginitis of Gonococcal Origin in Children." A limited number of reprints of the report are procurable from the Fund, which financed the study through the Bellevue-Yorkville Health Demonstration.

Agencies dealing with girl children had felt acutely the need for fuller information about certain aspects of vaginitis, a problem of medical, sociological, sanitary, and economic importance, when in July, 1927, the research project was inaugurated at the suggestion of Dr. Shirley W. Wynne, Commissioner of Health of New York City.

The committee appointed, composed of experts in the medical and social fields, outlined a

far-reaching program providing for intensive research. This included clinical, bacteriological, and sociological methods of diagnosis and procedure; comparative methods of treatment; laboratory technic; social service and follow-up; and history forms for medical and social data.

The objectives of the study were briefly as follows: (1) to study each individual case in its entirety, including a complete physical examination; (2) to determine if possible the causes of the local conditions, evaluating the clinical, pathological, and bacteriological findings; and (3) to compare the methods of treatment and to secure a complete sociological picture and examination of contacts.

The findings of the survey are presented from three points of view. The data collected in the clinic are discussed by Dr. Walter M. Brunet, director of the study, and Dr. Dora M. Tolle. The bacteriological aspects are evaluated by Miss Sara Alicia Scudder, who had charge of this phase of the work, and Miss Anne Ruth Medcalf writes on the medical social service activities.

Of 241 children selected for intensive study, 192, or 79 per cent were judged to have positive clinical gonorrhoea. Of these

192 children, 101 were recorded as having acute cases at the time of their first examination. At the end of the period of care, there were only 9 cases remaining in this grouping, while the number of suspicious cases had dropped from 33 to 21, and the number of negative cases had risen from 16 to 68.

### ◎ ◎ ◎ *State Aid in 1933 Is Assured for Counties Having Health Units*

THE New York State Legislature, in the recently passed budget bill for the current fiscal year, authorized the full amount of the appropriation of \$442,000 requested by the State Commissioner of Health, Dr. Thomas Parran, Jr., for State aid to the counties maintaining county departments of health.

For the first time, the subsidy contained provisions for the granting of State aid in meeting the operating expenses of county tuberculosis sanatoria in counties having health departments. This policy was promulgated last August by Dr. Parran as a method of encouraging the establishment of health departments in counties having less than 150,000 population. The counties benefiting by these subventions are Cattaraugus, Suffolk, and Columbia.

◎ ◎ ◎ *Cattaraugus County Department of Health Completes Its Tenth Year of Activity*

THE year 1932 completed the first decade of public health work on a county-wide basis in Cattaraugus County. In making public the tenth annual report of the County Department of Health, Dr. Reginald M. Atwater, the commissioner of health, said, "The modest number of activities started in 1923 has been slowly increased. At the end of 1932, in addition to the tuberculosis work and the laboratory, the County maintained a communicable disease service for diagnosis, consultation, and immunization; venereal disease clinics in Salamanca and Olean, with provision for treatment of indigent cases in remote sections; a corps of public health nurses, located in eight district stations; a bureau of maternity and child hygiene, concerned with the health of the child throughout pregnancy, birth, and infancy, and up to school age; as well as a sanitary engineer and a sanitary inspector working toward the protection of water and milk supplies."

The scope of activities of the Department was practically unchanged throughout 1932, ac-

ording to the report. The budget upon which the Department of Health operated was \$70,000. The total expenditures for the year amounted to \$69,999.97, of which 50 per cent was returned to the County in the form of State aid, making the net cost to the County \$34,999.99, or less than fifty cents per capita.

The general mortality rate for Cattaraugus County in 1932 was 14.2, which, Dr. Atwater pointed out, was slightly higher than it had been for the past three years. There were 26 deaths from tuberculosis during the year—a mortality rate of 35.8. Since 1927 the death rate from tuberculosis in the County has been consistently below 50 per 100,000 population, and for the last two years it has been less than 40. The rate in 1932 was a 50 per cent decrease from the rate of 71.4 recorded in 1922.

For the second consecutive year, there were no cases of smallpox in the County, and there were but eight cases of diphtheria, none of which resulted fatally. The average age of those attacked by the latter disease was over twenty-one years, and only one was of pre-school age. At the end of the year, 16,144 residents had been given toxin-antitoxin immuniza-

tions. Of this number, 2,016 were children of preschool age, or 31 per cent of all the children in this age group living in the County.

There have been no deaths from typhoid fever in the area in the past three years, although seven cases were reported during the year. Scarlet fever was reported as the cause of death in five instances, with 406 cases recorded for the year.

John Walrath, president of the County Board of Health, in his foreword submitting the report to the Board of Supervisors, said, "The program of the Health Department has been in progress for ten years. It has proved its value to our people all along but especially in these trying times. The need of its service is greater than ever before. . . . There is no county investment that returns a value in human lives saved and human welfare advanced comparable with the Health Department."

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© © © *Bellevue-Yorkville Cooperates in Campaign for Early Diagnosis of Tuberculosis*

"**K**NOWLEDGE has begun the conquest of tuberculosis," said Dr. Livingston Farrand, in a recent radio address given in

New York City in a special educational campaign for the prevention and control of tuberculosis held in the Bellevue-Yorkville Health Demonstration area. This project was a part of the national campaign for the early diagnosis of cases of this disease in which the National Tuberculosis Association has been engaged. "Tuberculosis has lost its place in the list of fatal diseases as the leading cause of death," he continued. "Knowledge can largely eliminate it as a public health problem. We know that sufferers from tuberculosis should not mingle intimately with other persons and, if possible, they should receive sanatorium or hospital treatment. We know that tuberculosis can be discovered with the assistance of the tuberculin test and X-raying months and even years before active disease occurs. We know that a proper regimen of rest and diet, sunshine and fresh air can build up the bodily resistance of children and adults who have contracted the disease in its early stages."

Dr. Donald B. Armstrong, third vice-president of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, who also spoke over the radio in connection with the campaign, warned against over-

confidence in regarding tuberculosis as a vanquished disease. He urged intelligent public support of health authorities and voluntary health agencies in their battle against tuberculosis during these critical days. "No one can estimate the ultimate effects of the depression, especially upon a disease like tuberculosis," he said. "No one can say what may be the harvest in this disease following the underfeeding and malnutrition

that accompany such a period of stress. No one can forecast the serious results that might follow these conditions if people are unaware of the hazards and if appropriations and contributions for work by health departments and tuberculosis associations are not maintained on an adequate level."

Over 10,000 pieces of literature on tuberculosis were distributed to families in the Bellevue-Yorkville district.