

ANNOTATIONS

WORLD POPULATION: PAST GROWTH AND PRESENT TRENDS¹

IN the opening paragraph of *WORLD POPULATION: PAST GROWTH AND PRESENT TRENDS*, Carr-Saunders states that he will attempt "to reconstruct population history and to describe the present population situation." Such a task seems almost beyond the scope of one volume, but the author has, in some three hundred pages, summarized and interpreted the facts about population in relationship to the economic and social conditions of individual countries and the world. Although his primary purpose is to describe population growth, he uses freely his knowledge of the social sciences to create a background which throws into clear relief his significant statistical analyses.

This book provides a veritable lecture course, which begins with a description of the techniques and sources necessary to study "how men count themselves," and takes the reader by gradual steps into the complexities of a world where some countries claim that population pressure can only be solved by colonization. With clear exposition the author discusses our limited knowledge of the growth of various countries, considers migration, births, deaths, and natural increase.

There follows a picture of the situation in Europe. As a basis for prediction, he uses the net reproduction rate applied by Kuczynski. The author believes, from calculations made on the birth rates of today, that the maximum population of Europe is coming at an earlier date and will be followed by a more rapid decline than most experts predict. Before 1950 the population in most countries in northern and western Europe will be on the decline. This assumes that fertility in the east and south of Europe will imitate the downward trend of the birth rate in the west.

¹ Carr-Saunders, A. M.: *WORLD POPULATION: PAST GROWTH AND PRESENT TRENDS*. Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1936. 336 pp.

Noting that where fertility has begun to decline latest, it has fallen most rapidly, the low level for these sections will be reached in less time than in the west.

It is observed that there can be speculation on the future of mortality and fertility, governing the course of population. There is not much doubt concerning future trends in mortality because men will benefit from research in public health. On the other hand, he regards as small in scope the chances for increasing the number of births through prolongation of life during the child-bearing period. Whatever improvement in mortality rates may come in the upper age limits, existing but not potential numbers will be affected. The future of fertility is not so certain, but events in Europe during the last century lead him to think that fertility will decline steadily for some time to come.

A detailed consideration of the extent and regulation of migration to the western hemisphere is given. The difficulties in assimilation of immigrants are analyzed, including factors of psychological, physical, genetic, and economic nature. The author states that it is both "the right and the duty" of the government of any country to regulate migration on two grounds: (1) to avoid the waste, friction, and disappointment of the old individual "hit-or-miss" migration, and (2) to take steps to assure that those admitted are assimilated. An interesting, but necessarily inexhaustive, consideration of the feeling of nations that have been affected by such restrictions follows, and mention is made of the nationalistic bluster of countries with a "racial" or "cultural" message.

Two of the most stimulating chapters are those on attempts to raise the birth rate and on the small family problem. Decline in fertility is mainly due to voluntary limitation. It is felt that attempts to raise the birth rate in France, Belgium, and Italy may have retarded decline, but beyond this little can be said for their effectiveness. The rise of the rate in Germany may represent a rise in fertility or may simply denote the stimulation of a large number of first born in a short period of time. From this analysis of countries offering social or economic inducements to have larger families, the author concludes that there is little hope of this method counteracting the declining birth rate of European peoples.

The small family problem exists when fertility is so low that a population is not replacing itself. The little known psychological attitudes towards marriage, the family, child-birth, and the social and economic

encumbrances which children involve are discussed in a thought provoking manner. In his genuine concern over the failure of England to replace its population, however, he reverts to the alarmism frequently voiced by other students. Inasmuch as parents can prevent or postpone children, there is no guarantee that enough babies will be born to prevent a declining population from extinction. The author would not dispense with birth control, but he would impress upon the country the dangers of a declining population. He feels the need for "social reconstruction" towards meeting an urgent situation.

Because of the scarcity of reliable figures on the population of Asiatic and African countries, little space is devoted to them. Limitations of available data and possibilities of future trends are set forth, providing an excellent summary for the student.

Carr-Saunders' *WORLD POPULATION* is a valuable source and is also a timely book, picturing as it does the present situation. Those concerned with population problems and with the impact of nationalism on population policy will find this a stimulating book.

SARA C. BRIGHT

• • •

DIET AND THE TEETH¹

THE publication of the final report of the Committee for the Investigation of Dental Disease is the fourth in a series of important contributions, by May Mellanby and her co-workers, to the literature of dental decay. In 1929 Mrs. Mellanby demonstrated that deficiencies of calcium, phosphorus, and Vitamin D in the diet of young dogs produce marked deleterious effects on the structure of the developing teeth. In 1930 the findings were augmented by demonstrating similar effects of like dietary deficiencies on the teeth of rats, rabbits, and monkeys. A third report (1934), which contained an extension to children of the previous experimental work, indicated that a direct relationship exists between defective dental structure (hypoplasia) and tooth decay. While Mrs. Mellanby's theories, offered in explanation of the etiology of dental de-

¹ *The Influence of Diet on Caries in Children's Teeth. (Final Report.)* The Committee for the Investigation of Dental Disease (Assisted by Alan Deverall and Mable Reynolds) Special Report Series No. 211, Medical Research Council, London, 1936.