

relationships as they now emerge into the foreground of national and international discussion.

ARCHIBALD M. McISAAC



POPULATION FACTS AND POLICIES IN GREAT BRITAIN¹

ACCORDING to estimates of various British and American demographers, England is now experiencing the crest of her population growth. Among the latter, Notestein and his colleagues have said, "Even before the present war there was a strong probability that England's population would commence to fall in the near future. On the basis of the projections [of the population of European countries to 1970], with the exception of France, England and Wales experiences the greatest population decline among the countries of Europe. From its assumed maximum of 41.1 million in 1945 it drops to 37.1 million in 1970, or about 10 per cent."²

Whether or not the current year actually witnesses the peak population, there is no doubt that England and Wales are confronted with the prospect of an early decline in numbers unless substantial and unexpected increases in fertility occur. The need for preventing or minimizing this future decline has been repeatedly emphasized in the so-called "Beveridge Plan" and in the speeches of Winston Churchill. Last year a Royal Commission on Population was appointed to study the factors underlying the trend of population and to make recommendations.

In the search for ways and means of encouraging larger families Great Britain will doubtless be satisfied only with those schemes that are consonant with the principles of a democracy. Indeed, the very appearance of the booklet under review, *POPULATION FACTS AND POLICIES*, suggests that any plan that Great Britain finally evolves will not be one that is "handed down" by the politicians or even by the experts on the Royal Commission, but will to some extent be an outgrowth of what the people want. For this booklet was prepared in response to the demands for a "study outline," for purposes of group discussions throughout the country.

¹ Hubback, Eva M.: *POPULATION FACTS AND POLICIES*. London, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1945, pp. 48 (paper), 2s. 6d.

² Notestein, F. W.; Taeuber, I. B.; Kirk, D.; Coale, A. J.; and Kiser, L. K.: *THE FUTURE POPULATION OF EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION*. Geneva, League of Nations, 1944, p. 60.

Pretending to furnish no more than an outline, the author simply sketches the available facts regarding demographic trends, briefly discusses the possible consequences and causes of those trends, and presents a systematic summary of what might be attempted by way of encouraging larger families in her country.

With respect to causes of the declining size of family, the author rightly lays the emphasis on voluntary instead of involuntary (biological deterioration) factors. She correctly emphasizes that contraception is only a mechanism or means of family limitation and that the real causes are embedded in the changing values and attitudes associated with the transition from rural to urban economy. Her outline of causes of voluntary family restriction includes the following topics: change in individual and social attitudes since 1870, limitation of the desire for children, the economic factor, changes in social life—the position of women, changes in family habits, housing, diminution in religious belief, and insecurity.

With regard to policies, the author states: "The kernel of the problem is how to combine the voluntary principle of free parenthood and wanted children, with the needs of the community. . . . Population policies in this country must be two-sided. . . . In the first place, we must do everything possible to encourage parents to want more children; secondly we must endeavour to remove the social and financial handicaps at present imposed on parenthood" (p. 31). According to the author, the policies aimed at stimulating stronger desires for children might include a whole range of social reforms designed to give security from poverty, unemployment, and war, and hence encourage a more vigorous and hopeful attitude toward life itself. They might also include specific educational programs on the need for more children, and education for family living.

The plans considered for reducing the economic handicaps on parenthood include (a) cash allowances in the form of marriage loans and bonuses, maternity benefits, and children's allowances; (b) government subsidies of essential foodstuffs; (c) taxation; and (d) a wide range of social services affecting mothers and children, such as maternity and child welfare services, improvements in schools, better housing through rental rebates, and miscellaneous health services.

Although the quantitative aspects of population are emphasized, questions regarding quality are also considered. In this connection the author takes the stand that as long as gross inequalities of environment exist it will be impossible to distinguish between the better and worse strains

except in so far as certain extreme cases are concerned. She therefore believes it essential "to take every possible step to level up the worse environments to the standard of the better ones" (p. 42).

Whether or not this little booklet provides any harbinger of the character of Great Britain's future population policies, it at least suggests that there is a broad base of progressive thinking in that country. It will behoove students of our own country to watch and study developments of population policy in England, for our own country, too, may experience declining numbers before many decades.

CLYDE V. KISER



WORLD POPULATION IN TRANSITION

THE most impressive thing about this volume¹ is the testimony it bears to the large number of scholars of the first rank who are devoting themselves intensively and objectively to the study of population and its problems. Merely to list those who have contributed to this book, with their respective subjects, would consume a large part of the space allotted to this review.

As Dr. Davis points out in his Foreword, "The study of population offers one of the unique and indispensable approaches to an understanding of world affairs." Nothing is more important than that those who are destined to exercise leadership in world affairs in the immediate future should be dynamically aware of this truth, and the volume in hand should be of great value in bringing this to pass, as well as in providing a concise body of data on which such leadership can be based.

The studies themselves fall into four logical categories. The first and last contain only one essay each. The first is an over-all review by Dr. Davis of the changing demographic phenomena the world over. The last, by Frank Lorimer, is an analysis of the population policies, actual and potential, of various countries, specifically Germany, Sweden, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

The second section consists of a number of regional studies by authors of established reputation, covering the United States, South America,

¹ Davis, Kingsley (Editor): *World Population in Transition*. The *Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Philadelphia, January, 1945, Vol. 237, pp. viii + 203, \$2.00 (paper), \$2.50 (cloth).