

on the Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility, C. V. Kiser and P. K. Whelpton showed how fertility planning by the parents and socio-economic status of the family affected fertility rates.

Attempts have been made to study public health problems on a family unit basis. Lowell J. Reed developed a family life table in a study of the effect of a chronic disease on the family. The Maryland Blue Cross has selected hospitalization-prone families in order to determine their characteristics. In the Eastern Health District of Baltimore several attempts have been made to determine various family characteristics of stable and non-stable families.

The author stresses the importance in family studies of placing the emphasis on the family rather than on the individual family members. This appreciation of the family as a unit has been neglected in the past.

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ENRICHING THE YEARS¹

IN 1947 a committee was set up by the New York State Legislature under the chairmanship of Senator Thomas C. Desmond, to study the conditions and problems of the aged and "... to turn the years of discard into a rich, fitting climax to years of living." For five years, the New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Problems of the Aging, has worked to obtain a better understanding of the senior citizens of our society. The findings and recommendations of this Committee are presented in the monograph *ENRICHING THE YEARS*. The monograph also contains articles on nutrition, health, chronic disease, rehabilitation, housing, education, employment, pension plans, and industry as they relate to the older person.

In New York State in 1950, 8.5 per cent of the population was 65 years of age and over. It is estimated that the State has now approximately 1,400,000 persons in that age category plus

¹ *ENRICHING THE YEARS*. New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Problems of the Aging. Legislative Document, No. 32, 1953, 199 pp.

an additional 5,000,000 men and women in the 45 and over age group. From 1940 to 1950, in New York State the increase in females 65 years and over was 53 per cent, the corresponding figure for males was 23.3 per cent.

America is a country that esteems and glorifies youth. Because ours is a youth-worshipping culture, human worth and value decline with the passing years. The aged in our society are thrust aside in the community, in the family, and in industry, until they attain their final status in life—the status of second-class citizens. It will require all the skills of the social psychologists and the sociologists to rid the elderly of the cruel prejudices held against them by a youth-oriented culture. If the later years are to be filled with a sense of achievement, usefulness, satisfaction, and self-esteem, it is essential that people's attitudes and stereotyped ideas toward the aged are changed.

In an effort to remedy the plight of the elderly, the Committee has initiated community programs for the aged throughout New York State. Local community leaders were trained by staff advisers to understand and work with older people. One of the most deeply-rooted beliefs that the Committee found was the wide-spread notion that human beings automatically become old and unfit to work when they reach the age of 65. That this notion is not only unscientific but also socially harmful is apparent when individual differences and variations in the aging process are taken into consideration.

Regarding the employment of older workers, the Committee believes that an educational campaign is necessary to eliminate the prejudices held by management and unions against the hiring of the elderly. "There is nothing inherent in our system of free enterprise which makes it impossible, unprofitable or unwise to hire and utilize older workers." Rather, it is industry's ignorance concerning the proper utilization of older workers that is barring them from employment. By shunting aside this segment of the population, industry is losing the skills, experience, mature judgement, loyalty, and dependability that these senior citizens have to offer. The skills of job engineers should be applied to the task of altering jobs to suit the physical capacities of the middle-aged and older worker. Establishment of retraining centers, job counselling and placement

services, are other measures that could assist the older person who is trying to reenter the labor market.

Some Committee recommendations for an economically secure old age are as follows: Extend OASI to the entire working population; inflexible use of 65 as the fixed age for retirement must be abolished; the law which prohibits persons receiving OASI from earning more than \$75 a month should be changed as it penalizes the older person who wishes to continue working. Private pension plans are felt to be of doubtful value for they provide economic security to a very small proportion of the population. Few workers are employed for 10–25 years by a single employer and thus, upon reaching age 65, they are not eligible for pensions.

The cruel neglect and the utter despair of lonely old men and women is described vividly in a section of the Committee's report dealing with the destitute aged on Old Age Assistance rolls. Contrary to popular belief persons on OAA rosters are not predominately Negro or foreign-born. The majority are native-born Americans who had always worked diligently, but being unskilled and lacking education, received low wages throughout their working careers. Medical ailments or physical impairments are the rule among the destitute aged and in the New York State community studied by the Committee, 90 per cent of the persons on OAA rolls had multiple ailments. The average OAA recipient lives on approximately \$1.50 a day for food, rent, clothing, light, heat, and medicine. This study clearly shows the need for providing the poverty-stricken elderly with greater economic support, rehabilitation facilities, training and retraining centers, educational programs, and sheltered workshops.

The remainder of the monograph consists of articles on various subjects relating to older people. Albert J. Abrams, the Director of the Committee, has contributed several valuable articles. "A Community and Chronic Disease," by Dr. Morton L. Levin, "Rehabilitation in the Allegheny County Home," by Dr. Murray B. Ferderber, "Mental Hygiene and the Aged," by Dr. George S. Stevenson, and "A Personal Look at Old Age," by J. C. Penney, are just a few of the excellent articles included in this comprehensive monograph.

The New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Problems of the Aging has fostered community programs, housing, counselling and job placement for the aged. In view of the fact that ours is an aging population, it is of utmost importance that the Committee continue its work, for the time has come "... to prove the potentials of the later years, and the value of age."

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MALTHUS TWICE AGAIN¹

THAT two separate books on Malthus were published in London in 1953 is only an example of the current resurgence of interest in Malthus. Much of the renewed interest has been aroused by the controversies over the outlook for world population and resources. These controversies, in turn, have been augmented, if not frequently started, by the postwar activities in the underdeveloped areas of the world.

Dr. George F. McCleary's book *THE MALTHUSIAN POPULATION THEORY* provides for the layman a good nontechnical description of the "Theory"; it is full of human interest materials on Malthus and some of his ancestors and contemporaries.

However, McCleary's is not simply a "popular" book. The author has studied Malthus's writings with much care. In the reviewer's opinion, he makes a distinct contribution in the chapter entitled "Malthus and Contraception" in which he marshals the evidence that Malthus knew about contraception and strongly disapproved of it. In the chapter "Mistakes About Malthus" McCleary points out that some held that Malthus advocated contraception and others that he was ignorant of it. Other "mistakes" listed by McCleary are "that the ultimate object of his work was to check population increase" (p. 95), "that Malthus recommended war, disease, and famine as remedies for over-population" (p. 96), "that population actually increases in a geometrical ratio" (p. 98).

¹ McCleary, G. F.: *THE MALTHUSIAN POPULATION THEORY*. London, Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1953, 191 pp. 15s.

Glass, D. V. (Ed.): *INTRODUCTION TO MALTHUS*. London, Watts & Company, 1953, 205 pp. 10s 6d. (New York, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1953, 205 pp. \$2.75.)