

5 May 1931.

Prof. J.S. Huxley,
Zoological Dept.,
King's College,
Strand, W.C. 2.

Dear Huxley,

Thanks for the cutting. I have drafted something of the kind you suggest. Do not hesitate to reject it, or alter it to any extent.

I shall be sailing for the United States on Friday fortnight. Would you be free to come down and see my chicks, and lunch with me some day before then? If possible I will get Spedan Lewis who has put up a lot of the cost, down the same day to meet you.

Yours sincerely,

The stimulating suggestion in the Week End Review for May 2nd., that the change from a decennial to a quinquennial ^{biennial} basis should be accompanied by a re^{orientation}constitution from a political to a scientific basis, meets a need which has been becoming year by year more obvious to students of social biology. Only on data collected on a national scale can an adequate view be based of the biological condition of our population, and of the changes which are undoubtedly taking place, apparently with startling rapidity in its biological composition.

A striking case is provided by our lack of direct and comprehensive data upon the rate of reproduction in different social classes. The Census now provides a very satisfactory basis for classification by occupation. In 1911 when the occupational categories were far less satisfactory, the Census recorded the number of children previously borne to each person enumerated. This gave a very valuable view of the distribution of reproduction for the end of the last century, and an indication for the beginning of the present century. It is now over a generation out of date, and although ^{striking}startling changes have since then certainly taken place in the general birth rate, the omission of the question in 1921 and 1931 leave us much in the dark as to the present position.

A scientifically organised department could make full use not only of the Census, but of the registration returns of births and deaths, which might be made to supplement the Census results very substantially. At present little seems to be done to bring these returns into harmony, so as to elicit a comprehensive picture of the vital statistics of the population. Ideally we should look to birth registration, using the same occupational classification as that used in the Census, to supply year by year the latest information as to reproduction. Death registration could be made to supply in retrospect the facts of the past few decades, which we have neglected to ascertain at the time. Most important of all, it should be possible for research, primarily scientific in aim, to be carried on at the General Registry ^{or Office,} since the information needed for special and supplementary enquiries can never be printed in full in the Reports. Even adequate facilities for voluntary and unpaid work at headquarters, would be a valuable step in the right direction, and would certainly be of public service in ^{securing} ~~recording~~ in exactly what respects the present returns are defective, and require to be supplemented.