

# MAN'S ADVANCE TO HUMAN FORM

## Problems of Population

### BIRTH CONTROL FOR THE MASSES

#### Science Congress Addresses

LONDON, September 26.

Man's evolution, the future of world population, and birth control were subjects dealt with by the greatest British scientific minds in papers read to the congress of The British Association for the Advancement of Science today.

Estimating the antiquity of the human stem at 20 million years and allotting 18 million years for the evolution of the human foot, Sir Arthur Keith, the famous anthropologist, emphasised that since man shared his arboreal ancestry with apes, it was on trees he acquired the initial stages of his posture and carriage. The tree-climbing ape, he said, diverged from simianity towards humanity by specialisation of the spine, legs, and feet.

Great-bodied prethroglodytes, which originated early in the Miocene era, diverged into anthropoid and human types. Human posture was evolved before the Pliocene period terminated, breaking after that into divergent branches, not necessarily among the ancestors of any living race. Modern races of mankind originated from some undiscovered neo-Pleistocene ancestor, whose brain greatly increased in size and complexity of power in a short period. The stages of the advance towards human form were typified by the Gibbons and other anthropoids.

#### Decline in Birthrate

Outlining the history of population, Professor A. M. Carr-Saunders, the Charles Booth Professor of Social Science at the Liverpool University, cited the quadrupling of the world's population in the past 300 years. Owing to the decline in the birth rate, which restricted races of pure European descent, they would cease to increase within three generations. China's population had been stationary for the past 50 to 80 years, and India, Japan, and Java would approach this position.

#### Economic Restriction

Professor Julian Huxley, the biologist, said the lower economic classes in Sweden reproduced more slowly than the higher classes. Many believed that section of the community was shiftless, stupid, and lazy, and did not properly utilise birth control information. Old families tended to extinction. The possession of a number of children in the higher economic strata of society did not favor further rising in the social scale in subsequent generations. Constant applicants for State relief should not be allowed to become parents if prevention was available. Higher wages and a high economic status tended to reduce the birth rate. The enormous differences in individual incomes should be decreased. Raising low and reducing high wages would be an advantage to children.

## Looking Two Million Years Ahead

Professor Lancelo Hogben, Professor of Social Biology in the University of London, said he considered contraception had significantly influenced the character of the population, and the growth of industrial communities in the past 75 years. Facts did not support the notion that sexual instinct providentially assured perpetuation of the human species. It was difficult, if the contraceptive hypothesis was correct, to foretell what changes in family economics and social organisation were needed to create new incentives to parenthood, and to prevent gradual racial extinction. Nevertheless, the time could be visualised, two million years hence, when all human beings would be reproduced in multiple births. Women would bear twins and triplets, and would not waste more time on producing large families than a man who played golf because he needed exercise besides conversation and shaving.

## The Adaptable Chinese

Professor F. A. E. Crew, of the Edinburgh University, drew attention to the peaceful migration by which the Chinese were conquering vast regions of the Pacific. The Chinese were most adaptable people, and bred and developed normally anywhere. The Chinese, the Japanese, and the Indians were exhibiting the migratory urge that other peoples displayed years ago. Then there was ample room; now there were political barriers to migration everywhere. British people did not migrate because they were socially comfortable.

"Since we cannot impose birth control on our surging competitors," he said, "we may be pushed out from Imperial territories by races capable of colonising them. Though among our people there are sufficient types to suit every environment, migrants, after a physiological examination, might be advised to seek a particular habitat instead of going to that part of the Empire whose advertisements offer the most rapid financial gain. The psychologist can tell us what profession to follow; the biologist can tell us where to follow it."

## Too Many People

Professor E. W. MacBride said a man whose increased skill gained him higher wages would be prudent enough to limit his family, but it was delusive to try to teach wage-earners prudence by paying them too much.

"Even if the diminishing birth-rate puts England at a standstill," he said, "in 1960 we shall have far too many people. Even since the war, the pressure of population has increased tremendously. Every legislative step permits more incompetents to live here. Fewer seek their fortunes abroad. The means of subsistence is not increasing faster than the population. There is a wheat surplus compared with purchasers, but not with consumers. India's population increased from 320 to 350 millions in the past 30 years. A continuance of this increase would result in untold wretchedness."

## "Sterilisation if Necessary"

"It is our duty to apprise the poorer citizens of the methods of birth control available to the educated classes. Painless sterilisation should be the only remedy for a man who continues to produce children, in utter indifference, relying on the dole. If we are to maintain the vigor of the race that is the end to which we must come."

## Value of Biological Science

Paying a tribute to biological science, Sir J. Arthur Thomson pointed out that it was making notable contributions to health and wealth. It would conquer more and more of men's enemies, he said, particularly parasitic diseases, such as cancer.

"Having a fine family is one of the oldest ambitions," he added. "Biology is the most modern counsellor on this subject, and its value is but half realised."