

ROYAL COMMISSION ON POPULATION

Memorandum submitted by the Eugenics Society

(1) Object of the Memorandum

The object of this memorandum is to put before the Royal Commission the importance of taking qualitative, i.e. eugenic, considerations into account when devising a positive population policy. The word eugenics (eu—good, gen—race or stock), first used by Sir Francis Galton in 1883, was defined by him as "The science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of the race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage."

This memorandum also seeks to draw the Royal Commission's attention to a restatement, in terms of the demographic and social trends of to-day, of how the aims of eugenics can be realized in what we believe to be an acceptable social policy.

(2) The Standpoint of Galton

Galton's conception of what eugenics is and what it aims at has been partially lost sight of in the controversies of later years. Two short quotations will show that his outlook is apposite to-day.

(a) Let us for a moment suppose that the practice of eugenics should hereafter raise the average quality of our nation to that of its better moiety at the present day, and consider the gain. The general tone of domestic and social life would be higher. The race as a whole would be less foolish, less frivolous, less excitable, and politically more provident than now. Its demagogues who "played to the gallery" would play to a more sensible gallery than at present. We should be better fitted to fulfil our vast imperial opportunities. Lastly, men of an order of ability which is now very rare, would become more frequent, because the level out of which they rose would itself have risen.

(b) The faculties of future generations will necessarily be distributed according to laws of heredity, whose statistical effects are no longer vague, for they are measured and expressed in formulæ. We cannot doubt the existence of a great power ready to hand, and capable of being directed with vast benefit as soon as we shall have learnt to understand

and apply it. To no nation is a high human breed more necessary than to our own, for we plant our stock all over the world and lay the foundations of the dispositions and capacities of future millions of the human race.

There are two essential ideas in the above quotations: that the inborn qualities of future generations should resemble the better rather than the worse moiety of the nation to-day; and that our imperial and world responsibilities impose on us a special obligation to foster the valuable inborn qualities of our people.

Galton was a cousin of Charles Darwin and his outlook was much influenced by the evolution theory. "Evolution," he wrote, "is in any case a grand phantasmagoria, but it assumes an infinitely more interesting aspect under the knowledge that the intelligent action of the human will is, in some small measure, capable of guiding its course." And in another context: "What nature does blindly, slowly and ruthlessly, man may do providently, quickly and kindly."

Though much has changed since Galton's time, his principles are as apposite to-day as they were sixty years ago. But they need to be re-stated in terms of the present demographic situation and of current social standards.

(3) Eugenics and Differential Fertility

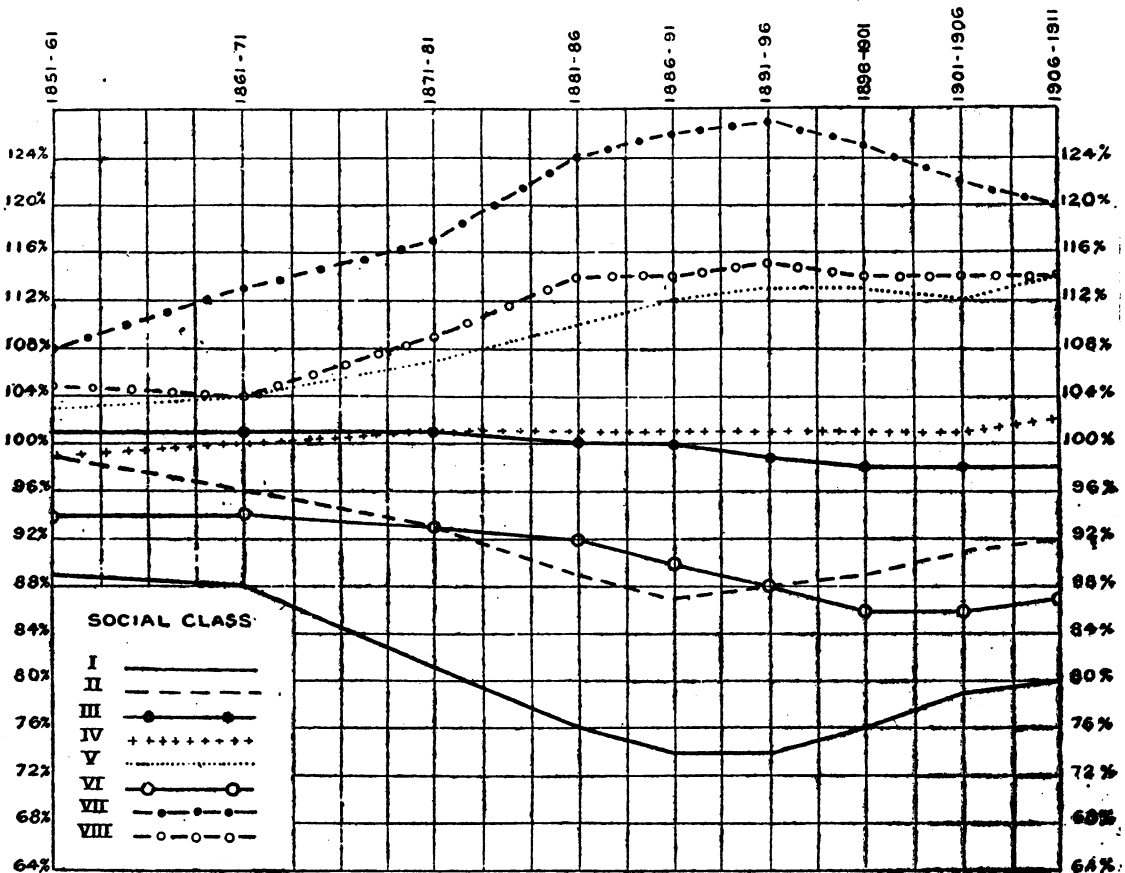
Though clearly aware of their importance, Galton was less preoccupied by problems of differential fertility than later writers such as Karl Pearson. Indeed, the word "eugenics" unescapably implies a challenge—to define what we mean by "eu" in terms of human values and human types. In the period before the last war, some people found their definition ready-made for them in the Registrar-General's figures. Appended is a diagram from the report of the 1911 census, published after Galton's death, showing trends in fertility between 1851 and 1911 in eight social classes (Vol. XIII, part II,

STANDARDIZED TOTAL FERTILITY OF EACH SOCIAL CLASS

PER CENT. OF THAT OF THE GENERAL POPULATION

FOR MARRIAGES OF VARYING DATES

Census of England and Wales, 1911. Vol. XIII, p. xciii (Diagram 16)



Class I. Upper and Middle Classes.

Class II. Intermediate between Middle and Skilled Working Classes (Includes Shop-keeping Trades).

Class III. Skilled Workers.

Class IV. Intermediate between Class III and V (Includes some Skilled and Unskilled Workers).

Class V. Unskilled Workers.

Class VI. Textile Workers.

Class VII. Miners.

Class VIII. Agricultural Workers.

p. xciii). A striking difference is seen between these classes: class I, which comprises the upper and middle classes, has throughout the period the lowest fertility. This class was widely regarded as the main repository of cultural values, and its low reproductive achievement was looked upon by many people as an ominous sign, portending racial decay. Such a view was readily taken by persons who were nurtured in a classical tradition. In ancient Greek valuations of humanity, the existence of slaves and barbarians played an essential part; Plato's "Republic" was organized on a caste system. The biological attenuation of the Registrar-General's Class I is widely regarded as an exaggeration. While we hold it desirable that our population should be more largely recruited from the first four of the Registrar-General's classes than at present, his classes are not regarded by us as rigid castes and the reversal of the present trends is not the sole aim of eugenics. One of its aims is to secure the largest number of births from the most intelligent families in every social and economic class (intelligence being the most important differential about which exact knowledge is attainable). Careful surveys—e.g. by Dr. J. A. Fraser Roberts at Bristol—have shown that the least intelligent families have on the average some three times as many children as the most intelligent, fertility declining evenly from one extreme to the other. The reversal of this adverse trend in differential fertility (the persistence of which must result in a steady fall in the general level of intelligence) must be among the primary objectives of any eugenic demographic policy.

(4) Perversions of Eugenics

Galton regarded eugenics as a means by which persons with valuable inborn qualities could make a larger contribution to posterity than persons less well endowed. He thought of the members of any community or race as varying in respect of valuable inborn qualities. While he believed that the different branches of the human race were unequally equipped with the inborn characters that produce and sustain highly

organized civilizations, it was no part of his outlook that biologically inferior races should be persecuted or suppressed. But this standpoint has been adopted by a later generation and has done great harm to the cause of eugenics. Under the title of "race hygiene," the dogma of race superiority has been espoused in Germany, where, in recent years, the young have been indoctrinated with "aryanism," anti-semitism and aggressive nationalism. Analogous views have been put forward in America by writers who were actuated by colour prejudice. Eugenics is also regarded by some as a preoccupation of cranks who wish to control human matings by stockyard methods.

Because of these perversions, eugenics has come to be regarded in certain quarters as politically and biologically suspect. Galton's simple and dispassionate statement has been forgotten. It is our aim to re-direct attention to Galton's standpoint which, fortified by advances in the science of genetics, has gained in cogency and in relevance to affairs of the present day. The word "eugenics" needs to be rehabilitated.

(5) Eugenics and the Expert

The contrast between the liberal and the authoritarian application of eugenic principles turns much on the use made of the expert. The authoritarian system employs compulsion and invests the expert with *powers*. At one end of the scale is compulsory restriction of births; at the other, quasi-compulsory child-bearing. Or, if actual compulsion is ruled out, there are severe penalties at one extreme and valuable economic and other incentives at the other, whose application is highly discriminative. The whole machinery depends on experts, from whose certificates result abhorrent vetoes or coveted privileges. Thus, a German can be compulsorily sterilized by order of a eugenic court. And his marriage can be vetoed. Such methods are contrary to a social philosophy which concedes freedom of choice and independence of action to the individual. A liberal system of eugenics would make use of the expert; but his function should be *advisory* only. He should

be readily accessible to everyone. His existence should be widely advertised ; but he should not be invested with *powers*.

(6) Five Standards of Eugenic Value

As remarked above, the word "eugenics" implies a challenge—to define what we mean by "eu." "A considerable list of qualities," wrote Galton, "can be easily compiled that nearly everyone would take into account when picking out the best specimens of his class. It would include health, energy, manliness and courteous disposition." The list might be extended by each of us in accordance with our system of private values. There are, however, five characteristics as to the excellence of which nearly everyone will agree.

- (a) Sound physical and mental health and good physique.
- (b) Intelligence.
- (c) Social usefulness : the individual should be a valuable and co-operative member of his community with moral qualities which make him a good citizen.
- (d) The individual should be free from genetic taints, i.e. unlikely to carry or transmit familial diseases and defects.
- (e) It is desirable that he should be a member of a big, united, and well-adjusted family and that he should be fond of children.

Let us briefly consider these qualities. There can be little disagreement about the first two. A community of sound and robust people is preferable to one of physical weaklings, and intelligent people are preferable to morons. But the first two qualities do not necessarily connote the third. A man can be a fine physical specimen and intelligent ; but he can also be an idler, a parasite or a criminal. The first three qualities do not connote the fourth. A woman physically and mentally above the average who plays a useful part in her community can also be a carrier of hæmophilia ; or she may have near relatives suffering from hereditary physical and mental illnesses of which she may be a probable carrier. So may a man.

The fifth attribute has figured prominently in discussions of differential fertility. There are good reasons for thinking that certain combinations of qualities, physical and psychological, produce infertility and that other combinations produce fertility. Through several generations, infertile connexions produce diminishing numbers of children ; childless couples or couples producing a single child become increasingly frequent. If the connexion as a whole is wealthy, the wealth becomes concentrated on a small number of persons or on a single person. The heiress is often the product of such a connexion, and a case has been made out by Galton that, as a result of the tendency of peers to marry heiresses, the former "marry" not only wealth but infertility, thus hastening the extinction of their lines ; and R. A. Fisher has argued that the "social promotion of infertility" occurs widely in all strata of society, resulting in a tendency for strains containing ability to mix with those marked by infertility, thus leading to the sterilization of ability. Biologically harmful social fashions are also set.

But if there are psychological traits which lead to infertility, there are converse traits which do the opposite. Philoprogenitiveness,* when combined with the first four qualities above enumerated, is an attribute which all must agree to be desirable. Families

* Dr. Spencer Paterson has proposed four new words—two nouns and two adjectives—genophilia, genophobia, genophilic, genophobic. He writes : "I think that these words should be defined as follows. Genophilia : Love for children ; an attitude of mind which welcomes large families. Genophobia : A dislike or shunning of children ; an attitude of mind which fears or shuns the advent of children. Similarly, genophilic and genophobic, used of persons, policies, legislation, etc."

Examples of the use of these words are as follows :
The policy of building four-roomed houses is definitely genophobic.

A eugenic policy is one which seeks to make good stocks genophilic and bad stocks genophobic.

Genophobia is spreading from urban to rural areas. Madame de Sévigné, that arch-genophobe!

The nearest current word to "genophilic" is "philoprogenitive" ; but this has no obvious converse and it cannot be applied to policies, legislation, etc. The two adjectives epitomize phrases thus facilitating the processes of thought. They focus attention upon important tendencies and implications in any population policy. They may be found useful by the Royal Commission.

in which the five qualities are combined are big, united and well adjusted. Their members are successful in life, with little or nothing in the way of inherited wealth. They make good in a variety of callings, and often spread themselves throughout the world. They take a pride in their name and in their "clan" and periodically have large reunions where people belonging to three or four generations assemble. This faith and belief in one's stock has important psychological corollaries. It connotes biological vitality, a philosophical optimism, a positive attitude to life. It adds something important, though less easily definable than the others, to the four characteristics first described.

Other qualities could be added to these five and, as Galton remarked, each of us could compile his own private list. It is in terms of these five, however, that we mainly understand the meaning of the particle "eu."

Only the fourth of the above-listed characteristics is concerned solely with genetic qualities. By definition, environmental factors are excluded. In the others—i.e. physical health, intelligence, moral qualities and a positive attitude to children—both genetic and environmental influences are concerned. Since Galton first wrote about eugenics, enormous advances have been made in our knowledge of plant and animal genetics. The principles of Mendelism have been discovered and the gene has been demonstrated to have a locus on the chromosome. Mendelian principles have been shown to operate in man; but the human being is a bad subject for investigation partly because of the length of the human generation and partly because human matings cannot be experimentally controlled. Nevertheless, the occurrence in successive generations of certain defects and diseases—most of them rare—has been shown to conform closely with expectations based on simple Mendelian hypotheses, and in some cases an accurate estimate can be made of the probability of such abnormalities being further handed on. Of such widely distributed conditions, however, as physical robustness, intelligence,

moral qualities and philoprogenitiveness it can be said that they are in considerable measure determined by heredity, though not in accordance with simple Mendelian principles shown in the transmission of a single gene. The best scientific evidence in the human field relates to intelligence; that general physical and temperamental qualities are also inherited is a matter of common observation rather than of scientific demonstration in humans, though in experimental and domesticated animals the importance of heredity is unquestioned by every investigator and breeder.

That environment produces important effects in man is obvious; nevertheless, considerable differences between people would continue to be seen even if the environment were uniform for everyone. In other words, people who are to-day remarkable for physical, mental and moral qualities are the ones who are most likely to transmit a favourable hereditary endowment of these qualities; but where the environment is bad, deficiencies are not in themselves proof that the hereditary endowment is poor.

(7) A Eugenic Policy Which is Socially Acceptable.

Let us consider from other aspects the five qualities mentioned in the preceding paragraph. How accurately can they be estimated? How much are they correlated? Is there any simple and observable social index of their joint occurrence which could be made the basis of a practical eugenic policy?

(a) How accurately can eugenically valuable qualities be estimated? Let us take them in the order above given.

(i) *Physical Health* or fitness can be estimated for *certain specific purposes*. Life insurance companies have learned how to take into account a miscellaneous assortment of factors in calculating risks. The family history, the different physical systems of the body, and the individual's habits are surveyed: all bear on the probable length of life. Minor abnormalities, some of them, perhaps, of congenital origin, such as errors of refraction or deafness, have here little

relevance except in so far as they may predispose to accidents.

The fighting services have evolved a very complicated system of grading and assessment, and during this war the number of categories has been much increased. Minor impairments of the sense-organs, whether congenital or the results of disease or accident, are here important. A man may be put into a low category for reasons which have nothing to do with his genetic fitness, such as the loss of an eye or of two or three fingers in an industrial accident.

Physical grading and assessment are being increasingly used in industry, again for the specific purpose of fitting the man to the right job. The fact, however, remains that, for genetic purposes, there is no accurate or generally accepted method of assessing physical health and fitness. There is no physical quotient.

(ii) *Intelligence* is the only one of the five characteristics which is quantitatively measurable. The intelligence quotient tells us something of importance about the child or the adult, though critics are not lacking to point out that general intelligence tests take little account of character and that they may miss special aptitudes and abilities.

(iii) *Social usefulness* is difficult to predict and impossible to express in a quotient. Character is here an important factor. This can only be assessed by personal knowledge of the individual. As a leading psychiatrist now working in the Navy recently remarked of psychological tests in general: "Unfortunately we have no tests for guts."

(iv) *Genetic qualities of relatives*, valuable and harmful, call for an assessment of the individual's pedigree. In at least one authoritarian country the subject's pedigree is investigated as a preliminary to deciding whether or not he should be allowed to get married. But there is as yet no scale of quantitative measurement.

(v) Lastly, *philoprogenitiveness* can be recognized when obvious; but large families are all too often the result of improvidence rather than of this attribute.

Thus, for eugenic purposes, only one of these five qualities can at present be quantitatively estimated, namely, intelligence.

(b) How much are desirable traits correlated?

There is a big literature dealing with genius and it has been widely, though by no means unanimously, contended that geniuses are often mentally unstable or physically defective. Accurate studies have been made of children of high and of very high intelligence. It has been generally found that such children are above the average in physique. But this may be partly due to the fact that they probably come from homes which are better than the average and have been well nourished and cared for.

Yet there is a certain amount of evidence pointing to the conclusion that desirable traits are positively associated—i.e. tend to occur in the same persons. What is certain, however, is that these correlations are at best small. Thus, in many individuals some desirable qualities will be present and others absent. There is little likelihood of any single scientifically controllable test being devised which would provide a single index of an individual's eugenic value.

Eugenic merit is thus a difficult matter to evaluate accurately. Different qualities, some valuable, others neutral, others harmful, have to be balanced against each other. There is no simple *biological* index.

(c) Is there a simple *social* index of the joint occurrence of eugenically desirable traits which could be made the basis of an acceptable social policy?

We think there is. *The five qualities above considered have as their confluent and resultant expression the couple who, in a community which provides good prospects for the future welfare of children, which encourages family life and inculcates a sense of its responsibilities, produce by intention and design a large family and provide for it a happy and a healthy home.*

Let us consider what is implied in this achievement.

To plan the births of a well-spaced family demands intelligence, foresight and restraint; to produce deliberately a family large enough

for, or in excess of, replacement implies a love of children, a sense of duty to the community and a belief that it is worth preserving, a desire to perpetuate family traditions, and an optimistic or positive attitude towards life; to provide a good home calls for the power to make a success of marriage and of life outside the home. All these are desirable qualities, and the emphasis is on the moral ones. But the choice here freely exercised, of producing a large family, should be made *in the full light of all relevant medical and genetic factors*. When these factors are seriously adverse, children will not be wanted by morally responsible parents; and they should be discouraged by precept and public opinion when moral and prudential qualities are absent in the parents.

This statement brings out the importance of the environment in a properly considered eugenic policy. In an unfavourable environment wherein parenthood is attended by serious economic handicaps, wherein the prospects for children are bad, and wherein birth control is widely practised, it is next to impossible to effect replacement in eugenically desirable ways. Because the potential parent loves children, he will shrink from bringing them into a world which holds for them poor promise. His philoprogenitive instincts turn in upon themselves and are stifled. Sir William Beveridge's five "giants"—Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, Idleness and Want—sterilize parenthood in large masses of the population. Where these evils prevail, the improvident and feckless contribute freely to the next generation; those who cannot use the prevailing birth control methods beget large families; and sexual, dissociated from parental, instincts determine the course of reproduction. A voluntary system of eugenics cannot work successfully, under conditions of extreme poverty, malnutrition, ill-health and isolation. A community which desires to encourage philoprogenitive instincts must provide good prospects for parents and for children in all classes. These views have been well put by Mr. Frederick Osborn in his book, *Preface to Eugenics*.*

* Harper & Brothers, New York, 1940.

Upon the argument here put forward the American and British Eugenic Societies are at one. *Both stress the need for a favourable environment wherein eugenic selection can operate.*

(8) Four Characteristics of a "Favourable Environment"

(a) *The removal of social and economic deterrents from parenthood.*—This subject is further discussed in section 10 below. At this point, however, we would make one observation. It has been contended by some that conditions should be created wherein a married couple would say: "We cannot afford *not* to have children." In other words, the bachelor, the spinster, the childless couple should be so penalized as to make their economic position worse than that of parents with numerous children. We do not support this extreme view. Some people are temperamentally or genetically unfitted for parenthood. These are behaving in a praiseworthy manner by refraining from having children. They should not be penalized. The sexes may be numerically unequal; women may continue to outnumber men after this war. As long as the prevailing sexual *mores* continue, marriage for some women may be impossible, however much desired. Such women should not be penalized. We advocate *equalizing* as far as possible the social and economic status of parents and non-parents; not the favouring of the one beyond the other.

(b) *The inculcation of a eugenic conscience.* Every adolescent should be taught and every parent should realize that he has a social and a national obligation to have enough children to replace the generation to which he belongs, *provided* (the eugenicist's proviso to the demographer's purely quantitative formula) that the children are likely to be normal, healthy and useful members of the community. The teaching we have in mind includes the elements of British and world demography. We would like to see these made common ground in all forms of secondary education, and covered by the County Colleges of the future.

(c) *The establishment of facilities by which*

every engaged or married couple can obtain the most up-to-date scientific guidance on genetic problems. To the question: "In view of such-and-such a family history, ought we to have children?" a careful and informed answer should be available for all, free. The provision of an answer demands an examination of the individual concerned, of his family pedigree in respect of the distribution not only of abnormal but also of normal persons, and of the actual or proposed partner and his pedigree. The information required is usually both voluminous and complicated. If the health services of the future are organized to meet the needs of the family as a unit rather than of the individual as a unit, the provision of guidance on these matters should become a function of the health services. At present the *Eugenics Society* undertakes this work, but perforce within narrow limits. (See Section 11 (3) below.)

(d) *Universal accessibility of knowledge as to how pregnancies can be regulated*—whether by the treatment of subfertility to promote births or by the dissemination of contraceptive knowledge to space or even prevent them. Without this knowledge and power, the family is often unplanned, couples failing to secure desired pregnancies or, the more usual event, having children whose birth is unwanted or eugenically undesirable. Information about birth-control should be in accordance with the family's religious beliefs, and these should be taken into account by those who advise. The Royal Commission will have received evidence about the "safe period." We have given this matter some consideration. While we do not believe that conception is impossible at any stage of the cycle (or supposed cycle), we hold that the chances are so much reduced during certain days as to provide a large measure of protection against unwanted pregnancies. Women for whom "appliance methods" are forbidden on religious grounds should, if they want it, be given information on the safe period and the guidance necessary for its effective application.

We also think that it should be possible for persons who suffer from, or probably

"carry" hereditary diseases or defects, to be voluntarily sterilized. We support the recommendations of the Brock Report on sterilization.* Though not yet implemented, the Brock Committee's recommendations have received very widespread support. There are reasons, as yet unpublished, for supposing that the legal risks run by a surgeon in sterilizing, at his request, a genuine sufferer from hereditary disease are less than have been supposed. The operation has, in fact, been frequently done without legal mishaps and has been warmly welcomed by the subject concerned. Sterilization is a complex subject upon which we could supply further written or oral evidence if desired. The principle of voluntary sterilization in appropriate cases has been approved by the Royal College of Physicians. We would like to see the College specify in greater detail than is given by the Brock Committee in what medical and genetic conditions it regards sterilization appropriate.

(9) **How Far Could Parental Instincts, Dissociated from Sexual, Effect Replacement?**

It is argued by some that the perpetuation of the species primarily depends on the sexual functions by which animals are impelled to mate when they are entirely unconscious of parental feelings; that, through physiological sequences, the parental instincts only reveal themselves when they are called for—i.e. when the young are born; and that these instincts are not continuously present and operative in the human being to a sufficient degree to ensure perpetuation of the species *after contraception has severed them from their sexual precursors*. In other words, it has been contended that philoprogenitive instincts are alone too weak to

* A copy of the Report (minus appendices) was attached to the Memorandum. The other documents attached were (1) a list of authorities, associations, etc., which have passed resolutions in favour of giving legal effect to the recommendations of the Report; (2) *Better Unborn*, a pamphlet describing "forty-two families which could be said to belong to the C3 element of our population"; and (3) a letter to the *Week-end Review* by a hereditarily deformed man whose sterilization had been secured through the help of the *Eugenics Society*.

effect racial survival and that a universalized knowledge of how to prevent pregnancy will cause race suicide.

This argument cannot at present be disproved. Nevertheless, we believe that the philoprogenitive instincts of normal men and women are powerful and operative impulses, much influenced by precept and example, whose alleged weakness has been falsely deduced from the fact that their free expression is restricted by a host of social impediments and economic deterrents. Indeed, these deterrents have caused an aberration of philoprogenitive instincts. A love of children has resulted in a restriction of their number, good prospects for a few being preferred to poverty or only modest prospects for many. Even if conditions were favourable to unrestricted voluntary parenthood, some selfish couples would deliberately avoid having children as they do to-day. In time, however, the processes of natural selection, which determine survival, would change; the emphasis would be displaced from the sexual functions, where it has rested up to now, to the parental.

But would parental instincts, un-reinforced by considerations of self-interest, be strong or widespread enough to effect replacement? As previously remarked, we favour the *equalization* of the economic and social conditions of parents and childless couples. Under these conditions, the valuable philoprogenitive instincts would mainly determine reproduction and would have the best chance of spreading throughout posterity. But if it were to turn out that, against such a background, reproduction fell short of requirements, it might prove necessary to attach positive incentives to parenthood, while at the same time penalizing the childless. It has been argued that the high birth rates which have been recorded during this war are in part attributable to the fact that pregnant women and mothers of young children are not called up for national service. It is difficult to assess how much truth there is in this contention. But if it has any basis, it provides an illustration of how motives which have nothing to do with philoprogenitiveness can result in the in-

crease of planned and "wanted" pregnancies. Children were an economic asset in the past, both in field and factory. A recent Russian law confers marks of very high prestige as well as substantial economic benefits on parents of very large families.*

May it prove necessary to supplement philoprogenitive impulses with others based on economic or social self-interest? The question cannot be answered, though light might be thrown on it by detailed studies of differential fertility.

Is any social, economic, religious or occupational sub-class of the population in this or in any other country replacing itself by means of pregnancies which are for the most part planned and wanted? We do not know the answer; research in this direction would be welcome.

(10) **Social and Economic Changes Needed to Equalize the Position of Parents and Childless Persons**

To equalize the position of the parent (irrespective of the number of children) and the childless adult, many changes and adjustments are called for. The Royal Commission will have taken evidence from many sources on these subjects. As to several, it will receive from its expert committees better information than we can supply. We add a few brief notes.

Family Allowances. These are desirable for many reasons other than eugenic. If the positions of parents and non-parents are to be genuinely equalized, allowances should begin with the first child and an equal additional allowance be given for every subsequent child. We would stress, however, the need that allowances should be in some considerable measure proportional to the income of the family, and if a flat-rate scheme be adopted, it should be supplemented by an additional allowance proportional to income up to a certain level beyond which

* We are inclined to predict that the Russian Government will be led by experience to take eugenic considerations into account in administering this law. The Order of "Heroine Mother" would hardly be appropriate for a moronic mother of ten or more mentally subnormal children, some of which have to be reared at the expense of the State.

further increments should not be necessary. The flat-rate scheme would satisfy minimum standards and would have no eugenic effects. Indeed, if not supplemented as suggested, its effect in some directions might be dysgenic. The size of a Civil Servant's family, for instance, is not affected by the fact that he may earn £3,000 at the age of 60, but by the income he receives between the ages of 25 and 40. If his income at that period is to be further taxed to provide for the flat-rate scheme, it is highly probable that his family will be even smaller than at present. But the supplementary scheme we have suggested will avoid this danger. Different views are held as to whether allowances are best paid in cash, in kind, or partly in cash and partly in kind. These must be largely speculative as we have no experience on which to base our judgment. It is still more difficult to say whether any one of these three ways would be eugenically preferable to the others.

The supplementary and graded allowance, over and above the flat rate, might be supplied as part of a system of income-tax liabilities and rebates, or as a compulsory insurance scheme, wherein payments and benefits would be stratified according to income levels up to a certain maximum. Towards such a supplementary scheme, the state would not make any contribution whatsoever. What, in effect, would be involved would be a re-distribution of the collective income of individuals and families between certain income levels. We wish to point out, however, that while identical re-distribution could be effected either by insurance schemes or by income-tax rebates, the former method possesses an important advantage, for it would be obvious to all that contributions were derived solely from the groups benefiting—contributions and benefits being in proportion. On the other hand it would be impossible to convince many people, even some of considerable intelligence, that the income-tax rebates were not a gift to the rich from the state.

Encouragement of early marriage. We favour such encouragement, though we have no special views as to how it should be given.

The war interrupted an investigation of the subject promoted by the *Society*. The removal of arbitrary restrictions on early marriage in certain occupations and professions (including the Civil Services, Local Government Authorities, peace-time establishments of the armed forces) might be a matter for legislation, central and local.

Child-bearing. The cost of maternity services should be made as low as possible or even provided free in all income groups; and the worries and stresses of childbirth should, as far as possible, be removed. Home-helps should be provided during confinement and at times of family crisis, and pregnant and nursing mothers in employment should be financially helped on a generous scale. We support the recommendations of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynæcologists on this subject.

Education. We welcome the Education Act (1944), having recognized in the costs of what has been called a "good education" one of the main deterrents from parenthood.

Housing. Schemes for housing and town planning should provide adequate variation in size of house to accommodate families of varying numbers. Schemes should offer facilities for the care, recreation and upbringing of children and should help large families by providing crèches, nursery schools and similar services. We favour schemes for facilitating the residential mobility of families as the number of children augments, without increase in rent charges. The subject of housing is intricate and technical. We have no special knowledge of it, but stress its important demographic aspects.

II. Miscellaneous

We would like to be allowed to submit observations on four other subjects:

- (a) The Social Problem Group.
- (b) The type of person who to-day seeks genetic advice (note by Dr. C. P. Blacker).
- (c) Health examinations before marriage.
- (d) The establishment of an Imperial Institute of Demographic Studies.

(a) *The Social Problem Group*. This term was first used by the Wood Committee (1929) which had been asked to investigate the incidence of Mental Defect in England and Wales and to make recommendations as to how the problem could best be dealt with. Six areas were carefully examined by Dr. E. O. Lewis from whom, we understand, the Royal Commission has received evidence. Here are two passages from the Wood Report :

There is yet a further reason which renders it essential for us to consider this marginal group. The two groups of mentally defective and retarded children are not merely contiguous groups ; there is scientific ground for thinking that a causal relation exists between them. The findings of our investigation . . . point to the conclusion that the majority of the feeble-minded are to be found within a relatively small social group, a group which may be described as the subnormal or social problem group, representing approximately 10 per cent of the whole population. Most of the parents in this subnormal group are themselves of poor mental endowment and would no doubt have been classed, when children, among the dull or retarded. Similarly, the dull children of the present generation, who form a large majority amongst children in this subnormal group, are the potential parents of many feeble-minded in the next generation. Therefore, from the standpoint of the prevention of many social evils it is of the utmost importance that the problem of the education and social care of the borderline retarded child should be effectively tackled.

Let us assume that we could segregate as a separate community all the families in this country containing mental defectives of the primary amentia type. We should find that we had collected among them a most interesting social group. It would include, as everyone who has extensive practical experience of social service would readily admit, a much larger proportion of insane persons, epileptics, paupers, criminals (especially recidivists), unemployables, habitual slum dwellers, prostitutes, inebriates and other social inefficients than would a group of families not containing mental defectives. The overwhelming majority of the families thus collected will belong to that section of the community which we propose to term the "social problem" or "subnormal" group. This group comprises approximately the lowest 10 per cent in the social scale of most communities.

The Wood Report was published in 1929. Fourteen years later, the social problem group was again brought before the public eye by problems arising from the evacuation

of children from bombed areas. Here is an extract from a report* on the subject :

The effect of evacuation was to flood the dark places with light and bring home to the national consciousness that the "submerged tenth" described by Charles Booth still exists in our towns like a hidden sore, poor, dirty, crude in its habits, and an intolerable and degrading burden to decent people forced by poverty to neighbour it. Within this group are the "problem families" always on the edge of pauperism and crime, riddled with mental and physical defect, in and out of the courts for child neglect, a menace to the community, of which the gravity is out of all proportion to their numbers.

The social problem group has, we think, interest for the Royal Commission because of another feature not mentioned above, namely an abnormally high fertility. "Two common types in this group," say the Wood Committee, "are the unmarried women of child-bearing age admitted two, three or more times to the maternity ward of the workhouse, and the recidivist of the criminal classes. Those two types alone are the parents of a not inconsiderable number of the mental defectives who become social dangers and economic burdens ; and probably this is the most serious offence of these parents against the community."

It is uncertain whether the social problem group is primarily the lower end of a continuous curve of distribution or a distinct sub-population with features that differentiate it biologically from those of the rest of the population. If the 10 per cent of the population which is lowest from the point of view of intelligence or any other socially desirable quality is arbitrarily cut off and studied in isolation, it will inevitably present many of the features of the social problem group. Furthermore, natural selection will promote the combination of socially desirable or socially undesirable qualities in the same persons. On the other hand, it is possible that genetic factors interacting with bad environmental conditions have, owing to a kind of vicious circle, more or less isolated a sub-population.

We do not feel that existing evidence as yet permits a decision in favour of either

* *Our Towns : A Close-up*. Oxford University Press, 1943.

hypothesis. This indecision makes careful research all the more necessary. In either event, however, it is inevitable that the group should be one of high fertility.

The Government's proposals (Cmd. 6550) for National Insurance suggest how further light could be thrown on this subject. It is proposed to appoint a Minister of National Insurance, and (para. 157) "Under the new scheme a wide network of local offices will be established at which the public may lodge claims, seek information or guidance, and obtain payments of certain benefits." It is also proposed to draw up a Register of Insured Persons. Paragraph 37 reads :

Under the new scheme it will be necessary to obtain and classify information about the whole population so as to enable every person to be placed in his or her appropriate insurance class. After that it will be necessary to compile and maintain one or more central registers, in which the insurance record and status of every insured person will be entered and kept up to date. The register will be an essential feature of the scheme for several reasons, first to record classification and transfer between classes, second to facilitate enforcement of the payment of contributions, and third so that *the record of any insured person in relation to contributions and benefits* can be ascertained when necessary. The task of organization involved in compiling and maintaining the register is obviously one of the first magnitude, but it is an unavoidable step and one which must ultimately promote efficiency and economy. (Our italics.)

This register should yield valuable information about the Social Problem Group. Machinery will have to be created to check the careless admission of claims and the irresponsible distribution of benefits. If the people in question do, in fact, present multiple social problems, the fact should show up in the records of the national register. It would be a good thing if the Royal Commission could recommend that special attention be devoted to this matter by the Ministry concerned with National Insurance, so that information which would enable us to form a true estimate of the nature of this group is not ignored or buried in files.

(b) *The type of person who to-day seeks genetic advice.* The following is submitted by Dr. C. P. Blacker, Honorary Secretary of the *Eugenics Society* :

"During the last fourteen years, I have been much consulted by people who write to the *Society* for guidance on genetic problems affecting marriage and parenthood. Many factors have to be taken into account in giving an opinion. Not only must a careful pedigree be obtained ; the individual should also be seen and examined. For obvious reasons, the *Society* cannot undertake to give these elaborate services free to all comers, but I undertake to provide them for persons who are members of the *Society*.

"The *Society* has produced a Schedule of instructions about how a pedigree should be drawn up. I am in the habit of sending this document to persons wanting genetic advice, at the same time asking them to carry out the contained instructions. Recipients are asked to return the schedule to me when completed. I then arrange for the inquirer to come to see me with his married or betrothed partner.

"I would here like to be allowed to make some general remarks about the people I have seen in this way.

"The average person who seeks guidance in this sphere is a morally responsible and conscientious individual who generally comes from the middle class. His family history often exhibits qualities markedly above the average as well as the black spots which cause the misgivings. In the majority of cases, the good qualities have, in my opinion, outweighed the bad and after pointing out that it is impossible to guarantee of any mating that the children will be normal, I have advised them to take the risk and have children.

"In most cases, the abnormality which is causing concern, while generally recognized as hereditary, does not conform in its incidence to the simple Mendelian hypotheses of dominance, recessiveness and sex-linkage. In some instances, the hereditary nature of the abnormality is doubtful. (Not all fits are the expression of idiopathic epilepsy ; not all forms of amentia are primary.) In many cases the couple are obviously of good type, capable of making good parents.

"The predominance of socially valuable persons among those who to-day seek guid-

ance on eugenic questions provides an example of the differential effects of propaganda. In the last twenty-five years the population of this country has heard much about the functions of parenthood. Much has been said about birth control, about over-population, about threatened depopulation, about hereditary diseases, about the health of mothers and children. The first to be reached by such propaganda are the scrupulous, conscientious and intelligent elements of the population; the last to be touched are the feckless, improvident and stupid. The last-named are the people at whom the propaganda is aimed; yet they are the last to respond.

"Two lessons, it seems to me, are to be learned from the above. The first is that great care must be taken in giving genetic advice. If the good qualities shown by the inquirer himself and discernible among his relatives are not taken carefully into account and balanced against the bad, if in other words the problem is hastily or cursorily surveyed and pronounced upon, there is a danger of the community being deprived of children who would be valuable assets to posterity.

"The second lesson is that the principles of negative eugenics should be known by those who administer the social services. If it is true that large families (often decimated by high wastages) are born to subnormal and irresponsible parents, it is also true that many of their pregnancies are unplanned and unwanted. Such parents are grateful for guidance and help; but they often lack the qualities to help themselves. Hence the need of eugenically enlightened social services."

(c) *Health examinations before marriage.* Various proposals have been made about health examinations before marriage, and in certain countries such examinations are compulsory. The question has been discussed in the House of Lords (November 17th, 1934: Speech by Lord Kilmaine).

We do not believe that compulsory examinations are yet practicable in this country. Nor do we believe that it is feasible to ask doctors to produce *certificates* of fitness for marriage. (The most that is possible for a doctor is to give a declaration that, to the best of his knowledge, the individual is free from certain diseases such as venereal diseases and tuberculosis.) But we do believe that, without asking for certificates, people should get themselves examined before marriage. Many doctors, however, are in doubt as to how they should conduct such examinations, and very delicate questions are raised.

To help the medical profession in this matter, the *Society* has produced a Prenuptial Health Schedule which provides the necessary guidance. The documents have been in fairly continuous demand since they were prepared in 1936, and the British Medical Association is in the habit of referring inquirers to us.

(d) *An Imperial Institute of Demographic Studies.* We regard the collection of comprehensive and accurate data on human reproductive trends as a vital task of the future. This need would, in our view, be best achieved by the creation of an Imperial Institute of Demographic Studies with ample funds and staff. We would like to see such an Institute established on a high level—perhaps depending from the Privy Council as does the Medical Research Council. Demographic methods throughout the empire could then be co-ordinated by frequent conferences with representatives of the Dominions and Crown Colonies; and research could be promoted and collated. The Institute might well bring this country into a position of world leadership in the matter of demographic methods. Such a creation would be a really worthy legacy of the Royal Commission, and would give it unquestioned historical importance.