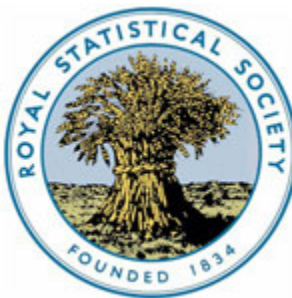


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Review

Author(s): G. U. Y.

Review by: G. U. Y.

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The Supplement includes a brief but illuminating section on the general social policy of the Co-operative Distributive Societies in relation to educational activities, the work undertaken by local societies, by the Co-operative Union and by organizations such as the Co-operative Students' Fellowship, the Women's Co-operative Guild, etc., receiving special attention. C.E.C.

11.—*Problems of Population and Parenthood: being the Second Report of and the Chief Evidence taken by the National Birth-rate Commission*, 1918-20. clxvi + 423 pp., 8vo. London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1920. Price 25s. net.

The so-called "Commission" on the Birth-rate, appointed by the National Council of Public Morals, issued its first Report in 1916. In view of the effects of the war there was a demand from various quarters that the Commission should not be disbanded but should continue its labours, and a resolution to that effect was carried at a meeting on "Marriage and Parenthood" held in March, 1918. The Council accordingly re-appointed the Commission, from which some of the former members, including Dr. Greenwood, have resigned, while others have been added. The terms of reference include the further consideration of the fall in the legitimate birth-rate; the "causes and prevention of the illegitimate "birth-rate"; the influence of ante-natal disease; the movements of population and the distribution of the sexes in the Dominions; the economic problems of parenthood; the housing problem in relation to parenthood; venereal disease; the industrial employment of women of childbearing age; "the differential or qualitative "aspects of the present birth-rate"; the constitution and uses of the Ministry of Health; the need of a census after the war, and the desirability of a permanent anthropometric department in the Ministry of Health.

Little of the volume will be of direct interest to the statistician. The report itself opens with a somewhat scanty section of ten pages on recent statistics of the birth-rate, containing nothing essentially new. It concludes with recommendations that the census in different parts of the Empire should be simultaneous; that the authorities should at the same time obtain "the necessary information" as to the production and supply of food; and that an enquiry should be initiated into the relation of religion (Anglican or Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish) to the birth-rate.

Section II passes to the voluntary restriction of the birth-rate in its ethical, economic and national aspects. On the former head the arguments for and against the use of contraceptive methods are merely set out. The Commission as such has reached no conclusion, though to judge by the notes of reservation mentioned below, the majority of the members are against the use of such methods.

In Section III the Commission deals with ante-natal and infantile mortality, and in Section IV with "Contributory Causes of Loss of "Population"—venereal disease, alcoholism and the law of marriage

and divorce. In the sub-section on alcoholism much play is made with Stockard's experiments on guinea-pigs. No reference is made to Pearl's experiments on poultry, in which the offspring of alcoholised individuals were found to be fewer in numbers than those of the untreated, but showed a lower post-natal mortality, a higher weight at birth and a higher adult weight. Why is no reference made to this work? His results are said by Pearl to be in accordance with the results obtained by Nice with mice, and by Ivanov with rabbits, guinea-pigs, dogs and sheep. No references are given to any of these researches either. Why? The statement that "as against this mass of concordant evidence," *i.e.*, the work of Stockard and others, "there can only be set the negative facts "that in some breeding experiments the offspring of alcoholised "animals have been normal" is a mere travesty of the truth. In Dr. Pearl's experiments, alcohol did not merely fail to act harmfully, it acted, apparently, as a beneficial ante-natal selective agent.

Finally in Section V is given a "suggested outline of further "enquiry"—(i) The development and education of young citizens for worthy parenthood; (ii) Sociological problems

The report is signed by thirty-two members of the Commission. It is followed by no less than eleven notes of reservation. Twelve members are definitely against the use of contraceptive methods; eleven sign another note to the effect that such methods are harmful; Monsignor Brown states that his Church forbids their use; four members sign a note to the effect that the use of such methods is "much less detrimental than any other course open to millions "of people." The remainder of the reservations are concerned with divorce, venereal disease and alcohol.

Of the minutes of evidence, the statistician may find of interest Professor Keith's evidence with respect to the proposed physical survey; Sir Henry Rew's with respect to food production; Dr. Stevenson's on the proposed general register; Dr. Ewart's evidence on the effect of parental ages at birth of children; and Dr. Halford Ross's experience on the apparent effect of a decrease in the death-rate in the Suez Canal zone in decreasing the birth-rate.

As in the case of the first Report there is no index, an omission which renders it a matter of the utmost difficulty to track any specific point through the maze of evidence. . . G.U.Y.

12.—Other New Publications.*

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: Division of International Law. Pamphlet No. 32. Violation of the Laws and Customs of War: Reports of Majority and Dissenting Reports of American and Japanese Members of the Commission of Responsibilities, Conference of Paris, 1919. 82 pp., 8vo. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919.

[Comprises articles 227-230 of the Conditions of Peace, dealing with Penalties; the Purpose and Composition of the Commission, its Report,

* See also "Additions to Library," page 714, *sqq.*