

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

200
Harvard Univ.
Indian population

FROM: RSM

DATE: September 10, 1953

TO:

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COMMENTS:

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SUBJECT:

The document prepared by Dr. John Gordon and collaborators on population is, I think, the most thoughtful and well balanced presentation of the subject I have seen. The proposal which forms Part IV contains the most practical design which has come to us in some five years of waiting. I hope very much that we can give it the most serious consideration, as it is high time we were doing something about the most important of all public health problems.

It is interesting that although Gordon pays a good deal of attention in the early parts of the document to the importance of individual motivation in the restriction of population growth, very little emphasis is placed on this in the experimental design. He demonstrates quite clearly that ~~that~~ motivation takes precedence over the immediate availability of a satisfactory method of birth control, and the conclusion seems almost inescapable that where there is a will there is a way. Note, for example, the very different methods employed in France and Ireland when the people in these two countries recognized the necessity of controlling population growth. One wonders if it would not be possible to include in his experimental design some villages in which the primary effort was directed to enlightening the population on the advantages to them as individuals of having fewer children. Ideally, there could be some villages in which this was the only effort undertaken and some others in which these measures were combined with education in regard to methodology. If it were possible to do this along with the other experiments, the project might become something of a classic. If anyone can do this most important job, the team of Gordon, Taylor, et al., would appear almost unbeatable.

Incidentally, I agree with Bal that a larger participation of the Indian government would in all probability be healthier in the long run although it might make for some little administrative inconvenience at the start. One wonders if Taylor feels as strongly on this point as Gordon seems to.

RSM:MER
Copy to Dr. M. C. Balfour

R. S. M.

RSM