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PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF POPULATION COUNCIL

The relation of population to material and cultural resources of the world presents one of the most critical and urgent problems of the day. There are few questions which relate more directly to human welfare in the years ahead.

One needs only to witness the misery of millions of the world's population to appreciate the extent to which many people are lacking even the bare physical necessities of life. There is a growing realization that these needs must somehow be met and that much more than economic problems are involved. Man does not live by bread alone. Consideration must also be given to his mental and emotional well-being -- to education, religion, art and other forms of expression which enable man to achieve self-realization. Satisfaction and happiness come from creating and doing and a sense of accomplishment. Thus, solutions to questions of population involve ultimately not only matters of physical and material well-being, but also those of a cultural, moral and spiritual nature.

Some students of these questions believe that the development and application of technology will be rapid enough to provide satisfactory living conditions for the entire human race and that efforts should be directed only to the more effective development and utilization of the world's resources. Others think that unless measures to reduce the birth rate are quickly and successfully adopted in several areas the rapid growth of population in relation to resources may have catastrophic results. Still others feel that

during the past century we have acquired a large body of knowledge and have applied much of it for the control of disease and premature death, but that we have not even begun to understand the problem of reproduction in man nor the factors - biological, physiological and psychological - which are associated with human reproduction. Many intermediate points of view are maintained.

The fact that many conflicting opinions have been expressed on the subject in recent years is understandable in view of the number and complexity of the factors involved. These range all the way from the possibilities of photosynthesis to matters of social structure. An understanding of the problem which might lead to solutions involves the use of all the information we now possess and the acquisition of a much greater store of fundamental knowledge. It involves a balanced and a simultaneous development in each of the significant areas affecting population change.

#### Proposed Action

In order to ascertain what most usefully can be done to stimulate interest in population questions, to organize knowledge in the field, to develop facts and to stimulate new research with respect to consequential questions, it is thought that there is need for some agency to serve as a focal point for the subject.

To this end it is proposed that there be formed under the laws of the State of New York a membership corporation with substantial assets and outstanding lay and professional leadership.

The broad objects of such a corporation (which it is proposed be called the "Population Council") would be:

- (a) To study the problems presented by the increasing population of the world and the relation of that population to material and cultural resources.
- (b) To encourage and support research and to disseminate as appropriate the knowledge resulting from such research.
- (c) To serve generally as a center for the collection and exchange of facts and information on the significant ideas and developments relating to population questions.
- (d) To cooperate with individuals and institutions in the development of programs.
- (e) To take initiative in the broad fields which in the aggregate constitute the population problem.

The foregoing is necessarily general. It is intended to express the broad objects of the corporation. Obviously the precise direction which the activities of the Council may take from time to time will depend upon the judgment of its leadership, which must be ever on the alert for opportunities of usefulness within its broad objectives. The keynote of its activities will be selectivity. Its program must be balanced but not diffuse. In general it is considered that the Council will remain small so as not to dissipate its strength in unwieldy ventures. Direct operations will be confined to those which cannot be accomplished more effectively through assisting other agencies or institutions.

In an effort to visualize some of the specific types of activities in which the corporation may participate directly or indirectly, the following are suggested:

1. Basic scientific research concerning the physiology of human reproduction, including physiological variations in the sperm and ovum in their growth and development, to the end that scientific knowledge may be increased concerning human fertility.
2. Applied research regarding the effectiveness of contraceptive methods having in mind the customs, attitudes and living conditions of persons in areas where population pressures are most acute.
3. Studies relating to the social, ethical and moral implications of contraceptive methods.
4. The development in areas where population pressures are most acute of focal centers for study and research on population questions, having in mind the importance of coordinated work in demography, public health, agriculture, the social sciences and other subjects bearing on population.
5. The training of professional personnel in areas where population pressures are or may become acute not only through the granting of fellowships for study abroad but also by encouraging local training.
6. The fostering of controlled experiments in areas of acute population pressure to determine the impact upon the birth rate of such separate factors as economic development, general education and contraceptive education.



7. Studies at close range in one or more small representative communities of the various factors which influence population change, recognizing particularly the interrelationships of such factors.

8. Studies of the role of migration as a factor in population change.

9. Studies of the factors governing family size and the modes of their change.

10. Research in both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of population in the United States in relation to potential material and cultural resources.

#### General Comments

The foregoing illustrations indicate the scope of the interests of the Council. There are many programs being carried on in different fields of human activity which are designed to improve the condition of mankind. One of the problems appears to be that there is no continuing group which is considering these activities from a population point of view. This it is hoped the Council will be able to do.

It is not intended to duplicate useful work which is now in progress in relation to these problems. The addition of competent personnel and substantial resources should not only increase the significance of these activities but also materially strengthen and accelerate the total effort toward the attainment of solutions which are so essential to human welfare in the future.

The task ahead is to study the facts with respect to significant problems relating to population and to encourage action to the end that the problems may ultimately be understood and solved.