

WORLD POPULATION WILL BE 3,500 MILLION IN 1969

In 1953 the world population reached 2,500 million.

By January 1, 1969 — 16 years later — the population will be bigger by 1,000 million.

Another 1,000 population gain is expected by 1983.

Another 7,000 million people will be crowded into the world by the year 2000.

The passing of each year means millions of more mouths to feed, and millions of more bodies to bury.

In 1968 approximately 118 million babies will be born — 324,000 a day or 225 every minute.

In 1968 almost 49 million people will die — 133,000 each day or 93 per minute.

About one-third of the people now living are under 15 years of age. In the developing countries, the figure approaches one-half.

The world's highest population growth rates are in El Salvador (3.7 per cent),

and Venezuela (3.6 per cent). About 85 per cent of all births today are occurring in the less-developed countries, where food is not sufficient, illiteracy widespread and personal incomes extremely low.

Less than one-fifth of the global population in the year 2000 is expected to be living in the developed countries.

These startling statistics graphically summarize a situation in virtually every country, especially in nations — India and Pakistan, for example — where the birth rate is very high and food production lags dangerously behind.

Some experts concerned with the global population "explosion" are understandably gloomy about the future. They foresee millions of people in overcrowded urban centers suffering from the effects of malnutrition or hunger, other millions dying

from famine. They anticipate hunger riots as well as political and economic upheavals in some countries.

Other experts, however, express varying degrees of optimism when they voice their views on what the situation is apt to be like in the next two or three decades. Formerly alarmed by forecasts, they are now heartened by the progress being made in birth control and in food production.

Pessimists and optimists alike concede that time is the crucial factor — how rapidly nations can bring populations and food supplies into closer balance. Dozens of countries already have large-scale family planning programs under way, and agriculture is being intensified. The United States is helping them in both respects. Pessimism is yielding to optimism.

Among the optimists in the United States is Dr. Donald J. Bogue, a demographer who directs the University of Chicago's Community and Family Center. He believes the population explosion is turning out to be a myth. The rising global birth rate, he is confident, will be brought

under control by the year 2000.

There are signs the birth rate is falling in South Korea, India, Pakistan and mainland China, and in some Latin American countries as well," Dr. Bogue said. "I think it will soon start to fall, if it has not already done so, in Indonesia and the Philippines."

He cited evidence showing an almost worldwide trend toward smaller families. The major nations of Europe as well as Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States are countries where families are controlling fertility, Dr. Bogue added. The availability of educational materials about contraception and greater public acceptance of improved contraceptive methods are enabling married couples of all economic levels to avoid unwanted births.

The fact that escapes the attention of most persons is that the rapidly increasing population is due not so much to a rising birth rate as to a great decrease in death rates in the past 20 years. Fewer people are dying because modern medicine

and public health practices are prolonging their lives. Nations are realizing that birth control must simultaneously accompany death control if populations are to be stabilized at levels conducive to better social conditions, greater economic stability and higher standards of living for all people.

As long as there are few reins on population and as food — the most nutritious kind — is not adequately available, malnutrition will make its victims liabilities rather than assets to their countries. About 10,000 people die every day of malnutrition, either starving to death or dying because their diet failed to protect them from disease. Malnutrition accounts for about one of every 13 deaths — a ratio that is much higher in the hungry countries.

One regrettable tragedy is that the burden of overpopulation falls most heavily on the shoulders of the poor — the poorer nations, poorer families, and poorer children. These are the ones who suffer the greatest from the effects of uncontrolled population increases.

In the years ahead, population gains will cause many complications for some nations. Experts believe that agricultural output will increase but not enough, that more children will grow up illiterate and in ill health, and that it will be very hard to find jobs for youth 18-24 years old.

Officials in some poor countries, where people for differing reasons are disinterested in family planning, have even suggested the use of punitive measures to enforce birth control practices. Such measures, because they are extreme, are not likely to be acceptable.

“If people are fully informed about the pros and cons of contraception, and if they can inexpensively and readily obtain contraceptives and use them advantageously and confidently, they will become confirmed supporters of limited family sizes,” one prominent U.S. demographer said.

Robert C. Cook, president of the Population Reference Bureau, Inc., in Washington, D.C. says of the population dilemma:

"The current phenomenal increase in world population has no precedent in history. . . Today the world is confronted with the greatest and most complicated problem in adjustment mankind has ever had to face. The matter is extremely urgent.

"Until the number of births in the world declines by at least 20 million per year, it cannot be said that

even an adequate beginning toward stabilization has been made."

Only the passage of years will reveal whether mankind will act to drastically cut the number of births, or suffer the many dangers of an overpopulated, underfed world. (IPS) — *By Sam W. Morris in the Manila Chronicle June 19, 1968.*

CONTRADICTORY CONDITIONS

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way — in short, the period was so far alike the present period that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. — *Charles Dickens*