

Book Reviews

Population and Progress in the Far East.

Warren S. Thompson. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill., 1959. 443 pp. \$7.50.

In this book, Warren Thompson, the distinguished and well-known population expert, writes of Asian economic, sociocultural, and population problems with knowledge, understanding, and sympathy. In a sense, the book dates back to 1929 when Thompson brought out his prophetic *Danger Spots in World Population*, wherein he pointed out the relationship between population pressure and wars and pleaded for some understanding of the economic problems of overcrowded countries. In 1946 he undertook a revision of that book but brought out what was really a new book, *Population and Peace in the Pacific*, the first competent and objective demographic survey of the region. Now Thompson has revised this and written what is in many ways another new book, *Population and Progress in the Far East*.

The title is apt, for here the author notes and evaluates the remarkable political, cultural, economic, and social changes (and their interrelationship with basic demographic factors) that have occurred in the region since the termination of World War II. Today, except for a few minor areas, Asia is politically free and has overthrown the discredited and unwanted European imperialism. (The British quit voluntarily and gracefully; the Dutch and the French, not so gracefully.) Economically, Asia is undergoing belated agricultural and industrial revolutions. More land is being brought under cultivation, land which through the centuries has been considered second-rate and uncultivable. Production per unit under cultivation is increasing, through the use of modern agricultural techniques. Despite limitations of raw materials, capital resources, and technological "know-how," every country in the region has embarked on heavy and large-scale industrialization, thanks to the assistance of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, to

economic aid from the United States, to the Colombo Plan, and to other assistance. The Asian countries hope that industrialization will help to siphon surplus population from overcrowded agricultural regions into urban manufacturing areas.

The emancipation of women has begun, and Asian women today occupy responsible positions and are gaining political, legal, and economic equality with men. What is more, Asia is trying to lift up the segments of its population which, through social and religious tradition, have been submerged and discriminated against. The hard cake of custom that offers resistance to change is being broken in Asia. Planned changes as well as involuntary changes in response to newly introduced technological innovations are taking place. Asia is trying to move from the bullock-cart stage to the jet age in one incredible leap.

Perhaps the most important change is in the economic-political structure of government and society. Every Asian country is witnessing a struggle between conflicting ideologies—between individual freedom, democracy and free enterprise, and all that is best in the Western liberal tradition on the one hand and totalitarianism, regimentation, "democratic dictatorship," and communism on the other. In the race for rapid economic development the conflict is symbolized by India and China—the one with its freedom, democracy, and mixed economy and the other with its Communist controls and regimentation.

Herein also lies the basic controversy between Malthus and Marx. Are huge populations an asset or a liability in an underdeveloped country attempting to raise its living standards? Japan and India are dedicated to an official policy of planned parenthood, whereas in China today the policy is pronatalist. Although for nearly 3 years the People's Republic of China embarked on a vigorous campaign for birth control, last year the policy was reversed in favor of the Marxian view of the population

question. And if China's communist economy is able to deliver the goods despite her teeming numbers and her alarming rate of growth (the net annual increase today is more than 20 million), the people of India may begin to wonder why their numbers must be reduced to facilitate quick economic progress. On the other hand, China might use her massive numbers as an excuse for expansion in the near future.

Thompson covers all these problems and more, as they are seen in Japan, India, China, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, North and South Vietnam, Korea, and Taiwan, and includes a wealth of documentary evidence and personal observation. His observations on the demographic situation in all these areas are sound and relevant. However, his picture of policy in China is no longer accurate, for the policy has been changed since the book went to press.

It is impossible in a brief review to do justice to Thompson's book. It should be compulsory reading for every student of Asian affairs, and not just for demographers or social scientists. Both the author and the publisher are to be congratulated on having given us this book.

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A Record of History and Evolution of Early American Bridges.

Llewellyn Nathaniel Edwards. University Press, Orono, Maine. 1959. xii + 204 pp. Plates. \$5.

Although Llewellyn Edwards maintained that his intensive studies of the history of American bridges were a hobby, this little book is anything but the work of an amateur. The completed manuscript was prepared for publication through the efforts of Edwards' widow and a number of his former colleagues. The resulting volume is a valuable addition to the literature on the development of bridge engineering—a subject that deserves fuller analytical treatment than has been given it in the past. There is certainly no lack of effusive writing on the architectural and scenic character of the bridge, but there is too little serious consideration of the technical significance of the bridge in terms of materials and structural theory.

As an active and successful bridge designer until shortly before his death