

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Demographic Yearbook 1949-50, Second Issue.** 1950. United Nations, Department of Social Affairs (Population Division), Department of Economic Affairs (Statistical Office). New York. Pp. 558. (45s.; \$6; Sw. Fr. 24).

With the publication of the first issue of the Demographic Yearbook, a precedent was established in the presentation of comprehensive and sound demographic data for almost every country in the world. The most reliable and recent figures on population, mortality, natality, and migration were collected for the years up to and including 1947, making possible up-to-date descriptions of each country and comparisons of characteristics in different countries.

This second issue of the Yearbook continues the main descriptions and further enlarges the field covered in the first issue. It gives a number of basic tables of population composition, economic characteristics, mortality rates, and migration across national boundaries for the years up to 1948 and in many cases up to 1949. Various sources of data are used, but for a number of the tables special questionnaires were answered by government and administrative departments. Undoubtedly the population data thus presented constitute the most comprehensive and up-to-date body of knowledge at present available. Moreover, this issue includes in the text a chapter which analyses regional population trends and attempts some interpretation of them.

In addition to the basic tables of the first issue, several new tables are included, some of which will be repeated annually, and others every five years. The subject of special emphasis in this issue, that of marriage and fertility, is one of particular interest to the western countries with their ageing populations. The special tables here presented cover a wider field than the customary summaries of marriage and fertility rates: there are tables of fertility rates by age of father, of births by age of mother and order of birth, and of information concerning surviving children, proportions of children under 5 years of age, and the like.

In such a large array of tables from countries differing so widely in their methods of collecting and recording data, it is hardly surprising that discrepancies become apparent—due in some cases to the divergence of ideas and definitions in different countries, and in others to inaccuracies of all kinds. These irregularities are discussed in the text at the appropriate points, and certain steps have been taken to minimize them; moreover, several devices are introduced to safeguard against misinterpretation of the data. One of these devices in connection with population data, takes the form of a code describing the type of estimate from which the data were obtained and indicating the reliability of the estimate.

Nevertheless, the non-comparability of figures for many countries detracts to some extent from the value of certain comparisons. In every table curious differences between countries emerge, and it is important to know whether these represent real differences or whether the curious points are only the results of inaccuracies in figures or different definitions of categories. For instance, Table 6, which gives the percentages of unmarried men and women in each age-sex group, reveals a very wide range of differences. France apparently has very small proportions of single men and women at the higher ages, whilst Ireland stands out as having large proportions of unmarried men and women at all ages and particularly at the higher ages and above 65 years. Other points of interest are disclosed in other tables: from Tables 5, 7, and 8, which refer to marriage status and to women by age and number of

children, a great divergence of marriage and family patterns is revealed. In Canada the numbers of children per 1,000 women are greater than in most countries, and are especially high for young mothers; in Switzerland, the numbers of children are low, but not for older mothers. Again, in the U.S.A. and in the Netherlands the numbers of children per 1,000 women of all ages are very similar, but in the U.S.A. a clear pattern of young marriages and early family-building is indicated, whilst in the Netherlands the numbers of children born to older mothers are consistently high. The whole set of tables on marriages, births, and fertility is extremely valuable, and the linking of these tables leads to many interesting conclusions—if the figures can be relied upon.

The set of tables on economic characteristics discloses other curious facts, such as the very high proportion in Japan of women over 65 years of age who are economically active. This apparently high proportion may depend on the definition of “economically active”, which would be different in industrial and in agricultural countries and could lead to false conclusions, especially in respect of the female population.

In each succeeding issue, the Demographic Yearbook will continue to bring the basic tables up to date and will select a new subject for special emphasis, the information being directly collected for this purpose. The reports, tables, and summaries thus presented will be of permanent value to local and national authorities concerned with health, employment, population, and other social responsibilities. The successive issues will build up an encyclopaedia of knowledge to which every social scientist, educationist, and student of world affairs, should have access.

LILLI STEIN

**Probation and Related Measures.** United Nations Department of Social Affairs. New York, 1951. Pp. 284, with seven appendices and bibliography. H.M.S.O., London. (22s. 6d.)

This is an important study, well documented, and collating data from many countries. It is the first book on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders to be published by the United Nations Secretariat.

The aim of probation is the social rehabilitation of offenders without punishment. It usually means the conditional suspension of punishment after trial and sentence, and the personal supervision and guidance of the probationer. It is recognized in most civilized countries that short-term sentences do nothing to “cure” the early criminal but merely bring the law into disrespect, and that treatment should fit the offender rather than the offence. Probation is thus in no sense a “let off”, but punishment is suspended and may be imposed at any time during the period of surveillance if the conduct of the probationer so deserves. “Commutation” and “pardon” must both be distinguished from probation, for in these conditions the prisoner is not automatically subjected to personal supervision. Parole, the supervision of pre-delinquents and other maladjusted persons, binding-over, and conditional suspension of sentence without probationary supervision, are all designed to reduce or avoid prison sentences, but differ from probation in the absence of personal contact between the probationer and his supervisor.

In most countries probation was introduced by statute, but in England and in the State of Massachusetts, U.S.A., it developed from common law practice.

It is a common belief that probation is extended only to juvenile offenders facing their first conviction. This may have been true in the past, but in most countries to-day, age and previous convictions are no bar to probation. Serious crimes, and those carrying heavy *minimum* prison sentences, are by law exempted; otherwise the personal qualities of the prisoner and the chances that he will benefit from probationary supervision are the deciding factors.

Probation may be initiated by two different legal procedures. The Anglo-American method provides for the suspension of the punishment after sentence, whereas the procedure obtaining in most countries of Europe suspends the sentence itself, since it is felt by many that the