

# The Changing World

Miles E. Cary

## POPULATION AND FOOD

VERY RECENT RECOGNITION of the fact that our security is inextricably meshed with the security of other peoples is forcing us to face problems that, formerly, were believed to be none of our business. Crucial among these new-old problems is that of providing a growing world population with a subsistence food supply.

Two books published in 1948,<sup>1</sup> dealing with this problem, have already made a considerable impact on the thinking of our people; and while some of the facts and conclusions of these writers may be controversial,<sup>2</sup> nevertheless, the data and ideas presented should be given careful consideration by leaders in all countries—and especially by teachers. Here are some of the facts:

In 1630 the population of the world was around 400,000,000; today it is over 2,000,000,000, and the rate of increase is now 1 percent per year.

There are approximately four billion

acres of arable land on the earth—about two acres per person.

It is generally accepted "that 2½ acres of land of average productivity" are required if a "minimum adequate diet" is to be provided each person.

The United States, today, has some 460,000,000 acres of crop land—approximately 3.5 per person. Originally there were 560,000,000 acres.

Russia has 3.5 acres per person; India has 1.3 acres; China has only ½ acre.

Of our original good topsoil, approximately ⅓ has been lost and we are even now losing it at the rate of 500,000 acres per year. This picture of heedless depletion of resources is repeated in every field: timber, grazing land, oil, minerals, water, wild life, fish. Furthermore, this exhaustion of natural resources is now going forward in practically all areas of the earth: Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas.

What is the answer? Education. Intelligent, cooperative management of natural resources. Voluntary population control. *But the fundamental solution is education.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Osborn, Fairfield. *Our Plundered Planet*. Little Brown and Company, 1948; and Vogt, William. *Road to Survival*, William Sloan Associates, Inc., 1948.

<sup>2</sup> Mather, Kirtley F. *Enough and to Spare*. Harper & Brothers, 1944.

<sup>3</sup> Beard, Ward P., *Teaching Conservation*. American Forestry Association, 1948.



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