

Perspective



To All Who Care About Tomorrow

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AN EPISODE OCCURS every now and then that evidently contains potentials of doing immeasurable good. Without question, the publication of the *JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD CHEMISTRY* is such an occurrence. Changing conditions in our own country as well as the world over make the dissemination of knowledge concerning agricultural improvement a matter of imperative importance.

We Americans have recently become aware of the fact that we face new and unexpected circumstances that will greatly influence the future welfare of our country. Contrary to earlier expectations, we are witness to a steady and, indeed, rapid increase in our population. The prospect now is that there will be 30 million more of us within the next 20-odd years. A keen appraisal made by the Government's Agricultural Research Administration last year indicates that there are real grounds for questioning whether we can produce enough crops and other agricultural products to meet this greater demand if present diet standards are to be maintained, to say nothing of being improved. Our agriculture, too, must be brought to a point where, quite apart from food supply, it can be counted upon to provide the large amount of organic materials needed for our industrial economy.

There is relatively little new land that can be brought into production. The gist of the situation is that more and more reliance must now be placed upon technical improvements in our agricultural practices. The contributions that have been made by chemical scientists are already substantial. There is need for even greater ones. All the while it is becoming in-

creasingly necessary to make much greater advances in the whole field of conservation. The work of the chemist will literally fall upon barren ground if soil erosion is not checked and if our forests and water resources are not capably managed.

As we all know, civilization today is passing through a period of tremendous pressures. These stem to a very large degree from the startling increases that are occurring in population throughout the world. There are 700 million more people on the earth today than there were in the year 1900. This number is equivalent to the sum total of the population of Europe, North and South America, and Africa in that year. This rapid upsurge in populations is continuing so that each year there are approximately 20 million additional people—a number equal to the population of two and one half cities the size of London or New York, or, in turn, of four cities the size of Paris or Tokyo. Consequently, the question of adequate subsistence for the people of the United States as well as for people in other countries is bound to be an increasingly critical one in the years ahead.

We Americans have assumed world-wide responsibilities. Obviously no need is more essential than that of food supply. The progress of agriculture depends to a large degree upon the dissemination of technical information not only here at home but to peoples throughout the world.

The *JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD CHEMISTRY* is being launched none too soon. It commences as an episode. It can be hoped as time goes on that it may be looked upon as becoming part of an epoch in the development of the agricultural sciences.