

moment the profession of agriculture continues in most parts to be looked upon by the rural community as an end in itself rather than "as a mere means of production of victuals, hence the real danger of a growth of population which must suffer discomfort because this end becomes rapidly more difficult of realisation." If the argument in favour of the limitation of population by artificial methods is based exclusively on the means of subsistence, then its advocates do not appear to have a strong case.

It seems to us that at the present moment, the remedy suggested to limit the population of India

within reasonable bounds, purely for economic reasons, does not receive support from the Census figures and the interpretation of them. However, birth-control methods might be found necessary to form part of the social programme of this country if Western conditions and ideals of life, the economic fever and fret of competition were reproduced here on the scale of the most advanced European countries where this doctrine of regulating the birth of babies is generally accepted. In India the conditions are still not quite favourable for universally welcoming this wild goose that lays no eggs.

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## NEWS

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### PRESERVING VARIABILITY

Subsistence farmers in the Third World have been cultivating today's major food crops for over 10,000 years. By observing the natural process of mutation and by careful seed selection over the centuries, these farmers have developed astonishing crop variability. This diversity has been necessary for survival. No one wheat or rice variety provides adequate protection against monsoon failures, pests, rusts or blights.

Practical farmers welcome a dozen or more varieties of wheat to their fields, because, come drought, flood or rust, something will make it to harvest time. Despite recent impressive advances in genetic engineering, most agronomists would continue to argue that science cannot begin to match the variability of nature. (*Appropriate technology for health, Newsletter 13, 1983; World Health Forum, 1984, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 58*)

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### LOW-COST DOMESTIC WATER PURIFIER

A simple and safe water purifier from Britain, intended for people who face problems of pollution and low water pressure, is capable of treating 675 litres an hour. Tested to a pressure of 4 bar, the Aquarius 150 could be of particular assistance to village communities with poor-quality water in developing countries. It is said to produce drinking water at a much lower cost than any other similar product known to the manufacturer.

Two pressure sand filters remove all solid matter from the water, which then passes through an activated carbon filter, for removal of colour, taste and odour. A transparent sodium hypochloride tablet dispenser is supplied for water sterilisation if required. The address of the manufacturers of the Purifier: Aquarius Water Purification Co, 544 Moston Lane, Moston, Manchester M10 9RG, England. (*British Industrial News, No. 145, March 1984, p. 19*)

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