



Scandinavia and the Population Question

Population Policies and Movements in Europe

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SCANDINAVIA AND THE POPULATION QUESTION¹

So far as the continued maintenance of their populations is concerned, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark are in a position similar to that of most other Western countries. In each of the three Scandinavian countries the net reproduction rate is below unity, and in each of three countries

TABLE 29. *Gross and Net Reproduction Rates in the Scandinavian Countries*²

<i>Period</i>	Norway		Sweden		Denmark	
	Gross rate	Net rate	Gross rate	Net rate	Gross rate	Net rate
<i>1906-10</i>*	1.799	..†	1.851	1.486
<i>1926-30</i>	0.992	0.857	1.166	1.012
<i>1931</i>	1.036	0.909‡	0.900	0.785	1.064	0.929
<i>1932</i>	0.989	0.874	0.879	0.775	1.065	0.939
<i>1933</i>	0.899	0.799	0.821	0.733	1.012	0.903
<i>1934</i>	0.883	0.797	0.815	0.727	1.040	0.934
<i>1935</i>	0.869	0.783	0.811	0.729	1.022	0.902
<i>1936</i>	0.874	0.786	0.841	0.756	1.042	0.933

* Kuczynski does not give rates for this period. The gross rate for *1910-11* was 1.853 and the net rate for *1901-10* was 1.556.

† No net rate was available for *1906-10*. The net rate for *1901-10* was 1.429.

‡ The rates are for *1930-1*, as the appropriate statistics are not available for the separate years. It should be noted that an inaccuracy is introduced into the calculation of net rates for Norway, as the deaths are not given correctly by age groups but, for the bulk of the ages, the age at death is obtained simply by subtracting the year of birth from the year of death. The correct age groups are, however, used- the present writer is informed by Dr. Gunnar Jahn- when the official life tables are constructed.

this is the momentary end-point of a decline in fertility which has been proceeding for some sixty years. Table 29 gives the position up to the most recent years for which the necessary basic statistics are available. The gross reproduction rates show that, with the possible exception of Denmark, no further reduction in mortality would be sufficient to compensate for the low level of fertility. Even in the case of Denmark it is doubtful if much compensation could be obtained by reducing mortality. In 1934, a year in which mortality was relatively low, the wastage of fertility due to death was about 10,2 per cent., and women could expect to live 31, 04 years in the child-bearing period, out of the 35 years which would obtain if there were no deaths occurring to females between birth and the fiftieth birthday. Presumably it will be possible to increase the number of years lived in the child-bearing period, but, with fertility at the 1935 level³, women would have to live 33,8 years out of the 35 to raise the net reproduction rate to unity, and the necessary reduction in mortality would not be easy to achieve. This is the case in Denmark, which has the highest fertility of the three countries. In Sweden, with the lowest fertility, the situation is much less favourable. Even in 1930-1 it is doubtful if more than 4 or 5 of the 49 administrative divisions of the country (25 urban and 24 rural) had net reproduction rates equal to or greater than unity,⁴ and since then the general

¹ This chapter is based largely upon two articles by the present writer: "Population policies in Scandinavia", *Eugenics Review*, July 1938 and "The effectiveness of abortion legislation in six countries", *Modern Law Review*, Sept. 1938, together with some additional material which has been obtained in the course of the last year.

² See Note VIIa, p. 461.

³ And assuming the same age-distribution of fertility-as in 1935.

⁴ From unpublished data kindly provided by Dr. C. E. Quensel, of Lund University

level has fallen. The large towns are particularly low on the scale, and in 1935 Stockholm had a net reproduction rate of only about 0,394.¹

The implications of three rates have not passed unnoticed in Scandinavia. Long before population policies were beginning to take practical shape in any of the three countries estimates of future population had been made, showing the trends in numbers which might be expected if fertility and mortality behaved in accordance with certain sets of assumptions. In 1926 Professor S. D. Wicksell published five such estimates for Sweden, two of which showed a future decline of the population.² In 1931 Dr. Adolph Jensen made three estimates of the future population of Denmark, two of which implied a growing and the third an eventually stationary population.³ Subsequent estimates include a series for Norway, published by Professor Wicksell in 1934,⁴ and a new series for Sweden given by Professors Myrdal and Wicksell in their report to the Swedish Population Commission.⁵ With the possible exception of the last estimates, about which it is too early to judge, the lowest fertilities assumed for the purposes of computation were still higher than have actually been shown in the most recent years. It should be emphasized that these estimates were aimed primarily at elucidating the effects of certain trends, rather than at attempting to forecast the probable populations of the future. Clearly, however, such computations indicate a real interest, among the social scientists at least, in the prospects of the populations of the three countries. But the interest was not translated into concrete proposals until very recently. For one thing, each country had its own immediate problems with which to deal, and for another, it takes a considerable time to change public opinion on the population question, especially when the large majority of progressive writers in the last thirty years have supported neo-Malthusian aims.

Doubtless the attitude of the general public still remains substantially unaltered. But informed public opinion, at least in Sweden, has undergone a considerable change in the last few years. The immediate cause of this change was a book by Alva and Gunnar Myrdal, *Kris i Befolkningsfrågan (Crisis in the Population Question)*, published at the end of 1934⁶ This book, as a writer in the *Anglo-Swedish Review* expressed it, dropped a bombshell among the thinking public of Sweden.⁷ And apparently the thinking public of Sweden is much larger, proportionately, than that of England, for by the middle of 1937 the book had sold some 16,000 copies, equivalent to a sale of over 100,000 in England and Wales, a figure rarely reached even by popular novels. The book explained the significance of recent trends in

¹ *Statistisk Årsbok för Stockholms Stad, 1938, p. 35.* This is probably too low, as it is based on the Stockholm life table for 1921-30.

² Wicksell, S. D., 'Sveriges framtida befolkning under olika förutsättningar', *Ekonomisk Tidskrift*, Parts 4-5, 1926, pp. 91-123.

³ Jensen, A., "Horoscope of the population of Denmark", *Bulletin de l'Institut International de Statistique, vol. xxv, 3me. Livraison, 1931, pp. 41-9.* See also Nybolle H. C., 'Nogle væsentlige Træk af Danmarks nuværende befolkningsmæssige Forhold', *Socialt Tidsskrift*, April 1934, pp. 111-36. For a general discussion of Danish population movements and problems see Jensen, A., *Befolkningsspørgsmaalet i Danmark*, Copenhagen, 1937.

⁴ Wicksell, S. D., 'Bidrag tili den formella befolkningsteorien. Med tillämpningar på Norges befolkning', *Statsekonomisk Tidsskrift*, 1934, Parts 1-2, pp. 1-94. An official estimate of the population of Norway-up to 1945 – is given in *Folkemengdens Bevegelse, 1921-32*, pp. 194-5..

⁵ See Note VIIb, p. 462.

⁶ Myrdal, A., and Myrdal, G., *Kris i Befolkningsfrågan*, Stockholm, 1934. The seventh edition was being sold in 1937, when the present writer bought a copy in Stockholm. A Danish edition was published in 1935 and a Norwegian in 1936.

⁷ 'The depopulation alarm in Sweden', *Anglo-Swedish Review*, January 1935.

PP. 14-15-

fertility, discussed the possible consequences of a fall in population, and examined, in the light of existing knowledge, the reasons for and possible cures of the present low fertility. In particular, it placed the population problem in its social context, and showed that for the bulk of the population the existing alternatives were either poverty or family limitation. *Crisis in the Population Question* was a political and social study expressing the views of two distinguished social democrats, and it provided a factual basis for discussion of the whole question. It met the neo-Malthusian argument with an analysis of probable population trends, and to the Conservative argument that a rise in the standard of living would not increase fertility, it answered that there was nevertheless a case for relieving the pressure to which, in present circumstances, the individual standard was subjected by the raising of children.¹ Discussion of the book was widespread and early in 1935 there were radio broadcasts on the population question.² The Riksdag was soon presented with motions by private members for the establishment of a population commission, and a Royal Commission was set up in May 1935. Experts from all the related fields were co-opted- it is a Swedish tradition that experts should play a leading part in the government of the country-and seventeen reports were issued, dealing with various aspects of the subject, including a bulky general introduction to the whole field of Swedish population problems.³ In the same year a Royal Commission on Population was set up in Denmark, but in Norway there has so far been no attempt to project a coherent and unified policy concerning population problems.⁴ Up to the present, Sweden is the only member of the Scandinavian group in which population policies have been implemented on any scale. The remainder of this chapter will therefore be concerned largely with the proposals made and implemented in that country.

The Scandinavian approach to the population problem is distinguished by two Special characteristics. First, that the passing of legislation should be preceded by detailed investigations of the various aspects of the population problem. Of no other countries is this true. Even in France, where pro-natalist measures have been applied for many years, and on an ever-increasing scale, no really serious inquiry has been made at any time, either by the Commissions set up early in the twentieth century, or by the Conseil Supérieur de la Natalité, created at the end of the last War. Secondly, in the totalitarian countries-and to a considerable extent in France and Belgium, too-strong elements of repression are evident in the legal structure which has been set up to check declining fertility. In these countries the governments have tried as much to coerce people into having children as to create an environment in which they would be willing to have them. Thus, as we have seen in earlier

¹ Mr. R. Sterner, in a letter to the present writer, described the book as a *J'accuse* against prevailing social circumstances-that is, against the circumstances which compelled the bulk of the population to limit their families as the only means of mitigating poverty. Mr. Sterner was one of the Secretaries of the Population Commission and was responsible for some of the special studies.

² They were reprinted as *Debatt i Befolkningsfrågan*, Stockholm, 1935.

³ *Betänkande i Sexualfrågan*, Stockholm, 1936. A popular summary of this report was also published-[Brunskog, M.], *Famlij och Moral*, Stockholm, 1937. It should be noted that the entry of the government into the field of population policy was not unreservedly welcomed by political parties. The Conservatives regarded the measures proposed as cloaking the introduction of socialism, while some of the Labour and Social Democrat papers saw 'nationalistic delirium' in the policy. It is also interesting to note that, under the influence of widespread discussion, the name of Myrdal soon became associated with large families and largescale child breeding.

⁴ Though Dr. Jahn (Director of the Norwegian Central Statistical Office) has, with others, urged the setting up of a Royal Commission on population problems. There is a certain amount of public interest in the question in Norway. See, for example, Langeland, O. H., *Det Er Liv Eller Død Det Gjelder*, Oslo, 1937, and Lionæs, A., and Skaug, A., *Dør Vi Ut*, n.d. (this pamphlet is by the two authors responsible for the Norwegian adaptation of the Myrdals' book). A Population Commission has been set up in Finland.

chapters, there has been a general tightening up of the laws relating to abortion, new laws, or official campaigns to check birth-control propaganda or the use of contraceptives, and attempts to drive women back into the home. But in Scandinavia the initial assumption is that parenthood shall be voluntary. The mandate of the Swedish Commission categorically states that homes which are economically badly off should not be burdened by too many children, while the mandate of the Danish Commission specifies that no repressive measures shall be considered.

In practice this has a very interesting result. It means that along with measures for encouraging fertility, there must also be other measures which make it easier for people to obtain reliable birth-control information. To achieve such an object will involve considerable new activity, for in none of the Scandinavian countries is the knowledge of modern techniques of birth control particularly widespread. In Denmark, for example, there is practically no birth-control movement, though Dr. Leunbach¹ has attempted to create one, and at the end of 1937 there was still only one real birth-control clinic, that set up in 1932 by the World League for Sexual Reform.² In addition, the State hospital in Copenhagen had an ante-natal clinic, and the clinic for women's diseases gave birth-control advice in cases where it was regarded as essential. Apart from this, birth-control advice was obtainable only from private doctors.³ Yet there was considerable pressure from doctors to change this position, and particularly to repeal the law under which birth-control propaganda was deemed a punishable offence.⁴

In Sweden the position was more advanced, but still very poor at the end of 1937, especially if it is borne in mind that birth-control propaganda in Sweden was begun, partly under English influence, by Professor K. Wicksell, in February 1880⁵, and that a Malthusian League was in existence in Sweden in 1911. But birth control was not a 'respectable' subject for discussion, and only in the Post-War period, especially under the influence of the growing workers' educational movement, did the subject make any headway.⁶ By the end of 1937 there were four municipal clinics-at Göteborg, Malmö,

¹ Dr. J. H. Leunbach was a candidate at the Danish Parliamentary elections of 1935, having a platform of Sexual reform-Hodann, M., *History of Modern Morals*, p.309. See also Leunbach, J. H., "La réglementation des naissances et de l'avortement en Scandinavie", *Le Probleme Sexuel*, July 1934. PP. 31-3

² See Dr. Leunbach's report on Denmark, in International Medical Group for the Investigation of Contraception, fifth issue, London, 1934, pp. 20-1. This report also analyses the results of a questionnaire sent in 1932 by the Danish Medical Association to 2,700 doctors. 2,330 answered-though not all of the questions-and were generally in favour of giving contraceptive advice to married and unmarried persons. 1,383 were in favour of birth-control clinics where any one could obtain advice, and only 704 were against this.

³ e.g. Dr. Leunbach himself fitted Gräfenberg rings to 175 women in the period Sept. 1929 to May 1930-International *Medical Group*, fourth issue, London, 1931, P. 12

⁴ Under Section 235 of the Penal Code of 1913, a fine was prescribed for any one communicating with the public or with an unknown person or persons, either by advertisements, poster, or other means, and offering to sell articles for preventing the consequences of sexual intercourse. Abortifacients would come under this description. This law did not, however, appear to interfere with the sale of contraceptives. The writer is greatly indebted to the Secretary of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Abortion for many documents dealing with the questions of abortion and birth-control legislation in Scandinavia.

⁵ Two addresses given by Wicksell in Feb. 1880. A transcript is given in *The Malthusian*, Aug. 1880, pp. 150-1. See also Myrdal, A. and G., *Kris i Befolkningsfrdgan*, p. 39 n. The development of neo-Malthusian ideas in Sweden is discussed in some detail in *ibid.*, pp. 35-65.

⁶ In 1911 a law was hurriedly passed, intended to be used against the militant birth-control movement which had begun to develop among working-class organizations. But it has rarely been enforced, except against pedlars selling contraceptives at public markets. It was repealed last year-see subsequent discussion.

Lund, and Stockholm (in the Sabbatsberg hospital)-and a private clinic in Stockholm, opened in 1933 by the National Association for Sex Education (Riksförbundet för Sexuell Upplysning), a body supported by over 40,000 members. But the numbers of patients seen by these clinics are very small. In 1935 the Sabbatsberg clinic saw only 116 women patients, the Göteborg clinic 48, the Malmö clinic 48, and that at Lund only 37.¹ The Riksförbund clinic has the largest number of patients, increasing from 747 in 1933-4 to 1,884 in 1936-7, and 2,280 in 1937-8.² In addition the association has contracts with doctors in various parts of the country for giving birth-control advice to people who are unable to go to Stockholm, and there is a very considerable postal information service, while the President of the Association, Madame Elise Ottesen-Jensen, frequently travels through the country on propaganda tours.³ Yet, at least until very lately, even this relatively large movement had made little impact upon the total population, and recent investigations carried out in the Stockholm clinics showed that over 60 per cent. of the patients trying to prevent pregnancy had used or were using *coitus interruptus*.⁴ And so far as the other clinics are concerned, lack of publicity and official indifference appeared to be chiefly responsible for their poor support.⁵

Norway has a more widely developed system of birth-control clinics, in spite of the existence of paragraph 377 of the Penal Code, which could be used-though it has not been since a test case in 1927-to prohibit the advertising or public display of contraceptives. The Norwegian birth-control movement was effectively begun in 1924 by Madame Katti Anker Møller, who, with the aid of women members of the Labour Party, succeeded in raising 3,000 kroner for the first clinic. Since then the movement has grown considerably, and at the end of 1937 there were twelve clinics, privately and independently run, but all springing from the same initiative and receiving grants from the National Health Insurance Fund and from the local government authorities. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that these clinics touch more than a fraction of the adult population.⁶

It is evident that supporters of the birth-control movement still have a great deal of work to do in the Scandinavian countries. This does not mean that the population is, as a whole, ignorant of the methods of birth prevention. The decline of fertility gives ample evidence to the contrary. But the methods used are often primitive and modern techniques of contraception- apart from the condom⁷- are not widely known, and the practice of abortion

¹ This data is from Gårdlund, T., "Bättre polikliniker för födelsekontroll", *Morgonbris*, April 1937, pp. 21-z, and same author, "Förefintliga rådfrågningsbyråer för sexualupplysning i Sverige", *Betänkande i Sexualfrågan*, pp. 331-49

² These figures were specially obtained from the Riksförbund by the courtesy of Mr. E. von Hofsten of the Stockholm Municipal Statistical Office, and they are very considerably higher than the figures given by Gårdlund for this clinic. The 1937-8 figure is not for the whole year, but from 16 Oct. 1937 to 27 Aug. 1938

³ In a discussion with Madame Ottesen-Jensen in Sept. 1937. Dr. Alma Sundqvist, another leading figure in the Swedish birth-control movement, told the writer that the Workers' Educational Association frequently asked her and Madame Ottesen-Jensen to tour the country and lecture on birth control.

⁴ Gårdlund, T., "Wissa uppgifter om preventivteknikens utbredning", *Betänkande i Sexualfrågan*, pp. 325-330. A somewhat lower percentage was yielded by a 1930 investigation carried out in connexion with an official inquiry into abortion, but the number of persons covered was very small.

⁵ The Sabbatsberg hospital receives each year about 1,000 patients who have had criminal abortions, and 200 of these return the same year with a further abortion (Gårdlund, in *Morgonbris*, loc. cit.).

⁶ From discussions with Dr. Gerda Evang and with the superintendent of the Oslo birth-control clinic, in Sept. 1937. See also *Krisen i Befolkningssporsmålet* (the Norwegian adaptation of the Myrdals' book), pp. 39-50.

⁷ The Danish Population Commission was of the opinion that the knowledge of contraceptive techniques available to men was extremely widespread, and that the chief task of birth-control clinics would be to give advice on the use of pessaries (according to a letter from Mr. H. H. Koch of the *Socialministerium*,

appears to be fairly widespread. In fact the question of abortion has given rise to a good deal of discussion in recent years, both because of the fairly high estimates of its frequency and because the existing laws, while being relatively harsh, are clearly not very effective. In Denmark a Committee was appointed in 1932 by the Ministry of Justice and issued its report in 1936.¹ It had to consider the fact that although, under the Penal Code of 1930,² the penalties for abortion had been reduced, Danish juries were still refusing to sentence women for having undergone abortions. Between 1928 and 1932 only 82 women had been accused and only 19 brought to trial. Of these 19, 4 elected to be tried without a jury and were convicted. But of the 15 who were tried by jury, 14 were acquitted, the remaining woman being sentenced because she was found guilty of infanticide. At the same time the Committee estimated that there were between 1,000 and 2,000 criminal abortions per year as compared with about 66,000 births,³ and one member placed the figure at about 6,000. Another member, Dr. Axel Tofte, subsequently suggested that the figure was probably between 2,000 and 5,000.⁴ The Committee felt that it had to strike a balance between an acceptance of the part played by abortion in everyday life, and the need to have some kind of penalty, since complete exemption would be against the conscience of the majority of people. Apart, therefore, from urging social reforms for improving the economic position of married and unmarried mothers, it recommended that abortion should be allowed on ethical,⁵ eugenic, and social-humanitarian grounds. At the same time a sub-committee which had been set up by the main Committee urged that access to contraceptives be made as easy as possible, though, in the interests of the public, there should be some supervision of the trade in these articles. The result of this Report was threefold. First, in May 1937, Section 235 of the Penal Code was modified. A fine was still prescribed for the offensive advertising or displaying of contraceptives, as well as for the unsolicited distribution of advertisements to persons not trading in such articles, but chemists shops and other approved stores were explicitly allowed to sell contraceptives.⁶ Secondly, a law passed at the same time modified the clauses of the Penal Code relating to abortion,⁷ and allowed abortion on eugenic, therapeutic, and ethical grounds. Social grounds have been omitted, but medical grounds are defined more broadly in the Act than in the Report of the Committee, and it will be possible to plead that a further pregnancy would have a serious effect upon the health of a woman who already has a large family and whose income is very small.⁸ Thirdly, the Act provided for the establishment by the provincial or municipal authorities of clinics at which persons of both sexes should have

29 Aug. 1938). In fact, of course, the position in Norway and Sweden does not appear to be markedly different from that in England. Denmark is poorer, relatively, in clinics, but birth-control information has nevertheless reached the public. Certainly the methods used by the public appear to be reasonably effective, even if they are crude.

¹ Betænkning . . . angaaende Lovligheden af Svangerskabsafbrydelse m.V., Copenhagen, 1936.

² Section 242 of the 1930 Code prescribed detention or imprisonment up to two years for a woman having an abortion, while persons procuring or helping to procure the abortion were to be sentenced to imprisonment for up to four years. (In aggravating circumstances this latter penalty could be increased to eight years, or, if the abortion had been procured without the consent of the woman, for two to twelve years.) Section 243 prescribed a fine, or detention for up to three months, or, in specially aggravating circumstances, imprisonment, for anyone importing, manufacturing, distributing, selling, &c., articles which, though said to be for sexual hygiene, are really intended for terminating pregnancy. This did not apply, of course, to instruments, &c., supplied to doctors or hospitals.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 24. It was the Medical sub-committee which made these estimates.

⁴ In a discussion with the writer, Sept. 1937.

⁵ e.g. in cases of rape, and certain cases of incest.

⁶ In Sept. 1937 regulations were issued concerning the authorization of the sale of contraceptives. Apparently condoms and rubber pessaries were the only forms authorized for sale, though other articles might be sold by chemists when a medical prescription was presented.

⁷ See Note VIIc, p. 462.

⁸ Information from Mr. H.H. Koch

access to good and reliable instruction in sexual hygiene and at which pregnant women should be able to receive advice and assistance. This meant the provision of public clinics for birth-control and ante-natal advice, a very great change from the situation current in Denmark at the time. But it should be noted that the Act, which was supposed to come into force on 1 April 1938, was postponed until 1 October 1939. Before that date two new Acts-both of 15 March 1939 have modified the 1937 Act, by omitting the birth-control clinics, and by setting up instead a series of State maternity centres for giving advice and guidance to pregnant women, and for helping them to receive the medical and economic assistance provided for them and for their children both before and after confinement. This Act came into force on 1 April 1939¹; and the question of birth-control advice has, for the moment at least, been shelved. It appears to be the intention of the government to solve this problem in connexion with the general work of the public hospitals.²

In Sweden the problem has been no less serious. A special inquiry undertaken by Dr. Edin³ showed that in 1930 there had been 10,445 abortions, either in hospitals or institutions or seen by doctors or midwives. Of these, 245 were therapeutic abortions and the remainder consisted of spontaneous and criminal cases, the distribution between these two categories not being known. It is certain, however, that a considerable proportion must have been induced, and Dr. Edin himself considered that the number of criminal abortions was probably over 10,000 per year. This should be compared with 94,220 live births in Sweden in 1930. Dr. Sundqvist regarded 10,000 as a minimum figure,⁴ Professor Gunnar Dahlberg thought it probable that a third of all illegitimate pregnancies and a sixth of all legitimate pregnancies are aborted⁵ - which would mean over 20,000 abortions per year- while Madame Ottesen-Jensen believed that an estimate of some 50,000 abortions per year would scarcely be an exaggeration.⁶ There is, of course, an extremely wide range in these estimates, but they are all large enough to explain why the existing abortion law⁷ was regarded as ineffective. Two committees were therefore appointed to consider the question. The first was set up in 1934 and reported in 1935,⁸ proposing that abortion should be allowed on ethical, eugenic, and social grounds. Therapeutic abortion was not to come under the proposal, since it was already allowed, though not specifically provided for in the Penal Code. The proposals were then handed, for further consideration, to a special committee of the Population Commission, and a report issued in 1937,⁹ proposing that social grounds be excluded and suggesting that it would be better to provide social conditions in which women could bear children without being reduced to destitution, rather than to accept the possibility of destitution and allow women to have their pregnancies interrupted. On this basis the law was drafted and passed on 17 June 1938, coming into force on 1 January 1939. The new law permits abortion on

¹ *Lov om Mødhjælpsinstitutioner*, 15 March 1939.

² Information from Mr. H. H. Koch, 21 June 1939

³ Edin, K.A., *Undersökning av Abortförekomsten i Sverige under Senare År*, Lund-Malmö, 1934, pp. 10-11 and 26ff.

⁴ In a conversation, Sept. 1937

⁵ In a conversation, Nov. 1937

⁶ In a conversation, Sept. 1937

⁷ See Note VIIId, p. 463

⁸ *Betänkande med Förslag till Lagstiftning om Avbrytande av Havandeskap*, Stockholm, 1935.

⁹ *Yttrande i Abortfrågan*, Stockholm, 1937. It did, however, recognize medicosocial grounds-e.g. where the woman was poor and worn out by child-bearing. This has not been specifically included in the new law though it may possibly be interpreted as coming under 'therapeutic abortion'-where the birth of a child would entail serious danger to the life or health of the woman

therapeutic, eugenic, and ethical grounds. In other cases the Penal Code still applies. The old clause in the Penal Code relating to birth-control propaganda was also repealed, as from 1 January 1939, by the Riksdag, and the trade in contraceptives has become controlled by the issue of a regulation making it necessary for private distributors to obtain a permit.¹

Norway, too, had a Committee appointed to consider the question of abortion law reform, and a report was issued in 1935.² There had been many demands for revision of the Penal Code, including a resolution of the 1930 Medical Congress and an appeal issued by the Free Churches in 1934, and signed by 200,000 persons over 18 years of age. At the same time it was clear that abortion frequency was increasing. In Oslo municipal hospital alone 1,121 women were admitted in 1920 on account of abortion or its immediate sequelae, while in 1933 the number had risen to 2,331. In 1920 115 abortions were performed in hospitals, while in 1933 the number was 1,625. Evidently the interpretation of the term "therapeutic" had become much broader in the period. The Committee estimated that in 1933 between 1,050 and 2,200 abortions were performed by "quacks" and that the total number of induced abortions was probably between 3,575 and 5,425, as compared with about 46,000 births. Dr. Gerda Evang, who is closely associated with the Oslo birth-control clinic, considered that this estimate was probably too low.³ The Committee recommended that abortion should be permissible on therapeutic, ethical, eugenic, humanitarian, and social indications, but stressed the need for an increase in assistance to mothers, of economic assistance to large families, of legislation to prevent women losing their employment on account of pregnancy, and of a definite housing policy. So far the abortion law has not been changed,⁴ and as regards the other aspects of the question, very little further progress has been made since 1935.

No doubt many people in Sweden and Denmark have been disappointed by recent legislative changes on the subject of birth control and abortion, and feel in particular that the law has not made sufficient provision for birth-control advice. But at the same time they must acknowledge that the new legislation has at least not been in any way "repressive" in the sense in which that term applies to France and Belgium, Italy and Germany. The legislators in Sweden and Denmark have genuinely tried to make parenthood more voluntary and less accidental than before.

On the positive side Swedish policy has largely followed the ideas expressed in the Myrdals' book. Briefly these ideas may be summarized as first, to encourage marriage, and secondly, to provide a social and economic environment in which the extra costs associated with the bearing and rearing of children are reduced as much as possible. That is, the policy aims at

¹ Myrdal, A., "A programme for family security in Sweden". *International Labour Review*, June 1939, pp. 723-63, at P. 738. This article gives the most thorough and valuable account in English of the objects and measures of Sweden's population policy.

² *Instilling nr. 1... amgående Forandring i Straffeloven § 245 of angående Utferdigelse av Lov om Avbrytelse av Svangerskap*, Oslo, 1935. The Committee was appointed in June 1934.

³ The reports of this *clinic-Mødrehygienekontoret i Oslo* show that the women attending in 1935 had had a total of 2,460 births and 693 abortions, or 28,2 abortions per 100 births. In 1936 the proportion among the patients was 34,3 abortions per 100 births. But this includes spontaneous abortions. Dr. Evang-in a letter dated 6 Sept. 1938-considers that Oslo is not typical of Norway as a whole, and that abortion is practised much more in the towns than in the rural districts

⁴ The abortion law-paragraph 245 of the Penal Code of 22 May 1902-prescribes imprisonment for up to three years for a woman who destroys or helps to destroy her foetus. Any one helping the woman shall receive imprisonment for not more than six years (not less than two years if he acted without the consent of the woman; and for life, or for not less than six years, if the woman dies as a result).

remedying the situation in which all the additional costs fall upon parents, while the unmarried and the childless, to use Mrs. Myrdal's phrase, "avoid contributing to the necessary investment in the future generation."¹ An additional principle is that, where possible, assistance shall not be given in money but in goods or services. One reason for this principle is economy. Substantial cash payments for children would be costly, and more 'value for money' could be obtained by central or local government bulk expenditure in such fields as housing, the provision of school meals, and so forth. At the same time the Myrdals consider that by giving specific goods and services there is more likelihood that the benefit will accrue directly to the children. Finally, cash payments for parenthood may encourage the breeding of undesirable elements in the population, a result which it is desired to avoid.² But there are, of course, certain spheres in which help may best be given in the form of cash grants.

Under the heading of encouragements to marriage, the Most important measure passed is the Act Of 30 September 1937,³ for providing home-furnishing loans. The loans have been granted since 1 January 1938, the money being provided by a governmental loan fund administered by the Central Bank and its local branches. Among the regulations in accordance with which the loans are given the most important points are the following: The loans are designed to allow persons who are already married (in which case the application for a loan must be made within six months of the marriage) or who are going to be married (in which case evidence of the intended marriage must be produced) to buy the furniture and other household equipment, the need for which is occasioned by the marriage which has been or is going to be contracted. At their maximum the loans are 1,000 kronor, and they are given only to persons who are Swedish citizens or who will be so as a result of the marriage (in the case of foreign brides); who are in need of the means for buying the necessary household equipment; for whom the grant of the loan is advisable, having regard to the applicants' own conditions and interests; and who are known to be diligent and economically prudent, and have shown the will to save, so far as this has been possible. The loans are to be repaid, with interest not less than that paid by the State for its own obligations, in quarterly instalments of such an amount that the loan shall be completely refunded within not more than five years after it has been granted.⁴

It will be noticed that no racial or physiological demands are made by the regulations. Nor is the loan in any sense a gift-it is not interest-free, and there are no cancellations at the birth of children. In fact the main idea, according to Professor Myrdal, is to enable young couples to escape the dangers of the hire-purchase system, and also, since their current expenses are

¹ Myrdal, A., op.cit., p. 740.

² See Myrdal, G., 'Population problems and policies', in *Annals Am. Acad. Pol. and Soc. Sc.*, May 1938, pp. 200-15 (this special number of the *Annals*, devoted to 'Social problems and policies in Sweden', contains the most authoritative studies in English of very many aspects of Swedish economic and social life), and *Betänkande angående Barnbeklädnadsbidrag m.m.*, Stockholm, 1938 (report of Population Commission), chs. 2 and 5. Mr. R. Sterner wrote on this point (9 May 1938)"the Most effective way of raising the fertility would be to pay large birth premiums. ... But this would be very ineffective from a medical and social point of view ... we have to go another way, even if the quantitative results do not come so soon."

³ *Kungl. Maj:ts kungörelse om statliga bosättningslån*, 30 Sept. 1937. See also the Population Commission's report on the subject (*Statens off. Utred.*, 1936, 14, pp. 45-7) for the original proposal, which was for loans up to 1,300 kronor repayable in four years. It should be remembered that many of the Commission's proposals have been modified in the course of passing them into laws. Myrdal, A., op. cit., gives an analysis of the original proposals as well as information on the Acts themselves.

⁴ Though this rule may be relaxed if circumstances make so rapid a repayment difficult. The present rate of interest is about 3 1/4 per cent.

lowest at the beginning of their married life, to have them repay the loan as quickly as possible.¹

Finally, unlike the German marriage loans, there is no attempt to drive women back into the home. On the contrary, the Population Commission is very anxious to safeguard and guarantee the employment of married women, and to establish their right to have children and to take the required absence during pregnancy and childbirth without being subject to the fear of losing their jobs. This has already been laid down under the health insurance system, and has been extended to women employed by the central and local government authorities. A good deal has also been done with the help of the Professional and Business Women's Association by creating public disapproval of certain banks and insurance companies which followed the practice of dismissing women on account of pregnancy or childbirth.

No income limit has been laid down in the regulations for administering the home-furnishing loans, but it is clear that they are intended only for members of the working class.² To this extent they leave untouched a problem created by the Swedish educational system. Primary education in Sweden is free, and secondary education is inexpensive, particularly because of the large numbers of bursaries and grants in aid of fees which are available.³ But little assistance is given to students proceeding to the universities. These students generally borrow from the banks, and the practice has become so well established that students' promissory notes are regarded as safe assets. Thus at the end of a degree course, a student often finds himself with debts of 10,000 kronor, and such an amount must be a serious barrier to early marriage.⁴

It is too early to speak of the effects of the home-furnishing loans, for no detailed marriage statistics are yet available for years subsequent to 1936. So far as the practical application of the Act is concerned, the Riksdag appropriated 2 million kronor for the loans for the fiscal year 1937-8, and 6 millions for 1938-9, and has proposed an appropriation of 5 million kronor for 1939-40. Up to 30 September 1938, 5,759 loans had been granted, amounting to 4,209,565 kronor, and another 1,090 loans had been granted but not yet issued.⁵ Theoretically, however, the effect of the loans depends upon whether their net result is merely to speed up marriage without either increasing the total number of marriages or the fertility of each marriage. It is quite true that marriage frequency is low in Sweden. According to the conditions of 1932-4, out of 1,000 spinsters reaching their fifteenth birthday, 790 could expect to be married by their fiftieth birthday, and even in 1934, with the return to relative prosperity, the figure rose only to 816 out of 1,000. But two points should be emphasized. First, even in periods of high fertility, marriage frequency in Sweden has not been high. In 1870-1 the comparable figure was 820, while it was 791 in 1890-1, 790 in

¹ In a conversation in Sept. 1937.

² Apparently some idea of a lower income limit is involved, since it is unlikely that loans will be given to applicants who are so poor that they could not repay them.

³ In 1934-5, 371,598 kronor were distributed from the bursary and prize funds, and in 1935 and 1936 there were also grants from a public legacy fund provided by the Government, the amount in 1936 being 60,000 kronor (*Social Work and Legislation in Sweden*, issued by the Royal Social Board, 2nd ed., Stockholm, 1938, p. 328). Mr. Richard Sterner, in a discussion of this question, suggested that the actual cost of secondary education was probably only 120 to 140 kronor per year, but that there were many pupils who paid only half of these fees, and also a considerable number who paid no fees at all.

⁴ But the government is proposing to remedy this by providing scholarships and endowments for students at State universities, to cover the basic costs of university life.

⁵ From a memorandum (in typescript), dated 26 April 1939, supplied by the Social department.

1900-2, and 768 in 1910-12.¹ So the decline in fertility has not been associated with any significant change in marriage frequency. Secondly, there are many commonlaw marriages in Sweden-known as *stockholmsäktenskap*- and illegitimacy is very high, illegitimate live births amounting to 15,96 per cent. of all live births in 1932, 15,49 per cent. in 1933, and 14,45 per cent. in 1934.² It is conceivable, therefore, that if the introduction of marriage loans increases the number of marriages, this may to a considerable extent be due simply to the legalization of these *de facto* marriages. On the other hand, marriage loans may, by lowering the age at marriage and therefore increasing the period of exposure to the 'risk' of child-bearing, increase the number of children per marriage. How the different factors counterbalance each other will not be known until the detailed statistics are available for a large number of years.³

Before dealing with the other steps which have been taken and proposals which have been made, it is important to know some of the facts concerning the economic and social conditions of the Swedish population. Those who have been impressed by journalistic eulogies of Sweden will be surprised to learn that, according to the 1930 census, 761,12 per cent. of the active population earned not more than 2,000 kronor per year, and that 51,9 per cent. earned not more than 1,000 kronor per year. Yet the incomes of 2,000 kronor and more per year formed 66,4 per cent. of the income earned by the employed population as a whole, and the incomes of 10,000 kronor or more per year, earned by only 1,1 per cent. of the employed population, formed 16,4 per cent. of the total income of all employed persons.⁴ How this situation affects families of different sizes is shown by the partial census of 1935-6, which made a special investigation of incomes in relation to the family. The main features are given in Table 30.

To a considerable extent this picture is overpainted. First, there is a marked tendency to understate incomes, and, secondly, it is very difficult in the rural districts to estimate the monetary value of income received in kind. The 1936 statistics of wages paid to workers in industry appear to be considerably higher than would be expected from the figures given in Table 30. But it would nevertheless be true to say that there is an inverse relationship between income and the number of dependent children, and this, whether looked at from the point of view of the standard of living or from that of the correlation between income and fertility, still produces the same effect. The larger families are worse off, economically, than the small ones.

Further, housing conditions in Sweden still leave much to be desired, in spite of the fact that slums, in the English sense, are extremely rare. According to the housing census

¹ This is gross nuptiality (excluding the influence of mortality). Nor has the mean expectation of unmarried life changed appreciably (also derived from the gross nuptiality tables)

² *Befolkningsrörelsen*, 1934, p. 24*.

³ See Note VIIe, p. 463.

⁴ From Sterner, R., "Levnadsstandarden i svenska familjer", *Betänkande I Sexualfrågan*, p. 217

TABLE 30. Median Incomes (including Husband's and Wife's Combined Incomes) in Marriages with Given Numbers of Children.¹

Marriages with the following numbers of children under 16 years of age	Incomes per year in kronor		
	Median Towns	Rural districts	Kingdom
0	3,145	1,362	2,148
1	2,967	1,478	2,072
2	3,023	1,459	1,955
3	2,986	1,449	1,751
4	2,790	1,388	1,612
5	2,650	1,349	1,474
6	2,573	1,314	1,425
7	2,500	1,323	1,410
8		1,200	1,275
9 or more		1,088	1,191
All marriages	3,036	1,421	1,993

of 1933, in which a child under 15 years of age is counted as half an adult unit, and kitchens, halls, and rooms smaller than 9 square metres (about 97 Square feet) are reckoned as halves of a room unit, about 13 per cent. of all dwellings were overcrowded in the sense of having more than two adult units per room unit. About 30 per cent. of children under 15 years of age were living in three overcrowded conditions, and so were 47,4 per cent. of the families with three or more children.²

These statistics apply only to urban districts-excluding Stockholm, where there had been a housing census in 1930-or to agglomerations in rural districts, excluding therefore most of the agricultural workers.³ But in rural districts the problem is certainly no less important, since, even if the number of rooms per family is higher, the families are larger than in the towns and the quality of accommodation is far worse. According to a special housing inquiry made in connexion with the census of 1935-6, and covering a hundred rural communes, about 15 per cent. of the dwellings were dilapidated and 9 per cent. were damp. About 33 per cent. of all dwellings consisted of not more than one room and a kitchen, as compared with approximately 50 per cent. in the towns, and about 12 per cent. of all dwellings were overcrowded in the sense of having more than two adult units per room unit. In addition, the prevalent "best room" system further restricted the space used for sleeping, so that of the population in families with three or more children under 15 years of age who were living in small dwellings, about 63 per cent. slept in overcrowded conditions in which there were four or more persons per room.⁴ The facts in this and in the preceding paragraph have not been given to try to prove that the Swedish standard of living is low. On the contrary, it is higher than in most other countries. But the facts do show-and the Population Commission recognizes the facts and faces them realistically-that the existing distribution of income in relation to family size and the poor condition of much of the housing are two of the most important problems which have to be solved.

¹ *Betänkande i Sexualfrågan* p. 26. The Table refers only to marriages contracted since 1900. In a letter Mr. R. Sterner stated that in 1936 the average annual earnings of full-time or nearly full-time male workers were 2,848 kronor in industry, and between 1,200 and 1,400 kronor in agriculture (including income in kind), with forestry workers at about the same level as, or a little below, agricultural workers.

² *Allmänna Bostadsräkningen År 1933*, Stockholm, 1936, pp. 13-14,

³ *Ibid.*, p. g. The general inquiry related to 243 areas- 196 towns and urban agglomerations, and 47 rural communes, excluding agricultural properties. But the special inquiry from which these percentages are derived related to 45 areas

⁴ *Partiella Folkräkningen i Mars 1936. Specialundersökning av Bostadsförhållandena i 100 Landskommuner*, Stockholm, 1938, pp. xii-xvi. Dwellings consisting of not more than two rooms and a kitchen constituted over 58 per cent. of all dwellings in the rural communes. Of these small dwellings over 35 per cent. were dilapidated or/and overcrowded

Among the measures taken to relieve the economic burdens incurred in respect of children we may note a number intended to reduce the personal expenses associated with childbirth. Previously a woman could obtain maternity benefit in one of two ways. If she belonged to an approved sickness insurance fund and was entitled to benefit, she would receive a grant of not less than 2 kronor per day for between 30 and 56 days. If she was not entitled to this benefit, and if the taxable income of the family (or her own if she was unmarried) was not over 500 kronor per year, she would be entitled to State relief at the rate of 1 kronor per day for 30 days, minus 2 kronor for registration fee, thus making a total of 28 kronor. A woman who came under the Workers' Protection Act, and was prohibited from working for a specified period before and after childbirth, would be entitled to the relief for 56 days. An Act passed in 1937 has now placed the minimum level of maternity insurance benefit at 10 kronor, to be given in a lump sum. In addition, State maternity relief has been increased to a lump sum grant of 75 kronor, while it can be claimed by a woman if the taxable income does not exceed 3,000 kronor per year. Consequently, about 92 per cent. of all mothers are entitled to this relief, whereas formerly only 74 per cent. were so entitled.¹ In addition, another Act passed in 1937 and coming into force as from the beginning of 1938, provides special grants for necessitous mothers. The grants may be given as loans or gifts, and either in money or in goods, and the maximum value is 300 kronor for the birth of each child. During the first stage of application of this Act over 25 per cent. of all mothers received assistance under it.²

For the children themselves a number of special provisions has been made. First, under an Act passed in 1938, the income-tax system has been altered, and the exemptions in respect of children have been increased. It was originally intended to introduce a fairly steep graduation of the tax, with a high exemption limit for children, and a special tax on bachelors. But the special Committee on Taxation to which the proposals were handed did not accept the bachelor tax and reduced the exemption level for children. The latter now amounts to about 80 per cent. of the exemption given for a single man and for a wife.³ Secondly, in 1937 the Riksdag introduced free school meals in districts in which there was unemployment.⁴ The scheme is as yet - although widened in 1938 - rudimentary, but it is hoped that, eventually, free school meals may be available for all children.

Besides the assistance given to normal families - that is, normal in the sense that both parents are alive, married, and not separated - new provisions have been made for special types of families. Sweden has, for example, taken an important step in improving the situation of unmarried mothers and their children. A considerable advance on the position in most other countries was made as long ago as 1917, when the Act relating to children born out of wedlock instituted a system of specially appointed legal guardians to act in the interests of the mothers and their children, generally until the children reached their sixteenth or eighteenth birthdays. But it was found that the maintenance allowance - determined generally by the court, and amounting to 15 to 20 kronor per month in the rural districts, and 20 to 30 kronor in the towns - was often delayed. In 1935 about half the cases liable for this payment

¹ Myrdal, A., op. cit., pp. 745-6, and Social Work and Legislation in Sweden, pp. 127-8.

² Myrdal, A., op. cit., p. 746

³ Letter from R. Sterner and *ibid.*, p. 742

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 753-5.

showed either complete or partial default.¹ To remedy this the Riksdag decided, in 1937, that a child whose father is liable to support him - and this applies equally to the children of separated or divorced parents- may receive an advance on the payment due to him, such an advance generally being given for a year at a time. The payment is then claimed from the father by the Treasury, and the costs of giving these advances are shared by the Treasury (75 per cent.) and by the particular local district (25 per cent.) from which the advance is received.² The same year also saw an Act instituting grants for needy children. Orphans, fatherless children, and the children of certain classes of disabled persons may now receive State allowances. For orphans these amount to 300, 360, or 420 kronor per year, dependent upon the cost of living in the district in which the child is living. The grants are reduced if they are being given to more than one child in the same family, and also if the total family income is above 600, 800, or 1,000 kronor per year, these limits being related to the cost of living in the different localities. At the same time, the grants are increased by 60 kronor per year for children under 2 years of age. For the other classes of children the basic grants are 60 kronor per year less than for orphans. In all cases the allowance ceases at the child's sixteenth birthday³

As regards housing, some improvement has come about in recent years as part of a general public works policy for relieving unemployment. In 1933 the Riksdag appropriated 5 million kronor for granting loans to contractors who wished to build new houses in towns and urban districts, and in 1935 a further grant of 3 million kronor was given, though the latter was also intended to help in the repair of existing dwellings. In 1936 still another grant of 2 million kronor was made, but the fund is now available for repairs only.

Similarly, beginning with 1933, grants were made by the Riksdag for improving and repairing rural dwellings, provided that the applicants were in need of financial aid. The upper limit of the grant is 1,000 kronor per dwelling, and in practice the average amount has been about 700 kronor. At the same time, loans have been made for building new dwellings in the rural districts, at 4 per cent. interest and to be repaid within twenty years, the maximum being 3,000 kronor per dwelling. Since most rural dwellings are built of wood, this sum probably represents the upper limit of about 70 per cent. of the total cost of construction. By the end of 1936 nearly 39 million kronor had been granted for rural housing, of which about 7.5 million kronor were used for putting up new dwellings.⁴ Since, however, much of the work was intended immediately to reduce unemployment, control over the quality of the work was not all that could be desired, with the result, according to Professor Myrdal, that in some 2 or 3 per cent. of the repaired houses the repairs were inadequate.⁵

There is also the question of the rent charged for various kinds of accommodation. Since the War the co-operative building societies- of which the two most important examples are the Stockholm Co-operative Housing Society (S.K.B.), founded in 1915, and the Tenants' Savings Fund and Housing Society (H.S.B.), founded in 1923-have helped considerably in reducing rents. It is estimated that in general the rents of co-operative dwellings are 10 to 30 per cent. below those available in the open market, while outside Stockholm they are generally 25 to 30 per cent. below the prevailing market price; but the co-operative

¹ Sterner, R., "Levnadsstandarden i svenska familjer", Betänkande i Sexualfrågorna, p. 230, n. 1.

² Social Work and Legislation in Sweden, pp. 233-5 and 228-9.

³ Ibid. pp. 146-7 and information from Mr. R. Sterner

⁴ Decree of 30 June 1933.

⁵ In a conversation in Sept. 1937

societies have built only a small proportion of the houses in the post-War period. Table 31 shows the rents for small dwellings in the period 1 October 1933 to 30 September 1934.

TABLE 31.¹ *Average Annual Rent in Kronor for Dwellings consisting of:*

	1 room	1 room +kitchen	2 rooms ³ +kitchen	3 rooms +kitchen
Stockholm	611	748	1,124	1,609
70 other towns	277	381	605	898

Reference to Table 30 shows how difficult is the position of families with three or more children. To improve the position of three families the government initiated, and in 1935 the Riksdag agreed to, a project for rehousing 20,000 families with three or more dependent children, who were at present living in overcrowded dwellings in the towns and urban districts. In 1935, 10 million kronor were granted for this purpose, and a further 15 million were given in 1936. From this fund loans for constructing dwellings of not less than two rooms and a kitchen for the accommodation of the large and relatively poor families are granted to the communes, or though the communes to public utility building societies or individual contractors of the same class as the building societies-which would seem to indicate the rapid disappearance of the speculative builder in the near future. Special attention has to be given to the provision of baths, communal laundries, access to parks and playgrounds, and the provision of indoor play centres and crèches if three are thought to be necessary. The dwellings may range from single-family houses to blocks of flats. The loan covers up to 40 per cent. of the value of the dwellings, the rate of interest being that paid by the State for its own borrowing, and the commune concerned must provide the land free of charge and be responsible for the payment of interest and amortization. It must also provide 5 per cent. of the capital required for building. It is estimated that in this way rents will be about 10 to 15 per cent. below those prevailing in the open market. In addition, the State makes grants to the communes for the purpose of further reducing the rents charged to the large families. Thus a family of these dependent children has the rent reduced by 30 per cent., a four-child family has a 40 per cent. reduction, and a family of five or more children is given a 50 per cent. reduction. To cover these rebates 500,000 kronor were allocated by the Riksdag in 1935 and 650,000 kronor in 1936.²

As an illustration of the result of this policy on rent charges, a flat in Stockholm built under this scheme, consisting of two rooms, kitchen, and bathroom, and provided with central heating and constant hot water, will be let at 550 kronor per year to a these-child family and 400 kronor per year to a five-child family. The average rent for a dwelling of two rooms and a kitchen in Stockholm in 1933-4 was, as is shown in Table 31, 1,124 kronor per year. In keeping with the general policy, the blocks of flats which Stockholm is setting up for large families are on the outskirts of the town, near to water and the green belt.³

In 1938 two important modifications were made in the legislation relating to housing for large families. First, the legislation was applied to owners of homes in rural or urban

¹ Social Work and Legislation in Sweden, p. 289

² Goodsell, W., 'Housing and the birth rate in Sweden', American Sociological Review, Dec. 1937, and Social Work and Legislation in Sweden, pp. 296-8.

³ Social Work in Stockholm (City of Stockholm Statistical Office), Uppsala, 1937, pp. 71-4. Collective crèches will be provided in the blocks of flats, so that children may be looked after while their mothers work or go out. At one crèche in Stockholm which the present writer visited, a charge of 60 öre per day was made for looking after a child from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and giving it three meals in that period. Such crèches are generally found in the H.S.B. blocks of flats.

districts. Secondly, the upper limit of rent rebates was raised, so that the rebate amounts to 60 per cent. when there are six or seven children, and to 70 per cent. when there are eight or more.¹ For the fiscal years 1935-6 to 1939-40 the Riksdag has appropriated 35,5 million kronor for the loan fund for providing accommodation for large families, and by the middle of April 1939 the loans actually granted amounted to 19 million kronor. Up to the present, rent rebates have been granted for some 5,1 00 dwellings, of which about 4,700 are in blocks of flats.²

It has already been noted that few specific measures relating to population policy have been promulgated in either Denmark or Norway. But in both countries a considerable proportion of recent legislation has a direct bearing on the population question and detailed Studies of the different aspects of the question are being undertaken both through the Population Commission in Denmark, and by means of *ad hoc* commissions in Norway. As regards Denmark, the question of the establishment of public birth-control clinics has been mentioned in an earlier section of this survey. The Danish Population Commission has also recently issued two reports,³ one dealing with help to needy mothers, in which it is proposed to follow the Swedish example and give a grant to help cover the costs of bearing a child, the other with the question of providing suitable housing conditions for large families. Here, again, the proposal is along the Swedish lines, consisting essentially of rent rebates of 30 per cent. for three children, 40 per cent. for four, and 50 per cent. for five or more children.

Denmark has, of course, already seen a considerable amount of State help in providing houses and flats. Up till 1 April 1936, by which date the relevant Act fell into abeyance, the State provided loans for up to thirty-six years and covering as much as 95 per cent. of the total cost of construction, including land costs, to public utility building societies, and by 1937 about 20 per cent. of the population of Copenhagen was living in dwellings under public or communal control. Loans for up to 70 per cent. of the costs of construction were also given for private buildings. In both cases the rate of interest charged was 4 ½ per cent., about 1 per cent. below the market rate.⁴ Since 1936, however, such public assistance as is given to housing must come from the communes concerned, unless new provisions are made under recommendations from the Population Commission.⁵

In Norway less has been done to improve housing, for the task of giving grants to help the provision of new dwellings has fallen entirely to the communes. In Oslo the municipal authorities granted loans covering up to 90 per cent. of the 'normal value', which apparently was equivalent to about 80 per cent. of the actual value. By 1937 about 17 per cent. of the population of Oslo was living in dwellings built under such grants.⁶ But the general housing situation in Norway is still very unsatisfactory. According to the reports of the Oslo Birth Control and Maternal Welfare Clinic, 67 per cent. of the patients who attended in 1933 lived in dwellings containing not more than one room and a kitchen, while the percentages were 58,2 in 1934, 58,5 in 1935 and 59,5 in 1936.⁷ These figures refer, of course, to a very selected sample of the population. But according to the 1930 census, there was marked overcrowding

¹ Myrdal, A., *op. cit.*, p. 752.

² Unpublished report from the Social department.

³ *Betenkning . . . angaaende Moderens Rettigheder i Anledning af Fødsel samt angaaende Seksualoplymning*, Copenhagen, 1938, and *Betenkning . . . angaaende Laan till Bølgbyggeri og Huslejeafdrag for mindrebedemlede, børnerige Familier*, Copenhagen, 1937.

⁴ Boldsen, F. C., 'Der Wohnungs- und Siedlungsbau in Dänemark, Schweden und Norwegen', in *Vom Wirtschaftlichen Bauen*, 18e Folge, ed. R. Stegemann, Dresden, 1937, pp. 53 and 56.

⁵ For existing social legislation in Denmark, see Steincke, K. K., 'The Danish social reform measures', *International Labour Review*, May 1935, pp. 620-48, and the account given in the *Danish Foreign Office Journal*, June 1939, especially pp. 108-12.

⁶ Boldsen, F. C., *op. cit.*, pp. 53 and 58-9

⁷ *Modrehygienekontoret i Oslo*, Reports for 1924-34, 1934, 1935, and 1936.

among the general industrial workers and their families. In Oslo 29,8 per cent. of these workers lived in overcrowded conditions (more than two persons per room), 29,0 per cent. in Bergen, 32,5 per cent. in Trondheim, 27,2 per cent. in Stavanger, and 21,0 per cent. in Drammen.¹ It is possible, however, that the near future will see improvements in housing conditions, since the present government is seriously concerned with the problem.

On the other hand, some important steps have been taken to improve the conditions of mothers and children. Since 1915, for example, mothers who are badly off have been entitled to a subsidy from the communes to help them during pregnancy and childbirth. During the last six weeks of pregnancy they are entitled to the payment of 45 to 110 kroner for the period. For the first month after childbirth they receive between 35 and 110 kroner, and for the next five months their grant is from 30 to 85 kroner per month.²

As regards children, there is the now well-known system of "Oslo breakfasts", which were first instituted under the direction of Professor Carl Schiøtz in Oslo in 1931. These breakfasts, which are generally given half an hour before morning school begins, consist of one-third of a litre of full-cream milk, a "Kneipp cracker" (made preferably of wholemeal wheat flour) served with margarine and goat's-milk cheese, further wholemeal bread with margarine and cheese *ad lib.*, and, finally, half an apple or orange, or a raw carrot. Margarine was used for economy only, and is probably now being replaced by butter, especially as the government decided to allow public and municipal institutions to buy butter at a reduced price. In March 1938 Professor Schiøtz proposed that half an orange be given in any case (or briar marmalade, which is very rich in vitamin C), as well as a raw carrot or half an apple, and that between September and May a teaspoonful of cod-liver oil should be given to each child at breakfast.

The "Oslo breakfasts" have been adopted by all the elementary schools in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Tromsø, and many other towns, as well as by a number of schools in rural districts. The breakfasts are given free of charge in the towns, but a charge is made in many of the rural schools, or else the children bring the standard constituents with them to school. In Oslo about 46 per cent. of the schoolchildren receive the breakfasts.³

Finally, a Committee set up in 1934 to consider the question of family allowances issued its report in 1938. The Committee was primarily concerned with improving the conditions of children, and not specifically directed to a population policy, and its problem was to decide how far children could be helped by public institutions and how far by direct cash allowances. The majority report concludes that collective effort is best for such needs as housing, and medical attention, but that for the day-to-day needs of life in a country in which the population is scattered and transport slow and expensive, cash family allowances would be the most satisfactory solution, particularly if these allowances were paid to the mothers. It recognizes the need for allowances graded in relation to the cost of living in different parts of the country, but, because of the complexity which such a system would involve, recommends a uniform allowance as between the different districts, graded so that the highest amount is given for the first child, with decreasing amounts for each subsequent child.

¹ *Folketellingen i Norge, 1. desember 1930 ... Boligstatistikk*, Oslo 1935, pp. 26*-8*

² Information given by Dr. Frydenberg of the Social department in Sept. 1937.

³ From C. Schiøtz, 'Skolefrokosten', *Tidsskrift for den Norske Lægeforening*, 1938, and a special memorandum entitled 'The Oslo Breakfast', both kindly sent to me by Professor Schiøtz. Parents who wish their children to have the breakfasts must state their reasons—poverty or poor health, or both. But Professor Schiøtz said that it was not considered a matter of reproach or shame to get free meals.

The Committee suggests no specific allowance, being willing to leave this question until such time as the government decides to implement the proposal, but in the estimates of costs which were drawn up by Dr. H. Palmstrøm, actuary and member of the Committee, the rates chosen as examples were 100 and 120 kronor per year. If 120 kronor per year were given for each child under 15 years of age, the annual cost would be nearly 82 million kronor. On the other hand, if the allowances were graded so that the first child received 120 kronor, the second child received only 90 kronor, and the third and subsequent children only 60 kronor per year, the cost would amount to nearly 66 million kronor per year. As for raising the necessary funds, the majority report suggests an increase in the turnover tax, a 1 per cent. turnover tax now yielding about 30 million kronor per year.¹ There is as yet no suggestion that the Committee's recommendations will be put into practice in the near future. In fact if anything is done at all, it is more likely to be on the lines laid down in Sweden and not as cash allowances.²

It is clear from the account that has been given that in the Scandinavian countries there is a real interest in the various problems which arise out of the population question. A great many of the proposals have been modified in the process of application, and very many of them still remain to be applied. But, especially in Sweden, they have been planned carefully, on the basis of a detailed study of the data available. Up to the present the economic assistance actually given to families is still relatively small, and whether the proposals suggested and measures actually introduced will have any significant effect upon the trend of fertility is, of course, impossible to predict. But of the general proposals and measures two things may be said. First, they are in keeping with the thesis of democratic government, for they all emphasize the need for voluntary parenthood. Secondly, whatever their effect upon fertility, they are in any case all socially desirable.

¹ *Utkast till Lov om Barnetrygd med Motiver*, Oslo, 1938. Judge G. Wiesener, Chairman of the Committee, kindly sent the writer a copy of the report and a special unpublished summary.

² Hertzberg, A., 'Barnetrygd i Norge', *Urd*, 12 March 1938. There was a minority report, drawn up by Mrs. M. Bonnevie, and recommending the establishment of a national equalization fund, financed by the affiliated wage-earners. See also "The question of family allowances in Norway", *International Labour Review*, July 1939, pp. 56-63, and Skaug, A., and Wold, K. G., 'Barnetrygdkomiteens innstilling', *Socialt Arbeid* 1938, no. 8, and 1939, no. 4. The writer owes a great deal to Dr. Skaug both for Norwegian publications and for valuable suggestions.