

Missing Page

Correspondence (from p. 2)

a Canadian edition. The proponents of this new legislation argue that Canadians enjoy writing for each other as well as producing paper for the whole continent and should be able to do so without "unfair" competition from the powerful neighbor. (No one argues in favor of abolishing competition.) Opponents of the proposal believe that *Time's* tax privileges are fair, since *Time*, unlike *Newsweek*, does have editorial pages produced in Canada. Mr. Neuhaus's account of the TV debate is also garbled and oversimplified.

2. The federal government does not support the propositions that all Canada is bilingual. It holds that all Canadians are entitled to the services of the federal government in either English or French. Frenchmen in Saskatchewan create no legal or political problems; like all tourists they will be warmly welcomed. There is, however, a problem about the few francophone Canadians who are settled there. The current policy is that they have the right to file their federal income tax in French or formulate a complaint against the Post Office in French. Those francophone Canadians vacationing in the West will find that the literature in the National Parks is available in their language too. That is about the extent of their "rights." The anglophone mailman in Saskatchewan is not expected to learn French to do his route. If young and bright, he will realize that ability to speak French will be an asset if he wants to aspire to a national role. The mechanisms involved here are social reward, not legal coercion.

3. French-speaking federal civil servants do not need to be "forced" to learn English. Every survey demonstrates that they already know it. Most French Canadians are digging their heels in, but not about having to learn a second language, for that is a fact of life; they rather insist that in their own country they should be able to function for most of the time in the language which is their own and which they know best.

4. As for the support gained by the separatist movement in Quebec, it

reached 26 per cent of the popular vote in the last provincial election (that is something more like 40 per cent of the Quebec francophone vote). The number of available "unreconstructed Gaullists" and "cocktail party champions of the IRA and Puerto Rican independence" cannot account for this percentage. This sort of percentage also impresses me more than acts of terrorism.

Moving to more delicate grounds, it seems to me that Mr. Neuhaus's vision is warped on many points. The mood of "ambivalent admiration" was characteristic of the 1950's, when indeed numerous Canadians went south ("talent that went to the U.S."). Mr. Neuhaus, however, is strangely selective in his outline of what has happened since then. The last decades, for instance, saw the growth of a selfish feeling of being lucky to have been spared some of the U.S. experiences. There has also been a reversal in individual migration: More Americans have come north and sworn allegiance to the Queen than Canadians have gone south to sacrifice on the altars of republicanism. And, to move to the trickiest issue, what is wrong with public schools in any given territory offering their instruction in one maternal language only—with, of course, the teaching of such second language as will be most useful? Peace in multilingual countries is usually achieved through unilingual territoriality. A Swiss can have his children educated in German, French, or Italian, but to exercise this "right" he must move his family to German-, French-, or Italian-speaking areas. Can Mr. Neuhaus name one political unit in the world which, in the name of freedom, undermines its own cultural identity by using tax revenue to support schools which use as a dominant language that of the toughest cultural competitor?

Let me add that the "notorious Bill 22" endorses the principle of stabilized enrollment in anglophone schools for the anglophone minority, the demographic trends of which are stable. The present Quebec government is strongly committed to this policy, probably in the spirit of *quid pro quo*, since most anglophone provinces do give now a varying degree of support to their francophone schools. (Needless to say, the Quebec government is under attack for that from its

ultranationalists.) So where in all this are the infringements upon democratic notions of freedom?

Let us reserve our democratic indignation for those social systems where school policies do not just show cohesive force but are genuinely totalitarian, where private schools are banned or have insuperable odds against them, where second languages are taught in a manner that weeds out any alien cultural influences, where the possibility of protest through disaffection is denied. Let me finally touch briefly upon one other topic. I welcome anything that prevents Canadians from taking themselves too seriously, but does Mr. Neuhaus really want me to believe that our attempts to pursue a Canadian foreign policy are somewhat akin to the drive to "think snow" in the Vermont hills?

Mr. Neuhaus's ignorance of Canadian economic and social realities also requires attention. On this point, however, I will not attempt to redress but will limit myself to two comments.

1. His diagnosis is strangely self-fulfilling. Imagine me trying to document signs of cultural vitality. I would obviously be perceived as involved in "the desperate search for arguments" and simply prove that I belong to the "intellectual industry" that makes believe and thinks Canadian. If I just point to something in Canada that is not "reactive or comparative" to the U.S., I am still proving his point by reacting to his article. With my motives thus impugned, what can I say? Perhaps point out that this game can be played both ways; what Mr. Neuhaus calls "talent seeking opportunity" can also be labeled "going after the bigger salary" (yes, in the 1950's there was a differential) or going where the intellectual excitement seems greatest (in the '50's many small-town anglophone Canadians were sure that large U.S. cities were "where the action is," except that in those days they called it "where the relevant issues are"). Would Mr. Neuhaus care to compare the relative moral dignity of his own existential choice with that of those Canadians who did turn down attractive offers?

Let us move clearly away from this sort of thinking. Can we perhaps agree that there is an equally respectable human endeavor in our different acts of citizenship? Common understand-

ing, I think, commends such a proposition and not the one about "common sense" being on the side of "joining the Union" and "winsome superstition" on the side of resistance to such views. Few will consciously argue that citizenship in a certain country is an *ipso facto* basis for moral superiority. (Let me add, however, that only the naive will believe that choosing or maintaining a citizenship is an act that has no moral ramifications.

2. The second comment can be made much more briefly. Ignorance on the part of a neighbor is a fault that I carefully nurture if he is an enemy and most readily forgive if he is a friend.

What am I then to think of Mr. Neuhaus? First, I might suggest that, when he rests his eyes on the banks of the Ottawa and wishes to write, he should turn to a genre other than social comment. His adherence to rules of evidence is much too relaxed when he is in such circumstances. He might also pay some attention to studies of nationalism. Not all nation-building follows the same path, nor fulfills the same needs, nor meets the same challenges. (Not all nations, for instance, become one largely through the proclamation of a doctrine addressed to themselves and to the rest of the world.) He might also reexamine yet once again, alas, the case of those critics who charge that there is a strange blindness common among U.S. social scientists and moral prophets. Their science is sophisticated and their hearts pure; they rush, therefore, to think Americanly and benevolently about the rest of the world; again and again they are met with at best an ambivalent response that creates a hurt and opens a gulf. But look at it from our point of view: We do not like always being invited to be friends on your terms.

Such reflections, I realize, are fairly trite. They have another great disadvantage: They usually launch many non-Americans into anti-American intellectuality, and quite a few American intellectuals into fits of self-doubt. There is no health in these kinds of mental joyrides. So I cannot derive any pleasure from my concluding reflections. I will, therefore, make my final point in more personal terms. It does little honor to Mr. Neuhaus to publish in *Worldview* a piece which uses the information and the tone he

has chosen. His humor turns too quickly into sarcasm. It is not funny to see him poke fun at *all* our political life. His own ties to the country are no excuse. These ties are the accidental ones of birth and upbringing. The ties of affection that he feels are nostalgic and sentimental, it seems to me. The group of people one really loves is the one with whom one lives the struggles of one's maturity.

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Richard John Neuhaus Responds:

M. Despland's splendid and chastening letter highlights once again the dangers in trying to be funny. I find myself in a "damned-if-you-do/damned-if-you-don't" dilemma similar to the one Despland says he is placed into by my remarks on Canadian thought being "reactive." That is, if I take up Despland on his arguments, I might be accused of giving the lie to the whimsical intent I attribute to the original article. Ah well, like Despland, let me muddle on in the hope of breaking out of the dilemma, if only by chance.

M. Despland's correction about *Newsweek* hardly seems substantive. By whatever name, "tax privilege" is the power to control, in this case to control competition. As for the pressures to learn French, the distinction between "social reward" and "legal coercion" is fragile at best. The point is that, and in part because of the law, if you want to get ahead you better learn French, also in Saskatchewan. As to the schools, there is nothing wrong with the law favoring one language over another. The "democratic notion" is that people ought to be able to choose for themselves and their children, a right sharply inhibited by Bill 22 in Quebec. I agree wholeheartedly with M. Despland that the desirable alternative is definitely not the "totalitarian" school policy that still prevails in the United States. Contra Despland, I reserve the right to "really love" both Canada and the United States, for it is among both peoples that I am living out the struggles toward maturity.

Finally, and for what little it may be worth, I suspect M. Despland and I are not so far apart. His return address, I

note, is a boulevard named Maison-neuve (new house, Neuhaus).

Food Enough for All?

To the Editors: I have just read the September, 1975, *Worldview* article "Food Enough for All" by David Harmon and Marilyn Chou and must make the following comments:

1. Harmon/Chou appear to have written their article within the sterile confines of Croton-on-Hudson. I refer particularly to their paragraphs about the so-called successful Philippines' "Masagana 99" program. Their recitation of Marcos's New Society, data is theoretically profound but realistically naive.

A closer look at the current Philippine scene would indicate that the proposed Land Reform program brought about by Marcos's New Society is a boon for sugar plantation owners. Land much needed for rice and other crops is being used for expanded sugar fields—at low yields for the grower and even less usable food for the average Philippine citizen.

Had Harmon/Chou taken seriously the plight of the Philippine citizen, they would know that even the price of rice is getting further and further beyond the reach of these good folk.

2. My point is simply this: that Harmon/Chou fall victim to the false hope that "profit" will enable an abundance of food for the world. It is not working so in the Philippines, nor is it for the rest of the world.

The first and most important incentive for food production is not profit but the sacredness and beauty of human life. When these factors are relegated to second place, we will simply not be able to deal realistically with the problem of food production.

The gap between rich and poor continues to widen. So does the gap between researchers and realism.

Ewing W. Carroll, Jr.
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David P. Harmon, Jr., and Marilyn Chou Respond:

Let us start with Mr. Carroll's second and more important point, that "profit" offers false hope. One of the key requirements in developing-country

agriculture is the need to provide an economic environment that will encourage the farmer to expand agricultural production. This economic environment encompasses a host of factors, including input availability, favorable input/output ratios, credit and marketing facilities, as well as physical and institutional infrastructure.

The People's Republic of China has gone so far as to compromise its political goals because it realizes that the farmers need the profit incentive to produce. Profit rather than altruistic motives impelled the Pakistani Punjabi to provide the tubewells, diesel engines, and other agricultural machinery necessary for success with high-yielding-variety seeds. It could only have been the attraction of higher incomes that motivated Philippine farmers to increase the acreage planted to high-yielding varieties of rice from 204,000 acres to 4.3 million acres over the period 1966 to 1973.

Regarding Mr. Carroll's first point, it may be premature to judge the two-year-old "Masagana 99" program, but it has provided the necessary elements of the economic environment referred to above. Also, latest U.S. Department of Agriculture figures show that currently in the Philippines more than 9 million acres of rice are harvested compared to 1.3 million acres of sugar cane and that the harvested rice area increased by 7 per cent as compared to 3 per cent for the sugar cane area last year. In addition, a bumper 1975 rice crop, an increase of 250,000 acres of irrigated land over the last year, and the widespread use of the new high-yielding variety of rice, IR-26, indicate some initial successes stemming from the "Masagana 99" program.

With reference to Mr. Carroll's last point—the widening gap between the rich and the poor, a survey conducted in 1971-72 covering six Asian developing countries, including the Philippines, revealed that the introduction of high-yielding varieties of grains on some 2,400 farms in more than thirty villages was not making the rich richer and the poor poorer. These villages were selected for "visibility" of both positive and negative impact of the Green Revolution. Rather, the use of high-yielding varieties resulted in the employment of more labor, important in countries with large rural labor

forces, and thereby increased incomes and effective demand—elements essential to increasing food production.

The Limits Model

To the editors: In his review of *Mankind at the Turning Point* (Worldview, September, 1975) R. W. Behan simultaneously indicts its predecessor *Limits to Growth*. In so doing, however, he has both misrepresented the contents and philosophical bent of *Limits* and reinforced a serious misimpression of the purpose and capabilities of simulation models.

Behan asserts that *Limits* is a "physical-environment, antipollution argument for the cessation of global growth and economic development." He implies that *Limits* ignores social forces and the role of such intangible variables as human perceptions and values. Nothing could be more untrue, as anyone can discover for himself by reading the book and examining the published model. The model in fact explicitly represents the role of values and perceptions in making decisions about, for example, consumption and childbearing. Nor does *Limits* anywhere support a "freeze" on the "global distribution of wealth and guarantee that the problem of underconsumption in most of the world would last forever." To the contrary, the book explicitly calls for a redistribution of wealth, and argues that a viable steady-state can be achieved only if the rich nations are willing to sacrifice some of their higher material standard of living for the benefit of the poor.

Behan next maintains that *Limits* focuses only on "symptoms" and that the book "played exceedingly well the compound-interest game, if present trends continue." If exponential population growth and ever greater exploitation of finite resources to sustain economic growth—the express concerns of *Limits*—are only symptoms, then what are the causes? Behan would have us believe that "inequitable and intolerable distribution of the world's wealth" is the cause. But Behan surely has cart before horse in his argument. The poverty of the majority of mankind is a direct consequence of two

major long-term phenomena: the presence of too many and ever increasing numbers to share a finite pie in the poor nations, and simultaneously the insatiable extraction of the world's riches to sustain a high living standard in the rich nations. These two trends in fact are inseparably related. All the equitable distribution possible cannot improve life in impoverished countries that continue to experience exponential population growth. That would be possible only in a world of infinite resources, food, and pollution-absorption capacity. At the same time, further exploitation by the rich countries is rapidly destroying the means by which the poor nations can move to check population growth. Not merely symptomatic, but the very heart of the matter, is whether or not "present trends continue." Among the alleged shortcomings of both *Limits* and the Pestel-Mesarovic book Behan identifies a shared disposition to "erect a fairly strict dichotomy of man vs. nature" and to assume "a rigid finiteness and fixity of natural resources." Behan never explains what he means by a dichotomy between man and nature, nor how *Limits* supposedly introduces the dichotomy. Considering that population, human food consumption, and human capital investment are three major social variables in the world environment as described by *Limits*, I am at a loss as to where Behan sees a dichotomy. With respect to the question of resource availability, it seems to me that we can argue all day about how much zinc, petroleum, and coal are buried in the earth, but one thing we shall all have to agree upon is that there is only so much—in fact, a finite amount. Unless Behan has privy information that the world's resource deposits are periodically increased from some extraterrestrial source, I don't see how he can say that the assumption of finite resources is "demonstrably wrong." On the contrary, to maintain otherwise seems to me to be demonstrably absurd.

Aside from misrepresentation of *Limits* and logical non sequiturs, Behan reinforces a commonly held, but unjustified, impression of the purpose and capabilities of simulation models, at least with respect to social system simulations. The fallacious impression is that complexity equals sophistication. Behan describes the

Pestel-Mesarovic model as "an entire order of magnitude more sophisticated than the *Limits* model." What are his criteria for sophistication? Apparently the fact that Pestel and Mesarovic have divided the world into ten regions, each of which can exhibit unique behavior. My point is not to fault Pestel and Mesarovic. To the best of my knowledge they have not actually published a *model*, but only a book based on their model, so neither Behan nor I are in a position to evaluate their model's sophistication. Instead, I am taking aim at the compulsive reductionist mentality which requires ever more elaboration and complexity in their models. We are all quite familiar with the extreme example of this point of view—the investment of fortunes of time and money in constructing monstrous "black box" models whose behavior and output cannot be explained but only taken on faith. The less virulent form of the disease is exemplified by those who worship at the altar of disaggregation. The bigger the model, the better. The more disaggregated, the more accurate and reliable. But size, complexity, and level of aggregation are poor indicators of a model's accuracy and usefulness. A model is by definition a simplification. Therefore, since we can never have a social model that perfectly represents reality, the important question when building a model is just what do we gain from further complexity and disaggregation. One thing that seldom increases with model size is intelligibility. After all, there is something to be said for being able to explain how the structure of one's model actually leads to its behavior. The *Limits* model represents a giant forward step on that account.

University of Pennsylvania demographer Etienne van de Walle captured the essence of the *Limits* model in his recent *Science* book review (September 26, 1975) of *Dynamics of Growth in a Finite World*, the formal model employed in *Limits to Growth*. Van de Walle observes that "the value of the book resides in the explicit statement of the assumptions behind World 3 (the *Limits* model)...for the same public of generalists to which *Limits to Growth* was addressed. In expounding these assumptions the authors set standards for clear exposition and present an enticing philosophy for model builders and a guide to under-

standing complex systems through model building."

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R.W. Behan Responds:

Mr. Sweeney's articulate discomfort with my review of *Mankind at the Turning Point* is astonishing. I agree so strongly with many of his assertions that our diametric "bottom-line" disagreement is difficult to understand.

My indictment of *Limits to Growth*, for example, was indeed "simultaneous," not specific and exclusive. Having said in the January, 1974, issue of *Worldview* ("The Liturgy of the Environment") and in detail that the *Limits* argument was "unfair if not fraudulent," I felt little need to make anything more than a "simultaneous" case in the present book review.

I did indeed assert that *Limits* is a "physical-environment, antipollution argument for the cessation of global growth and development," and I did indeed imply that human variables were ignored. And I did indeed, contrary to Mr. Sweeney's veiled accusation, read the book. On page 142, as a matter of fact, I found the authors saying: "The model contains dynamic statements about *only the physical* aspects of man's activities" (italics mine).

The man/nature dichotomy I spoke of in the book review also was treated in some depth in my '74 *Worldview* article. Put it this way: If nature supplies man's needs, as *Limits to Growth* assumes, then man is seen as dependent on, and separate from, a beneficent nature. Each man is only a consumer, a passive receiver from a natural environment, and it may well be we're in deep trouble. But if we see man, adopting some randomly occurring substances and forces, supplying his own needs—through radically altered "natural ecosystems" called "agriculture," for just one example—then we see each man also as a producer. And we are dependent on a man/nature unity: the man/nature dichotomy disappears.

If we conceive of a man/nature simultaneity, then "resources" are seen to be the products of "natural" substances and the human ingenuity to transform them into satisfactions. The

two elements are separated by only the most arbitrary semantics—or by unexamined assumption, as in the *Limits* book.

"Naturally" occurring substances and forces are certainly finite, as Mr. Sweeney alleges. I might point out, incidentally, that the magnitude of that finiteness is often incomprehensible. There is sufficient solar energy stored in the Gulf Stream each year, for example, to supply seventy-five times the annual energy needs of the entire U.S. And we have the tested technology to tap it.

My rejection of the assumption of finite resources, however, does not depend on staggering magnitudes. Rather it depends on the simultaneous man/nature concept of resources, and the intertemporal changeability of the "natural" component. Mr. Sweeney suggests this view is "demonstrably absurd." I fear that suggests that Mr. Sweeney is demonstrably unread. Ignoring, should he prefer, my own article in *Worldview*, Mr. Sweeney might look at Zimmerman's seminal book *World Resources and Industries*, Barnett and Morse's standard work *Scarcity and Growth*, and Derr's newly revised book *Ecology and Human Need*. All of them discount resource scarcity, and several make explicit a functional (i.e., man/nature unity) concept of "resources." To argue that resources so defined are scarce and/or finite is to argue that human ingenuity is exhausted.

Mr. Sweeney admits he is unable to evaluate the Pestel/Mesarovic model; it has not yet been published. Perhaps I can help, with elementary inference. The *Limits* model took the globe as a homogeneous unit; the Pestel/Mesarovic book spoke of ten regions, disaggregated from the whole. From this I infer a model more sophisticated by an order of magnitude, i.e., by a factor of ten. And I found that appealing, for it illuminated problems and opportunities that the aggregated model in *Limits* failed to discriminate.

But Mr. Sweeney is impatient with my enthusiasm for disaggregating the whole. I am reminded of the old trapper with one bare foot in his campfire and the other in a snowbank: in the aggregate he claims to be comfortable. Perhaps, with his penchant for aggregation, Mr. Sweeney would care to replicate the old trapper's experiment.