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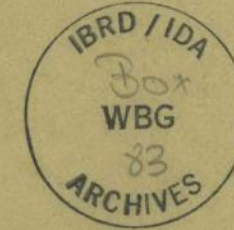
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GARNEAU

Statement of the World Bank's Population Policy and Summary of its
Activities in the Field - Requested by Miss Joan McKay of the
Population Service of the Agency for International Development

"(Population growth) is a thorny subject which it would be very much more convenient to leave alone. But I cannot, because the World Bank is concerned above all with economic development, and the rapid growth of population is one of the greatest barriers to the economic growth and social well-being of our member states."

This was Robert Strange McNamara speaking to the Governors of the World Bank, assembled in Washington for their 1968 annual meeting. Mr. McNamara chose this, his first public speech as President of the World Bank, not only to impress upon his audience the terrifying implications of the current population explosion, but also to pledge the Bank publicly to assist requesting member governments in their programs:

"We are therefore faced with the question of what action we at the Bank, as a Development Agency, should take to lift this burden from the back of many of our members. I propose the following three courses:

First: to let the developing nations know the extent to which rapid population growth slows down their potential development, and that, in consequence, the optimum employment of the world's scarce development funds requires attention to this problem.

Second: to seek opportunities to finance facilities required by our member countries to carry out family planning programs.

Third: to join with others in programs of research to determine the most effective methods of family planning and of national administration of population control programs.

With these three proposals for immediate action, I hope we may contribute to the success of the UN system which is already working in this field, and to the well-being of the developing nations."

Mr. McNamara elaborated his views on the population question in a major address at the University of Notre Dame, May 1, 1969.

In the past year, the Bank's economists have stepped up research into the negative effects of steep population rises on development. Their findings have been summarized in several publications and made available to economic planners around the world.

The most significant step, however, has been the fulfillment of the second proposal above. A separate operational unit, the Population Projects Department, has been created to consider for future Bank Group financing specific population control programs submitted to it by interested member countries. So far 9 countries have approached the Bank for assistance in this field, and Bank Missions have already been sent out to 5 of these countries to investigate the projects involved.

Population and
Dr. Kandiah Kanagaratnam, a former Chairman of the Family Planning Board of Singapore and population consultant for the World Health Organization and the World Bank, was appointed on September 22 as the first Director of the Population Projects Department.



September 23, 1969
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