

A Word With You

By ROBERT CLANCY

What will the year 2000 be like? They're predicting all sorts of marvelous things about it. And you needn't be unconcerned, because part of the prediction involves your own longevity, prolonged by science, and you may well be around to see it.

Fifty years ago and thereabouts it began to be fashionable to peer into the future. In the days of Henry George, Edward Bellamy was already talking about 2000. The socialistic schemes in *Looking Backward* are not at all strangers to us today, though not as pretty as Bellamy thought they'd be.

Other prophets of the period were timid in painting the future and their marvels usually fell short of what actually transpired—so we are informed by L. Sprague de Camp, in the February *Galaxy Science Fiction* magazine. Another writer in the same issue, Robert A. Heinlein, looks anything but timidly at the year 2000 and predicts extraordinary scientific progress.

But Mr. Heinlein senses trouble in the sprawling, uneven development of the sciences. "We need a new specialist," he says, "who is not a specialist but a synthesist. We need a new science to be the secretary to all other sciences."

A big order. And not without point when one reviews another recent and perhaps more serious symposium on the year 2000 by a number of scientists, many of them Nobel prize winners. Energy from the sun will provide electricity for cities. Fresh water will be obtained from the ocean, and deserts like the Sahara will blossom. Space travel, of course. And (you'll love this) over-population will no longer be a menace.

Yes, science needs a secretary. A secretary to remind the graybeards that increase in population, increase in productive power, and increase in land values go hand in hand. Here is data the implications of which need to be analyzed and synthesized. Lying around neglected, this fundamental relationship is powerful enough to shatter the brave new world of 2000. But if it is acted upon sensibly, as Henry George proposed — to abolish all taxation save that upon land values — then will a tremendous step forward have been taken, and then might the sister sciences move forward hand in hand, and then might the year 2000 be two thousand times better than today.