

is it, as some contend, as new liberation, a shaking off of hypocrisy, a trend toward individual maturity? Is it here to stay, or is it a passing fad? Is it an unrelated phenomenon, or does it say something about social trends in general? Many say in defense of sensual films that it is better to make love than to make war. No doubt—but on the wide screen?

Those concerned with the progress of the social order cannot but regard with apprehension any further trend in this direction. Censorship of films is no answer. If the spate of flagrant films is an expression, though minor, of some malaise in society, we had better probe this matter more deeply.

It often happens in society that people seek freedom bordering on license in one department of life when there are too many troubles and frustrations in other departments. Present-day society places so many constrictions on the individual and so many obstacles in the way of his economic well-being, after so many false promises, that the trend in motion pictures might very well be one response to his bafflement.

If there is anything to this theory, we may take it as one more warning that we had better straighten out our economy. Perhaps in restoring economic balances, other imbalances may be corrected, such as the gross tendencies of the motion picture industry.

## SOCIETY IN A STRAITJACKET

"There appears to be a tendency to use people as if they were natural resources."

AT THE Second International Congress of Social Psychiatrists held in London from August 4-8, Dr. G. W. Esty, MD, FAAP, of New Jersey, presented a paper on The Psychoeconomics of Human Ecology—a Challenge to the Behavioural Sciences.

"If human ecology pertains to the effects of the environment upon the behaviour and viability of man," he said, "we can observe that society appears to be sick."

"Behavioural scientists, including the social psychiatrists, can contribute to man's survival provided they direct their efforts toward the correction and prevention of those underlying destructive economic forces that contribute to society's illness and survival."

"Superficial expedients such as slum clearance or the building of model cities will but ultimately intensify relative poverty, richness and social disruption, unless there is a significant change in conventional tax systems which are inherently responsible."

Dr. Esty said that in an affluent society this potential for social disruption and self-destruction starts with the family and its child-rearing practices and attitudes. A process of manipulation of the child for the

ends of others commonly begins in infancy, and extends through childhood, schooling, and into the world of business and politics, creating a "thing-centred" society. Escape from such conforming pressures tends to the development of varied deviant psychosocial behaviour. Too often there appeared to be a tendency to use people as though they were natural resources—to be mined, controlled, manufactured and shaped. Both human and natural exploitation brought pollution and human wastage, which may threaten survival.

"Youth has rebelled against this manipulative society, its waste, its hypocrisy, its wars. Youth seeks new values and directions, based upon the worthiness of human beings and the equal right and opportunity for all people to survive. Let us then involve youth with the most basic and almost forgotten 'inheritance of the past'—the land, from which we spring and have our being."

Agrarian land reform, he said, is now common and has received increasing world-wide attention. However, little effort has been directed to urban land reform, where taxation has been viewed as a fiscal matter only, without reference to its psychological impact upon human

behaviour and motivation.

"Can cities survive? Can the process of city decay, with its social pollution, be reversed? Economists, politicians, and city planners responsible for the formulation of laws, are seldom mindful of the psychology of human behaviour. As a result tax systems tend to be negatively motivated and are therefore avoided or violated, leading to further decay."

An incentive tax system was described "which positively motivates human response and permits the solution of ecological problems." Based upon the fact that land values of sites or locations are determined by the demand of a given population, the speaker urged that a graded tax be placed upon such community created values, and that taxes upon improvements of production, currently penalizing human effort and incentives, be removed. Benefits to the economy, the elimination of slums, and the conservation of natural resources and land were demonstrated.

Dr. Esty urged that behavioural scientists and others familiar with the importance that incentives and motivations play in human affairs, begin to involve themselves with the leadership of governments and with the concerned youth leadership as well, to counsel with them on the psychoeconomics of taxation, welfare and aid programmes as they affect human dignity, health and survival.