

CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY AND WORLD POVERTY, edited by Arthur McCormack; Burns and Oates; 42s.

The chief merit of this symposium is that it treats the problem of world poverty in many of its aspects and is not confined merely to the population question. This is, of course, discussed. Maitre Rouillet and Fr Mertens outline in the first two chapters the extent of poverty and malnutrition and recent demographic trends, whilst Mr Colin Clark and Mgr Ligutti discuss the possibilities of increasing agricultural production. Cardinal Suenens and Dr Marshall deal with the attitude of the Church to marriage and responsible parenthood, and give the lie to those critics who think the Church believes 'in an ungoverned state of unwanted births which would complicate an already grave population problem'. If a slowing down of population growth is desirable, it must be achieved through the responsible decisions of individual couples and licit means. Contributions by Fr Lestapis and Fr Zimmerman show how the encouragement of birth control in Japan and Sweden has been followed by the ready resort to abortion when contraceptive measures have failed. Meanwhile, Fr Nevett in a discussion of Indian problems shows that a substantial fall in the birthrate could be achieved by the very desirable raising of the average age at which girls marry. (This in India is fourteen, and at this age the girls are not ready for the responsibilities of motherhood.)

The problem of population growth is more complex than how to feed more people. As steps are taken to raise agricultural productivity, fewer people are likely to be employed on the land, not more. The task of finding industrial employment for displaced agricultural workers has to be faced. This aspect of the problem is admirably dealt with in the chapter by Mr Hollis. Perhaps the most important chapter is that by Professor deWilmars who summarises some of the detailed calculations of capital equipments if the underdeveloped countries are to increase their food production, find industrial employment for a growing urban population, and achieve sustained economic growth. This chapter goes a long way towards filling the gap in the article by Mr Clark, published in *World Justice* some years ago and reprinted in this symposium which showed that the earth is capable of feeding a vastly greater population than envisaged in the foreseeable future, but did not go into the vital question of rates of growth. The ultimate potential of the earth is meaningless unless the realisation of that potential can keep in step with population.

Mrs Williams, in her article on the finance of African development, refers to the fact that foreign enterprises investing in underdeveloped countries expect a higher rate of return than in their home countries, and that this may be seen as exploitation. It is not clear whether or not Mrs Williams agrees with this view. In so far as these enterprises regard investment in underdeveloped countries as more risky than investments at home, they are entitled to expect a higher return on their capital. Often, too, the underdeveloped countries have only themselves to blame for the risks of investment appearing unduly high. Al-

though she may be right in saying that the interest charges on official British loans may appear unattractive by comparison with the terms offered by the Russians, the real trouble is not interest charges. Provided the funds loaned are used productively, increased output should more than cover the interest payments that arise in the future. The real difficulty is that the payment of interest, and the subsequent repayment of the capital can only be made in goods. It is essential therefore that the underdeveloped countries be allowed to make the payments, and that the markets of the developed countries should not be closed to their exports by tariffs or other restrictions.

Several writers refer to the right of a man to migrate in search of a decent standard of living. Canon Janssens reminds us that property rights are not absolute. They are a means towards the end of ensuring that the fruits of the earth serve the needs of all. If they frustrate that end, they must be modified. The developed countries have an obligation to accept immigrants, even the aged and the sick. Yet there must be some limit. The 'White Australia' policy is clearly wrong, but a country like Britain can hardly accept unlimited numbers of immigrants without undermining the whole economic, social and cultural structure of the country. There is an urgent need for further study and discussion of this problem in relation to the absorptive capacity of particular regions.

Finally, a word of praise must be given to the editor for the way in which he has gathered the various contributions together, and linked them with his own comments. He has done a very good job, and the standard of discussion in this book is far above what we are accustomed to—on the one hand from those who see the problem as a simple one of too rapidly increasing population to be controlled by means of contraception and, on the other, from those Catholics who refuse to see the difficulties of continued and perhaps accelerating population growth.

J. M. JACKSON

LES LAÏCS ET LA VIE DE L'ÉGLISE: Recherches et Debats du Centre Catholique des Intellectuels Français; Fayard; 6.50 NF.

LA LIBERTÉ D'OPINION ET LES CATHOLIQUES, par Jacques Leclercq; Cerf; 11.40 NF.

Anybody can see that the position of the layman in the Church is quite different today from that of any previous period. The reason, naturally, is that the position of everybody in the world is different. The position of the clergy in relation to the secular world is different: indeed the very meaning (as understood in practice) of the word has changed almost beyond recognition in three generations or so. This particular layman would be much more ready to welcome a systematic study of the place of the clergy in society (and not in church society