



CAN HE BLOCK IT?

# SCIENCE IN REVIEW

## The Now Famous Kinsey Report Is Criticized On Statistical and Sociological Grounds

By WALDEMAR KAEMPFERT

It was hardly to be expected that the chorus of praise that greeted the remarkable report on "Sexual Behavior in the Human Male" by Drs. A. C. Kinsey, W. B. Pomeroy and C. E. Martin, would not be offset by some caustic comment. Though this department believes that Professor Kinsey and his colleagues have performed an important service by showing how unrealistic and even barbarous is the legalistic conception of sex relations which has prevailed for centuries, it also believes that the public ought to know what sociologists and statisticians think of the now famous report. So a summary is here presented of a critique by Prof. A. H. Hobbs and R. D. Lambert of the University of Pennsylvania.

Kinsey and his colleagues draw these broad conclusions: Of the male population of this country, 85 per cent have had premarital intercourse; nearly 70 per cent have had relations with prostitutes; between 30 and 40 per cent are unfaithful to their wedded consorts, and 37 per cent have had some homosexual experience between adolescence and old age. Yet Dr. Kinsey is far from holding that our sexual morals are loose and that the world is going to the dogs. He thinks that even scientists have wrongly accepted as valid the "biological notions of ancient jurists and theologians or the analyses made by the mystics of two or three thousand years ago."

### Sampling Method Criticized

In their dissection of these conclusions Hobbs and Lambert condemn Kinsey's method of procedure, specifically his method of sampling the population. To obtain a fair random sample of anything, from the heat value of a carload of coal to the patriotism of a community, is not easy. Kinsey knows it and takes what are to him the proper precautions. His men asked white males questions that covered 300 to 500 items. Thus 5,300 case histories were compiled. To obtain homogenous samples, the histories were classified according to sex, race, marital status, age, educational level and either rural-urban background or religious background. Kinsey intends eventually to break down his cases into twelve groups.

We cannot here list all the pitfalls into which Hobbs and Lambert maintain that Kinsey has fallen in sampling the population. A few examples will have to suffice.

Each case was treated as if it fell not only within its own but also within a previous age category. A married man of 30 who was interviewed would thus provide material for youths who were single. Kinsey justified the procedure on the score that sexual patterns persist, so that practices which the 30-year-old man engaged in during his youth were assumed to be the same as those of youth in general today. Any change in the pattern of sexual behavior or any selectivity of older age groups will thus distort findings for younger groups. The procedure also classified persons in sexual categories on the basis of isolated instances rather than on the basis of patterns of behavior. The adults of today would be labeled as criminals if as boys they had ever swiped apples and as gangsters if they ever belonged to a boys' gang.

### Common Statistical Procedure

Kinsey is well aware of the difficulty of getting a fair random sample and of using it correctly. So he weights his figures to accord with what is known to hold good for the general population. This is a common and a necessary statistical procedure. But, say Hobbs and Lambert, "weighting is not applied for other admittedly significant categories, such as religious affiliation, degree of adherence to religion and rural-urban differences. Those who are 20 years of age or older constitute

75 per cent of the population, but only 20 per cent of the sample. Only 30 per cent of the total population, 30 years or over, is single, but this group of single males constitutes 78 per cent of the sample. So Hobbs and Lambert take up one item after another of the sample and show that few correct conclusions can be drawn from them.

### "Stratified Samples"

Kinsey justifies his disproportions by calling them "stratified samples." Hobbs and Lambert retort that "this procedure demands more or less equal samples from each of the ultimate groups" and that Kinsey accepts "the principle of the stratified sample only in setting a lower limit to the number of cases (fifty) which will be included in each subgroup."

As sociologists Hobbs and Lambert object to the method of treating the sexual behavior of man as biologists treat it in animals. Kinsey happens to be an entomologist, which may explain his attempted disregard of all sociological values. He found it impossible to abide by his principles. In discussing "Religious Background and Sexual Outlet" he is up to his neck in social and moral interpretations. Hobbs and Lambert find that this applies to ten out of sixteen chapters.

Kinsey is so very much the biologist that he contrasts various types of sexual behavior with "normal mammalian behavior," which is the "basis in the human animal" and "normal among other anthropoids," and dwells on the effect of "tyranny of the mores" on the "victims of the mores." If we are to accept this kind of reasoning, say Hobbs and Lambert, we shall have to consider speech, abstract thought, writing, driving an automobile, wearing clothes and making studies of sexual behavior as reprehensible in the sense that they are not "normal" among lower animals. Sexual behavior happens to be a matter of social concern. If we were to judge sexual practices in terms of "normal mammalian behavior," all culturally affected behavior would be "abnormal," Hobbs and Lambert point out.

### Social Conditions

Just because Kinsey tried to avoid social interpretations of his data, Hobbs and Lambert think that he has erred. A sociologist would say that behavior under one set of social conditions would be wrong, under another condoned, even applauded. Killing is generally condemned; in war it is commended. The man who catches his wife in adultery and shoots her paramour stands a good chance of being acquitted by a jury. A policeman who kills a fleeing murderer is not regarded as a criminal. A college boy who necks and pets is just sowing his wild oats, but the college girl who goes as far with the boys may find herself an outcast.

"The situations are quite different biologically as well as economically and socially," say Hobbs and Lambert. Boys cannot become pregnant and thus add an illegitimate child to the burden their families must carry. All this Hobbs and Lambert adduce not to commend or condemn human sexual behavior but to indicate that man, being a social creature, must be treated as such in any study of his mores.

The human species reproduces itself much as all higher animals do, but what is normal sexual behavior for grizzly bears in a forest or for cattle in a pasture is not necessarily normal for men and women in New York or London. In fact, animals are not given to nearly as many departures from what we call "normal" sexual behavior as are human beings. Much cruelty and injustice are to be found in laws that govern sexual behavior, but it does not follow that everything that a beast of the field may do is "normal" for members of a human society.

## EDUCATION NOTES

### Activities on the Campus and in the Classroom

#### ORNI—New Colleges

Immediate establishment of new state colleges, one in Los Angeles, the second at Sacramento and the third in the Compton-Long Beach area has been recommended by the State Commission on Higher Education. In a recent report to the State Interim Committee on Education the commission also recommended the creation of public-supported colleges where needed.

#### CAROLINA—Guidance

Workshops for principals, teachers and prospective teachers in guidance, education and remedial reading will be held under the auspices of the Summer Session of North Carolina State University. The guidance program will be the first of a series to be conducted by the State Department of Public Instruction for a limited number of teachers with guidance responsibilities.

#### WISCONSIN—Alumni Fund

Wisconsin College's Alumni Fund, dedicated during the last two years of the New Era campaign, will be resumed this spring. The fund will attempt to raise \$100,000 for faculty salaries. The New Era campaign, which recently ended, raised \$2,000,000 for additional building, equipment, endowment, scholarship and other needs of the college.

#### VIRGINIA—Student Teaching

Elementary school teachers who are in their first year at Glenview (W. Va.) State Normal School are receiving first-hand experience by participating in the school sessions of seven neighboring counties. The students spend an entire week in each of the rural schools and, upon returning to the campus, correlate their own experiences and formal studies.

#### ILLINOIS—Grading the Faculty

Faculty members as well as students were

### New Institute at Tufts For Applied Psychology

Tufts College has established an Institute for Applied Experimental Psychology, designed to undertake a diversified research program dealing with "man-machine relationships." The project will be integrated with the science divisions of the School of Liberal Arts, as well as the engineering school and the Tufts Medical School.

The institute's work will center in the fields of applied visual research and in training devices for industry and governmental agencies. Created with the aid of government and foundation grants, the institute will work in cooperation with business, industry and research organizations in allied fields. A number of internships are to be made available for the coming academic year to candidates who hold the Doctor of Philosophy degree or its equivalent.

Middle Atlantic States in assimilating a mixed population, developing business and industry and supplying wealth for national expansion.

#### VANDERBILT—Placement Service

A placement service for students in the College of Arts and Sciences and Graduate School has been established at Vanderbilt University. The bureau is intended to serve as a liaison between prospective employers and Vanderbilt students seeking jobs.

#### BERKLEY—Creative Writing

A creative writing workshop has been organized by a group of students at Oberlin College to provide constructive criticism and to help find markets for their work. With English instructors and faculty members assisting in the program, the workshop holds weekly sessions on radio drama, feature writing, poetry and fiction.

#### MICHIGAN—Testing Service

A voluntary state-wide testing service to aid Michigan high schools in counseling their students is being

## NOTES ON SCIENCE

### Chemical Dye Retards Growth of Virus—Sunspot Activity

#### VIRUS—SUNSPOT

Dr. William N. Takahashi of the University of California College of Agriculture reports in Science that Malachite green, a chemical dye, almost stops the growth of the mosaic virus that attacks tomatoes and tobacco. The dye actually penetrates the plant cells and markedly slows down the growth of the virus without hurting the cells in any way. Apparently this is the first time it has been possible to kill a virus or slow its growth without destroying the host animal cells in which it lives.

#### SUNSPOTS

The peak of sunspot activity for the present 11-year cycle has passed. According to scientists at the National Bureau of Standards, the peak was probably higher than ever before. As the sunspot number—a general indicator of sunspot activity—goes down, the ionosphere will not reflect the higher radio frequencies back to the earth. The net effect will be to jam all radio communication into an ever-narrowing band of frequencies for worldwide communication.

#### NEW ATOM PLANT

An atomic energy laboratory is to be built northeast of Marion, Ohio, under the auspices of the Atomic Energy Commission for the study of fundamental problems in nuclear physics. Warehouses, shops, a power plant, sewage and water systems now on the spot will be retained. The new buildings, chiefly laboratories, will cost about \$5,000,000. Dr. Carroll A. Hochwalt, vice president of the Monsanto Chemical Company, will be in charge of research.

#### VITAMIN A'S ORIGIN

Young plants and vegetables are the original source of vitamin A. Prof. Edith A. Roberts and Miss Mildred D. Southwick of Vassar's faculty report

A Year's Dental Work in One Session