

## Green Survival and the Population Problem

**A** POPULATION PROBLEM in this country? Phooey! Anyone with a good pair of eyes and an ounce of reasoning can tell there are not too many people in this country. There will not be too many for years, perhaps centuries, to come.

A population *distribution* problem in this country? Now that's a worm with a different wiggle. Anyone with a good pair of eyes and after one visit to any metropolitan center in the U.S. would have to conclude that there most certainly is a population distribution problem.

And you in the horticulture-arboriculture-commercial turf industries have a vital interest in whether or how that distribution problem is solved. It can be, as the American Association of Nurserymen has suggested, a matter of "Green Survival."

Do you want the apartment housing industry to decide how people should live? Stacked higher and higher in the air and packed into smaller and smaller cubicles? Some apartment executives say the young prefer this kind of living; that they want leisure time for things other than mowing a lawn. That sounds like a partly believable cover-up for the real reason apartment buildings are designed as they are. They're designed to return the biggest profit to the owners.

Funny thing. After jamming the people together, what do the builders do to make the multi-housing cubicles attractive? Plant trees and grass.

There is a reason. A Louis Harris poll this summer asked people to choose among 26 things they considered important to their happiness. Ninety-five percent—more than any other response—selected "green grass and trees around me."

Why then have 75% of our people bunched themselves into urban corners of smoke, fumes, traffic jams and cubicles? They had no other choice. That's where the best-paying jobs were.

Ask any 10 persons: If you could take your present salary and the future opportunities your job holds and live anywhere you wished, where

would you live? We bet you will get some surprising answers.

Are there alternatives? Why not build entire new cities in places where there were none? Build them from the ground up, complete with the conveniences city dwellers now have and with comparable job opportunities, but design them with lots of "green grass and trees around me."

Far fetched? Listen to Samuel C. Jackson, federal assistant secretary for metropolitan development: "We have a program within the Department of Housing and Urban Development which has as its purpose the creation of new cities and towns. It is the New Communities Act, a program of federal guarantees to private developers and grants to public bodies."

The first of these cities is now being planned, he said. It will be a satellite of Minneapolis, near Chaska, Minn.

The importance of where and how people live is crystalized by HUD's prediction that housing unit starts during the 1970s will exceed two million per year.

Expenditures in housing will account for a major portion of the \$1.5 trillion in all types of construction predicted for the 1970s.

If new communities were built, what would happen to old ones? E. B. Weiss of Advertising Age offers one answer. He predicts 1,000 downtown pedestrian shopping malls by 1980. Eventually, he believes, the malls will outnumber the out-town shopping centers, now totaling between 15,000 and 20,000.

If the Harris poll isn't considered an unqualified mandate for optimism, then do a little pencil work. Calculate the business potential for providing and caring for the trees, grass and flowers that will be used to dress up all we've talked about. The figures are scintillating, indeed.

We agree with the tree industry prognosticators in this issue. The future has never looked brighter. The door is wide open. How far we go will depend on how fast we run.

*Gene Ingalsbe*