

Illegitimate Births Is Serious Problem In State Of Oregon

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If illegitimate births in Oregon continue to increase at the current rate, in 1976 nearly 4,000 children will be born who have little or no chance of being adopted.

This is one of the disturbing conclusions in a study reported on at the 53rd annual scientific meeting of the UOMS Alumni Association by Dr. Harold Osterud, chairman of the department of public health and preventive medicine.

To realize that such a situation could exist a mere eight years hence, one need only look at some of the statistics Dr. Osterud has compiled in the first phase of a comprehensive study on illegitimacy.

This past March, for the first time in Oregon's history, one out of every 10 births was illegitimate.

During 1966 (the last year for which complete statistics are available) it was one out of 14, and in Portland even higher, one out of every seven. During that year 2330 babies in the state were born out of wedlock. In 1967 the number jumped to 2478.

In contrast to the spiraling number of illegitimate births, Oregon's overall birth rate is falling. Since 1953 it has dropped more than 18 per cent. Oregon's illegitimacy rate did not climb as fast as the national average until 1960. Since then it has been increasing more rapidly.

These statistics are brushed off by some who say they are not in reality an increase but a reflection of the population explosion. There are now more young women than there were in the 1940's and 50's, they say. But computers spit back such facts as: in 1940 the adjusted rate was 3.1 illegitimate births per 1000 unmarried women in Oregon. In 1960 it was 12.3. Although figures on the current unmarried female population are not available, Dr. Osterud estimated that today they are running close to 16 illegitimate births per 1000 unmarried women in the state.

The ages of unmarried mothers in Oregon range from under 15 to over 40. In 1940, 1950 and 1960, about 41 per cent of all illegitimate babies in the state were born to girls 15 to 19 years old. Since then, illegitimate births among this age group have increased to the point that today roughly half of the unwed mothers in Oregon are teenagers. The next largest in percentage are the 20 to 24 year olds. The number of women in the 25 to 29 group having illegitimate babies has decreased significantly. Dr. Osterud thinks this may be due to the increased knowledge and use of contraception methods among the older group.

Although teenagers are producing most of the illegitimate babies born in Oregon, women 30 to 34 years old have a higher rate in relation to the total number of unmarried females of this age. For example, in 1960 one out of every 52 unmarried women 30 to 34 had an illegitimate baby as compared to one out of every 119 unmarried teenagers.

Do very many women have illegitimate children other than their first one? According to Dr. Osterud's report, during a four-year period ending in 1953, 16 per cent of white illegitimate children born had two or more older brothers or sisters when they arrived. (These siblings may or may not have been illegitimate.)

But by the 1963-66 period there was a five per cent increase in this category of illegitimate white children.

On the other hand, 42 per cent of the non-white illegitimate babies born from 1950-53 already had two or more brothers or sisters, but by the 1963-66 period, this ratio had fallen to 32 per cent.

Another popular belief is that we have fewer "forced marriages" these days, hence the increase in illegitimate births. But statistics do not bear this out. Allowing for population increase, the National Center for Health Statistics has found that the number of women pregnant before marriage has risen since 1945.

In one out of about every seven marriages in Oregon during 1966, a child was born less than eight months after the wedding. For marriages involving girls 16 or under, every other bride was illegitimately pregnant.

Non-whites have a higher rate of illegitimacy than whites,

but both are on the increase. However, the illegitimacy rate is going up faster among whites than non-whites.

Are these illegitimate children in Oregon being adopted? Unfortunately, not all of them. In 1960, nearly 500 were not adopted, in 1966 almost a thousand. And the future looks even bleaker. With our spiraling rate of illegitimacy, even if the number of adoptions continues to increase, by 1970 over 1700 babies born out of wedlock will be left without adoptive homes. In 1976, 3782 will be born to a future of growing up in foster homes or institutions.

"This is a serious problem and we had better look at it seriously," Dr. Osterud said. "We all know the techniques for preventing illegitimate pregnancies. I know I'll be con-

sidered an old square, but as far as I'm concerned the two best preventive measures are those of abstinence, which is hardly a popular concept today, and the second old fashioned concept is marriage . . . and I'm not speaking of forced marriage but a monogamous faithful marriage. Neither of these seems to be working very well at the present time so perhaps we have to look at some alternatives.

"We have contraception and abortion. In spite of the availability of contraceptives, including the pill and the intrauterine devices, the illegitimacy rate is soaring. Perhaps what we really need is the morning-after pill, but we don't have it. Abortions are rather drastic in my opinion. We may have to use them, but certainly they are not as satisfactory as contraception nor is contraception as desirable as marriage or abstinence."

Dr. Osterud doesn't claim to have an answer. The problem belongs to the citizens of Oregon. Ultimately they must provide the solution.

WORK SMARTER - NOT HARDER

HOMEMAKERS TELL US THAT FINGER MARKS are a problem on copper and avocado colored refrigerators. The best solution so far seems to be to use a little creamy white furniture or kitchen wax on a cloth and polish the surface until dry. This will leave a slightly waxy finish.

DURABLE PRESS FABRICS ARE HERE TO STAY. Beth Petersen, home economist with Du Pont, tells us that by 1970, 75 per cent of the market in home furnishings will have this type of finish.

If you're buying new laundry equipment, you may want to consider features which give the best performance with these fabrics.

Washers last, on the average, about nine years, so think about what will be in your wash basket then too. Of course, special features add to the price and thinking ahead about your pocket book is also important.

Baseball

COW HOLLOW

The Cow Hollow Little League minor lads, to date, have won four games and lost one. In a June 6 contest on the Adrian diamond, they defeated their hosts by an 18-4 final tally. Again on June 10 the Cow Hollow lads took a 16-12 win from the Nyssa No. II team. Their June 13 game, however, found the Cow Hollow minors defeated by a 16-7 score by Payette II. They came back for another win on June 17 by taking a 14-6 victory from the Fruitland boys.

Pitchers for the CH minors are Douglas Wynn and Sam Hartley, with Roger VanZelf behind the plate. Serving as umpires are Val Garner and Bud Gooch.

During the next week, the Cow Hollow youths are scheduled to play June 20 at New Plymouth; on June 24 will meet

the Payette I lads on the Cow Hollow diamond and on June 27 will travel to Fruitland.

NYSSA LEGION

The Nyssa Legion team has a record of three wins, three losses since the season began.

On June 1, the lads shared double-header honors with the Baker squad, with a 4-0 loss and a 1-0 win. On June 6, the Nyssa youths defeated Baker by a 7-1 final score and on June 11 they bowed to the Ontario Legion team by a 3-2 tally. On June 13, the final score was Nyssa, 5 and Boise 4. Then on June 17, the local lads were defeated by Payette by a 6-2 score.

Bill Mayden is manager for the Nyssa team, with Jim Anderson and Frank Wilson serving as coaches.

The Nyssa youths and their positions include Steve Pecora,

catcher; Dan Wilson and Von Bowman, pitcher and shortstop; Jeff Lundy, first base and outfield; Jerry Wright, second base; Tim Klinkenberg, third base and outfield; Clarence Tisdial, second base and outfield; Bill Coles, catcher and outfield; Bob Lassiter, outfield; Gary Ross, first base; Jerry Fritz, third base; Mike Murray, centerfield and pitcher; John Bernal and Don Hiatt, outfield.

In addition to a June 19 game at Weiser (after Wednesday presstime), the Nyssa Legion lads' schedule next week calls for a June 24 contest at Boran in Boise and a June 25 game at Weiser.

BABE RUTH

The Nyssa Babe Ruth team defeated Payette 6-3 Wednesday evening of last week. The local lads led the scoring throughout the contest. Rod Lewis was on the mound until the sixth-inning when he was relieved by Bryan Feik. Lewis was credited with the win.

On the following evening, June 13, the Nyssa Babe Ruth squad defeated Ontario II by a 5-4

final tally. After trailing 4-2, with two down, the Nyssa youths took advantage of some Ontario errors by getting three runs for the victory.

Rick Wilson was on the mound for the Nyssa team, and went all the way. Mike Smith led the Nyssa attack with two hits, including a triple. Steve Cody pitched for the Ontario Babe Ruthers.

A schedule of future games was not available at Journal presstime Wednesday.

My Neighbors



"Boy, is she stacked!"



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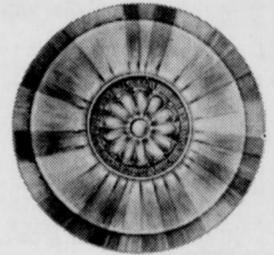
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