

# 'Growth,' Population Called 'Gods' Wrecking Environment

By TIM RICHARD

In Congress recently, they erected a giant clock to keep an up-to-the-second account of America's gross national product.

To Dr. Robert Rienow, that clock symbolizes man's abuse of his environment—an abuse that "has suddenly turned deadly."

In his view, the GNP clock represents materialism—a system of values that considers only things and dollars, and brushes aside the damage done by "the crowding, gouging and tearing of the land."

DR. RIENOW isn't a big name in the movement to save the environment or he might have drawn more than a few dozen persons to his lecture last week in Schoolcraft College's humanities series.

He is professor of political science in the graduate school of public affairs at State University of New York Albany. He is the author of "Moment in the Sun," an angry, limited account of the devastation of the en-

vironment. He recently produced a 28-part television lecture series which is being circulated across the U.S. by NET, so you may hear more of him sooner.

Rienow is the son of a son of a smalltown printer and he delivered papers while growing up in Wisconsin, which he is proud to point out is the land of such environmentalists as Sen. LaFollette, Nelson and Proxmire.

HIS LANGUAGE denouncing materialism borders on purple prose:

"An arsenal...petro-chemical technology...raw power—this became our creed."

"An orgy of production and consumption was launched (after World War II)...manglers of the land...We use vast quantities of poisons to raise our crops. We've poisoned our lakes and streams—and now our oceans."

"We're on a suicidal binge (caused by something) we have luntheadedly called 'Progress.'"

"Growth has been our number one god."

OUR CORPORATE system is locked onto at least a four-per-cent growth rate...Petty politicians measure progress in terms of the property tax base and miles of freeways...Even ministers measure their progress quantitatively—numbers of baptisms, numbers of communions, numbers of marriages.

One facet of the growth dogma, Rienow insists, is "social and political approval of population increase. The diaper has been hoisted high and is hailed by industry."

The assumption of resources and worship of population growth have a common intellectual source—what Rienow calls "anthropocentrism."

Stated plainly, it's the doctrine that man is the center of the world, the possessor of the world, the

owner of the world and not just one ruinous part of the world.

"Our conception of 'Progress' is suicidal," and Rienow's solution is a new set of values, one that doesn't put a dollar sign on everything.

THIS NEW SET of values will emphasize intangibles instead of materialism, restraint instead of hedonism, compassion instead of self-indulgence.

It will measure progress in terms of trees planted, not in the dollar value of timber cut down.

It will give credit to the production of low fuel consumption vehicles like bikes and mini-buses rather than bigger and more powerful autos.

An "elite," he said, will

have to measure every corporate and public agency action in terms of the environment and perform as a "watchdog" over every institution of society.

A congressional reform will be needed, he said, to replace the system whereby environmental legislation can be shoved into any one of four committees in the Senate and seven in the House. "By improper reference, a bill can be killed."

Above all, said Dr. Rienow, industry will have to stop behaving like "the gourmand housewife. She makes better and tastier dishes every day, but she never gets rid of the garbage, and she lets the dishes pile up until there are no more."



CHARLES D. FRITZ, vice president and general manager of WXYZ Radio, has been named general chairman of Junior Achievement Week. He will preside over JA activities the week of Jan. 24-30. JA Week is a national event during which high school students in JA economic education programs are recognized for their accomplishments.

## Housing Gets Boost

"Breakthrough" housing may be a reality in southeast Michigan with coordinated action and more federal funding, according to Charles Tucker, chairman of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) housing committee.

Tucker spoke before a conference of 80 representatives of "Breakthrough" building firms and representatives of banks and neighborhood improvement associations.

HUD has announced that it will earmark certain housing subsidy funds under rent supplement programs for sponsors using the Breakthrough products," he said.

"We are hopeful that by spurring the interests of those in the region, we can get some of the money for housing in Southeast Michigan."

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## 'Poor Planning' Slows Park \$\$\$

By TIM RICHARD

Of all the local recreation projects for which cities and counties seek state funds, about half are "deferred" and a few even rejected. Why?

Poor planning, says Joseph Seavey, chief of recreation services of the State Natural Resources Department.

Seavey spoke last week to a regional meeting of the Michigan Municipal League, and many Observersland mayors, councilmen and appointed officials heard his talk in the community room of Livonia Mall.

Michigan voters in 1968 approved a \$100 million bond issue for recreation, and \$30 million of that will go to local governments.

Seavey and his staff go over the projects and draw up a list for approval by the Legislature. So far, 446 projects have been submitted, less than half (196) approved, 235 deferred and 45 rejected. Some \$11.8 million has been committed.

IN GOING over these projects, Seavey was sometimes shocked and astounded.

"I was astounded at the lack of community recreation" in many places, he said. Local units thought they

had comprehensive plans for land use and public facilities. "But often recreation ended up with three green spots on the map, and recreation is nice and maybe we oughta do something about it."

The greatest problem, Seavey said, is that local officials "fail to justify your priorities...Your planning didn't tell us anything. How many will use the facilities? For what?"

Often there's no recreation planning at all—only a vague notion that there should be 10 acres of park property for every 1,000 inhabitants, but no grasp of what recreation is about.

"Once in a while, a community understands what recreation is. But others leave it until it's too late," Seavey said.

HE BRANDED as "appalling" the lack of cooperation and joint planning between cities and school boards. "Often we see a separate city recreation department, a school recreation program and then a city parks department."

Seavey, who has been a recreation department official in Muskegon and East Detroit before joining the state DNR, said local offi-

cials tell him that "you in Lansing don't know our problems."

"We'll agree 100 per cent," said Seavey. "We want citizen participation and planning...We're going to be on your back."

He said the state bond issue had stimulated a crash program to put projects in deficient areas, and has prompted local officials to look at areas they had previously bypassed.

HIS COLLEAGUE, Victor Horvath, assistant grants coordinator of the DNR, said the department must make reports twice a year to the Legislature recommending grants to local units.

Wayne County and its communities have been allocated \$10.2 million from the total program, and the Legislature has approved \$4.68 million for acceptable projects as of mid-1970. Another \$3.7 million in projects were recommended by the DNR as of last Dec. 1, leaving only \$1.8 million, which will probably be allocated April 1.

Thereafter, anything left will go into a regional then a state, pool. Thus, local governments who haven't asked for any recreation funds were advised to get going.

The money is allocated on the basis of the 1960 census because the bond issue was approved in 1968. A Nov. official, asking if there was any chance the basis could be changed to the 1970 census, a move that would benefit growing suburbs, was told: "No."

## Ryan Named To New Post

Robert W. Ryan, a former vice president of International Systems & Computer Corp., Dallas, has been elected to the new post of vice president-actuary of Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. of America, Farmington.

Ryan, 32, has a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Michigan and a bachelor's degree in mathematics.

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