

**SOCIETY**

order of their birth). He concludes that a reversal of the downward trend in SAT scores will soon appear.

Research findings, Zajonc writes, show intellectual performance improves with decreasing family size, except in one-parent homes; test scores reflect even the temporary absence of a parent. Firstborn children perform better than later children, especially when intervals between births are relatively short. Long spacing between siblings benefits the later child by permitting development in a more "mature" environment. The only child suffers from the lack of opportunity to teach younger siblings—a handicap affecting last-born children, too.

Thus, some of the decline in SAT scores may be attributed to a steady fall in the percentage of first children born between 1947 and 1962 (from 42 percent to 27 percent), resulting in fewer children taking the SAT who have the intellectual advantages of being firstborn. The proportion of first children has been steadily increasing since 1963, and children born in that year, who will take the SAT in 1980, already show improved scholastic performance.

### *Future Limits On Leisure*

"The Future of Free Time" by Alexander Szalai, in *Futures* (June 1976), IPC Science and Technology Press Ltd., 32 High St., Guildford, Surrey, England GU1 3EW.

There are signs that even as free time increases, it is becoming less free. Reporting on last April's Second World Congress on Free Time and Self-Fulfillment in Brussels, Szalai, an economist at Karl Marx University, Budapest, writes that recent concentration by unions and employers on easing the daily grind often resulted in 30-60-minute reductions in the work day that people easily frittered away. However, past reductions in both work day and work week (to seven or eight hours on the job, five days a week) have changed popular demands. Instead of further reductions in the workday, employees want longer weekends and vacations.

"The future seems to belong to the accumulated use of free time," says Szalai, who notes that a worker allowed to trade a 30-minute reduction in his eight-hour day for "accumulated time off" could enjoy an extra three weeks of paid vacation every year. Such practices, if widespread could have a profound impact on tourism, sports, and other leisure industries. But few forms of leisure can be enjoyed without commercially produced goods and services. In socialist, planned economies, such goods and services—from ski boots to bathing suits, books, movies, and dance halls—are available only if government planners provide them. In capitalist countries, Szalai predicts, environmental concerns will probably increase government curbs on the unfettered enjoyment of added leisure (e.g., limits on the use of motor vehicles or on public access to wilderness areas).