

NUTRITION

American Physique Superior Because Better Food Eaten

But Small-Income American Family Still Buys Poor Selection Of Foods, Reports to Home Economics Association Reveal

BETTER feeding of the American people, whether accidental or planned, has actually produced a people of better physique within a few decades.

This view was expressed before the American Home Economics Association by Prof. Agnes Fay Morgan of the University of California.

Citing achievements deriving in part at least from better food, Prof. Morgan named:

1. Vastly improved infant health and survival.
2. Lowered mortality and morbidity at all ages.
3. Accelerated rates of growth in children.
4. More comfortable as well as longer deferred and longer lasting old age.

There remain, Prof. Morgan said, three pressing problems which may be of nutritional origin. These are still to be solved:

1. The prevention and cure of malignant growths.
2. The control of susceptibility to infectious diseases.

3. The prevention of the circulatory and metabolic diseases which are now one of the chief causes of death of middle aged and elderly people.

Despite the chorus of nutrition workers, telling the world over and over what a balanced diet should be, the American family with small income still buys a poor assortment of foods.

This is the evidence from a check-up on foods chosen by 25 families of unemployed in Berkeley, California. The families received grocery orders for a certain money value.

Ruth Okey of the University of California said in reporting the result that the grocery slips showed too many sweets and fats and too few foods containing vitamins, especially vitamin B.

"The families were probably of higher intelligence than the average," she said, "hence the findings indicate very poor choice of food in the American family on a low income level."

The amounts of the orders were said to be generous in comparison with most relief schedules at the present time.

Science News Letter, July 1, 1933

tion, on the other hand, makes its most vigorous progress between two and six years.

The investigators have been hampered in their study of development of the various parts of the brain by the fact that the brains studied are of dead and therefore defective children. Unless death is swift and accidental, the child has suffered through an illness that may have affected the brain as well as all other parts of the body.

Psychological tests on living children, however, give results in harmony with these examinations of the brain, the investigators said.

Science News Letter, July 1, 1933

GEOLOGY

Temperature of Ground Dates Last Ice Age

WITH a thermometer in the depths of a Wisconsin copper mine as their "calendar of prehistory," two geologists have estimated that the last ice age withdrew from northern Wisconsin twenty or thirty thousand years ago. The scientists, Drs. W. O. Hotchkiss, president of Michigan College of Mining and Technology, and L. R. Ingersoll, of the University of Wisconsin, told the American Association for the Advancement of Science how they obtained their data and made calculations.

The new figure is much less than the estimated period since the Niagara Falls region was free of a continental glacier. It is greater than the seven or eight thousand years European geologists have determined from studies of layers of sediment as the time since the retreat of the last ice sheet from parts of Norway and Sweden. But it does agree roughly, as geological time is approximated, with the dates set for the retreat of the last great ice shelf from Europe and North America.

The temperature measurements, which were made at levels 500 feet apart to a depth of one mile, also indicate that the melting of the ice "was followed, perhaps after several thousand years, by a period distinctly warmer than the present, which was succeeded in turn by one slightly cooler and lasting until rather recent times." Only the average temperature of the ground varied in this manner, it was pointed out, while the average air temperature could have been different.

Accuracy depends on the assumption that the last ice sheet covered the site for about 50,000 years.

Science News Letter, July 1, 1933

ANATOMY

Six-Year-Old Children Have Brains of Adult Size

WHEN a child reaches the age of six, his brain has grown to approximately its full adult size, scientists learned from a report by Drs. Y. T. Loo and T. Wingate Todd, of Western Reserve University, to the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Although it takes the human body about 20 years to reach its adult size, the brain takes only six and in better nurtured children only about four.

By this time the child has also attained adult mental capacity, the investigators conclude, and it remains only to

convert this potential capacity into ability by learning and experience throughout the school and college period.

Parts of the brain are fully developed even before the child reaches kindergarten age. The parts of the cerebrum which govern vision and hearing are fully grown and developed by the end of the first year, the scientists reported.

The area of the brain where memories are stored, and the area devoted to learning, grows vigorously from soon after birth, but has made its greatest changes before the child is two years old. The area utilized in attention and concentra-