

EUGENICS

Man's Control Over Life Is Prime Science Contact

Both Births and Deaths Are More Subject to Human Decisions and Man-Made Environment Than Ever Before

IT CAN be argued that the only truly direct effect science has had upon man is the application of medical and health knowledge that has lengthened his life span and reduced the birth rate.

Autos, radios, and all the impacts of physical science upon man's environment? Merely indirect and secondary, although admittedly important.

An intellectually exciting idea put forth by Frederick Osborn, population authority, in some of his thinking on eugenics is this:

"Both births and deaths are more subject to human decisions and to a man-made environment than ever in the past. Man is given a new responsibility he did not expect and which he is as yet wholly unprepared to discharge."

The objectives of the newer eugenics are not particularly radical and are not centered upon sterilization or such techniques. They are concerned with making the best of what we have through education. This applies to determining who shall be born into the world as well as what happens to them later.

Most emphatically eugenics today does

not desire to make a selection between social, economic, or racial groups.

In the last few years science has amply proved, in Mr. Osborn's opinion, that whether or not there are differences between such groups with respect to the average capacities of the individuals which compose the group, such differences in average capacity are relatively small. On the other hand, the differences between individuals in the same group are known to be very large.

Eugenics thus demands a selection between individuals. It asks simply for a gradual increase in births among those individuals who are above the average of their group in socially valuable qualities. It wants a gradual decrease in births among those below the average of their group in socially valuable qualities. On the average, it is found that those parents who provide the best home training for their children are also those with the best genetic stock.

This is a rather happy philosophy for planning mankind's future.

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MEDICINE

New Human Disease Found; It Is Horse Brain Disease

AN entirely new human disease, the horse encephalitis or "sleeping sickness" that attacked some 25 children in Massachusetts, has appeared. Its newness was pointed out by Dr. James P. Leake, U. S. Public Health Service, on his return from Boston where he investigated the condition.

Appearance of this horse ailment in humans does not, however, solve the problem of human so-called sleeping sickness such as has been epidemic in St. Louis and other parts of the country.

Discovery that the children got the ailment from horses was announced almost simultaneously by Drs. Leslie T. Webster and F. Howell Wright of the

Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, and Drs. L. D. Fothergill, J. H. Dingle, S. Farber and M. L. Connerley of Boston, who found the virus of the horse disease in the brains of children who had died of it.

No further cases are expected this year, Dr. Leake pointed out, because the disease has died out in the horses in Massachusetts. It is spread from horse to horse by mosquitoes and probably mosquitoes carry it to children.

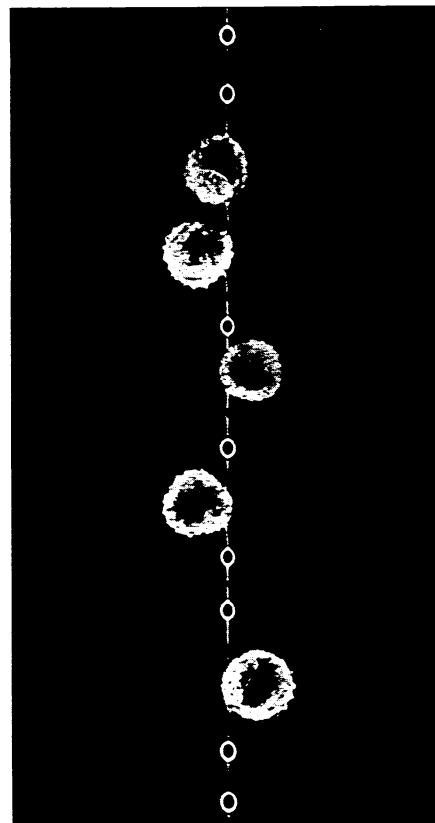
The ailment is altogether a disease of babies and children, which is one of its striking differences from other types of encephalitis or "sleeping sickness" that become epidemic.

The virus that causes the disease is entirely different from viruses of other human encephalitis types and from the Western encephalomyelitis of horses.

The symptoms of the disease acquired from horses are also different from other types of human encephalitis. Convulsions are a striking feature of the horse-acquired sickness, and there is occasional spastic paralysis. Sleepiness or stupor, which gives encephalitis its popular name of sleeping sickness, is present, but no more so, Dr. Leake said, than in any very sick person who has fever.

The disease is highly fatal, another difference from St. Louis encephalitis. Nearly two-thirds of the children in the Massachusetts outbreak died.

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NOT FAIRY NECKLACE

It is a photomicrograph (at 600 diameters) of a spider-web thread, with five pollen grains of the tall ragweed, that have been caught by the sticky droplets seen elsewhere along the thread as small, black-centered beads. The picture was made by Oren C. Durham, chief botanist of the Abbott Laboratories, North Chicago, Ill., who specializes in hayfever pollen problems. "I wonder what Madam Spider thinks," Mr. Durham comments, "when she hangs out her line for live game and gets a string of pollen." Fortunately for Madam Spider, she doesn't know how to sneeze.