

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Steps To Control Rabies

Federal control commission to take responsibility of activities to check rabies. Methods based on scientific information can be adopted.

► **FIRST STEPS** toward a federal rabies control commission are being taken by the U. S. Public Health Service with the cooperation of the Alabama and Georgia state health departments, it appears from a report to the American Veterinary Medical Association meeting in Cincinnati.

The commission would be composed of members from the U. S. Bureau of Animal Industry, the U. S. Public Health Service and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, according to the plan outlined by Dr. Ernest S. Tierkel of Montgomery, Ala.

"Eradication of rabies is not possible in this country unless a properly authorized national agency assumes the responsibility of coordinating rabies control activities," he declared.

With a commission such as he described, a uniform pattern of rabies control methods based on proved scientific information can be drawn for adoption and action by the states. The commission could distribute to the states the best accepted procedures for diagnosing rabies. It would institute an accurate system of reporting rabies and keep local authorities posted on the most effective methods for immunizing, or vaccinating, against the disease. It could also prepare and distribute material for the education of the public on the problem.

In Alabama and Georgia epidemiologic studies are being started. The object is to form a basis for field demonstrations, on a county or multi-county health unit level, to evaluate various methods of controlling rabies. Mass vaccination of dogs, incarceration and impounding of strays, quarantine of exposed animals and concentrated trapping programs in areas where fox rabies exists are the methods to be tested.

Studies of another kind are under way at the U. S. Public Health Service's communicable disease center at Atlanta. Here scientists are experimenting to determine the length of time the commercial dog vaccines give protection against rabies. They are trying to re-

fine the system of dosage to get the best results. They are testing the safety and relative effectiveness of newly developed vaccines from live rabies virus such as vaccines from virus grown on chick embryos. The effectiveness of experimentally killed virus vaccines, including those made from rabies virus weakened by ultraviolet light and others inactivated by mustard-gas chemicals, is being tested.

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PALEONTOLOGY

Smithsonian Finds Skulls Of Ancient Stick-In Muds

► **THIRTY-FIVE** members of an Oldest Inhabitants Club in what is now New Mexico were such stubborn stick-in-the-muds, some 150,000,000 years ago, that they died because they wouldn't (or couldn't) come up out of the wet.

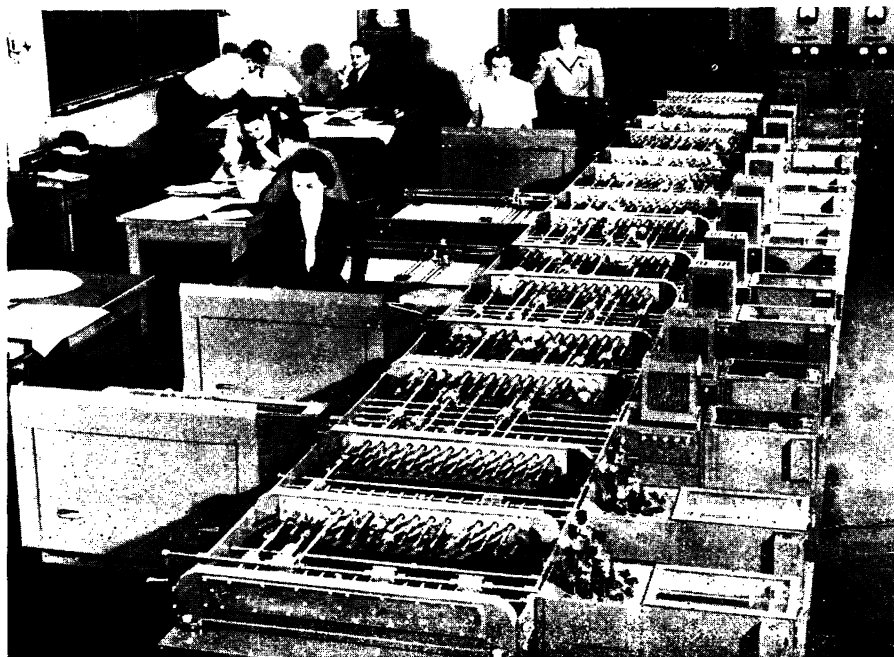
Now they are museum pieces: their skulls have been brought to Washington by Dr. D. H. Dunkle, who is paleontologist at the Smithsonian Institution.

The big find of ancient remains represents the highest type of vertebrate life known on earth during the transition period from the Age of Fishes to the Age of Reptiles. They were giant amphibians known scientifically as stereospondyls, relatives of the salamanders and mud-puppies of today. Their great size is indicated by the length of their skulls—two feet is not uncommon.

Dr. Dunkle states that in one slab of stone 40 feet square he found nine of these big skulls. Apparently the animals were caught in a drying pool and had no means for escape, since they were dependent on water to keep their scaleless skins moist.

During the Triassic Age, in which these creatures lived, a great part of the earth was apparently low and marshy. When geologic revolution set in, heaving up mountains and drying up the marshes, the more progressive reptiles, which could live on dry land, inherited the earth, while the giant amphibians perished.

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MATH BY MACHINE—This differential analyzer has accomplished in two weeks computations equal to 17 man-years of effort. Although the machine operates mechanically, it is electrically controlled. It has become part of the "figure center" at U. C. L. A.