

## PSYCHOLOGY

# No Drop in Intelligence

► OUR civilization is not growing dumber, losing its intelligence, although the wealthy and better educated classes are having smaller families.

This assurance was given the British Association for the Advancement in Science in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, England, by Dr. P. E. Vernon, psychologist for the British Admiralty.

Other psychologists backed up Dr. Vernon who took issue with the opinion of Sir Cyril Burt, of the University of London, that by the end of the century the proportion of superior children will be half that in 1920 and the proportion of the very dull will be more than doubled.

Although psychologists admit that the most intelligent are not passing on their gifts to the next generation because of their small families, still the children do not appear to be any dumber than their parents or grandparents.

Perhaps something is wrong with the I. Q. tests, Dr. Vernon suggested. Maybe they are influenced by the environment or the children get higher scores as they grow more used to being tested.

"There are great difficulties in proving the extent to which intelligence is inherited, either by pedigree, twin resemblance, or other investigations," he said.

Prof. L. S. Penrose, another psychologist, expressed doubt of the prediction of geneticists that the intelligence level will decline. "Genes for high intelligence are apparently being continually lost but this is probably an illusion," he declared.

Effects of slight changes in environment can easily surpass the effects of natural selection on human characters, he indicated. Also stable hereditary conditions can be produced by the intermarriage of differing kinds of people—a hybrid vigor—even in the

presence of the tendency of the intelligent and the stupid to marry others like them in intelligence.

Two surveys of the intelligence of Scottish children indicate that the youngsters of today are actually brighter, not duller, than their elders.

In 1947, a group intelligence test was given to all 11-year-old Scottish children. Results were compared with a similar survey of 11-year-olds in 1932. It was shown that the 1947 children are brighter, although the brightest children come from the smallest families.

Science News Letter, September 17, 1949

## CHEMISTRY-ENTOMOLOGY

## Silicone Greases Collect Germs Effectively

► BACTERIA, pollen grains, fungus spores and other airborne troublemakers can be more advantageously collected on the sticky surface of a silicone grease than on vaseline, agar or other "stickums" now employed, Drs. S. M. Pady and C. D. Kelly of McGill University, Montreal, point out in the journal, *SCIENCE* (Aug. 19).

Glass plates or other objects smeared with sticky substances have been in use for some years for capturing microscopic objects floating in the air, sometimes on the ground, often on airplanes at high altitudes. All the media hitherto used change consistency with temperature, the two Canadian scientists point out. At the very low temperatures encountered in high airplane flights some of them freeze, lose their stickiness, and become unable to capture anything.

The silicone greases, on the other hand, keep the same stickiness at deep sub-zero

temperatures that they have at summer warmth, and so will function as catchers under any circumstances. Moreover, they may if desired be sterilized by heat, still without changing the character of their surfaces.

Science News Letter, September 17, 1949

*Goldenrod*, suggested by some as the national flower because it is distinctively American, is condemned by others in an erroneous belief that it is a prime cause of hay-fever.

## SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

VOL. 56 SEPTEMBER, 17, 1949 No. 12

49,500 copies of this issue printed

The Weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C., NORTH 2255. Edited by WATSON DAVIS.

Subscription rates: 1 yr., \$5.50; 2 yrs., \$10.00; 3 yrs., \$14.50; single copy, 15 cents, more than six months old, 25 cents. No charge for foreign postage.

Change of address: Three weeks notice is required. When ordering a change, please state exactly how magazine is now addressed. Your new address should include postal zone number if you have one.

Copyright, 1949, by Science Service, Inc. Reproduction of any portion of SCIENCE NEWS LETTER is strictly prohibited. Newspapers, magazines and other publications are invited to avail themselves of the numerous syndicate services issued by Science Service. Science Service also publishes CHEMISTRY (monthly) and THINGS of Science (monthly).

Printed in U. S. A. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Washington, D. C. under the act of March 3, 1879. Established in mimeographed form March 18, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide to periodical literature, Abridged Guide, and the Engineering Index.

Member Audit Bureau of Circulation. Advertising Representatives: Howland and Howland, Inc., 393 7th Ave., N.Y.C., Pennsylvania 6-5566 and 360 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago. STAt 4439.

## SCIENCE SERVICE

The Institution for the Popularization of Science organized 1921 as a non-profit corporation.

Board of Trustees—Nominated by the American Association for the Advancement of Science: Edwin G. Conklin, Princeton University; Karl Lark-Horowitz, Purdue University; Kirtley F. Mather, Harvard University. Nominated by the National Academy of Sciences: Harlow Shapley, Harvard College Observatory; R. A. Millikan, California Institute of Technology; L. A. Maynard, Cornell University. Nominated by the National Research Council: Ross G. Harrison, Yale University; Alexander Wetmore, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution; Rene J. Dubos, Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Nominated by the Journalistic Profession: A. H. Kirchofer, Buffalo Evening News; Neil H. Swanson, Baltimore Sun Papers; O. W. Riegel, Washington and Lee School of Journalism. Nominated by the E. W. Scripps Estate: H. L. Smithton, E. W. Scripps Trust; Frank R. Ford, Evansville Press; Charles E. Scripps, Scripps Howard Newspapers.

Officers—President: Harlow Shapley, Vice President and chairman of Executive Committee: Alexander Wetmore, Treasurer: O. W. Riegel, Secretary: Watson Davis.

Staff—Director: Watson Davis. Writers: Jane Stafford, A. C. Monahan, Marjorie Van de Water, Ron Ross, Lydia Schweiger, Ann Ewing. Science Clubs of America: Joseph H. Kraus, Margaret E. Patterson. Photography: Fremont Davis. Sales and Advertising: Hallie Jenkins. Production: Priscilla Howe. In London: J. G. Feinberg.

# Question Box

## ARCHAEOLOGY

What attitude do scientists have to Noah's ark? p. 178.

## ARCHAEOLOGY-ANTHROPOLOGY

How has a new frontier of American prehistory been opened? p. 179.

## GENERAL SCIENCE

How do our standards affect modern art? p. 182.

## MEDICINE

What is the effect of drinking alcohol daily? p. 181.

Photographs: Cover, George A. Smith, Quarryville, Pa.; p. 179, Coast Guard; p. 181, Piasecki Helicopter Corp.; p. 183, General Electric Company.

Why may Cortisone point the way to better treatment of allergies? p. 178.

## PHYSIOLOGY

Why will there probably never be a machine that will work like the brain? p. 181.

## PSYCHOLOGY

What protection is there from mass murder by crazed people? p. 183.

Why do some scientists believe intelligence is not declining? p. 180.

## VETERINARY MEDICINE

How may barren cows be treated to give milk? p. 184.