

## PSYCHOLOGY

# Welfare, Suicide Linked?

► THE NOTION popular among conservative politicians that the paternalism of the welfare state causes suicide is not supported by a study of Norway and Denmark.

Although both these countries are welfare states, Norway has a low suicide rate and Denmark a high one, Dr. Maurice L. Farber, professor of psychology at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, pointed out in *Mental Hygiene*.

"In my own intensive interviews with suicide attempters in Norway and Denmark," said Dr. Farber, "I never encountered a case in which boredom or lack of incentive played a significant role."

Conceding that a number of welfare states do have high suicide rates, the psychologist said it is easy "to fall into the fallacy of assuming causal linkage." In these states as in nonwelfare states, there are many other factors such as increased urbanization, technological change, industrialization and changes in work activities that may well influence people with damaged personalities to do away with themselves.

The United States suicide rate dropped following the social legislation of the New Deal period, and the rate in the Canadian

province of Saskatchewan, which has the most advanced welfare state provisions in Canada, is slightly lower than that of its neighboring provinces, Dr. Farber said.

The needs of people who are potential suicides are mainly emotional ones, which the welfare state affects very little, he stated, but it supplies something that may mildly help to reduce the rate.

Dr. Farber cited two theoretical principles to support the idea that the welfare state has at least a mildly ameliorative effect on suicide. First, suicide is a "consequence of experienced deprivation," not blamable on a type of government that supplies the opposite of deprivation; and second, the welfare state provides a hopeful future outlook in which economic anxieties are reduced.

"I have never encountered a man who attempted suicide because he had just received a social security check," the psychologist said.

Dr. Farber spent a year as a special research fellow of the National Institute of Mental Health at the Institute for Social Research, Oslo, Norway.

• Science News Letter, 88:111 August 14, 1965

## BIOLOGY

# Antivivisection Bill Hit

► INTERSTATE SHIPMENT of animals for laboratory use is being attacked in two bills introduced in the House of Representatives last month. The bills, HR 9743 and HR 9750, were written and sponsored by antivivisectionists and their less-outspoken allies long associated with the sabotage of animal science, the National Society for Medical Research warns.

Such action encourages a black or gray market in animals for research, forcing scientists themselves to either take advantage of it or give up their lifesaving experiments.

Antivivisectionists are defeating their own purpose in opposing laws that would save unclaimed animals in the dog pound from the gas chamber so they could serve humanity in tests of new drugs, surgery and other medical procedures, Ralph Rohweder, executive secretary of the Society, points out.

"Some legitimate humane societies have braved the wrath of the AV fanatics and provided animals for study that otherwise would have been killed uselessly," says Mr. Rohweder. Some of these societies that tried to advance public health lost large bequests from wealthy animal lovers who were misled by antivivisectionist propaganda.

Although 11 states and 30 communities, including most of the major medical centers, have adopted laws that both protect pet owners and guarantee an adequate supply of animals for study, every state should have such a law, Mr. Rohweder emphasizes.

The scientific community is not guiltless, he concedes.

"Scientific leaders have sometimes taken the cynical view that it is better to take the path of least resistance because of discouraging legislative defeats." They reason that it is easier to buy animals, asking no questions.

Pound laws are in effect in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, Oklahoma and Utah.

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## TECHNOLOGY

# Shock-Giving Collar Controls Delinquent Dogs

► AN ELECTRONIC dog collar has been developed as a means of training delinquent animals. The dog under training wears a collar with a red light and electric contacts round its neck.

If the wayward dog molests sheep or otherwise misbehaves, the trainer presses a button and by radio the dog receives a mild shock, sufficient to dissuade it.

The collar works at a distance of up to about a quarter of a mile. The red light tells the operator the gadget is working.

The collar was devised by J. G. Park, Felixstowe, England, for corrective training of dogs used by the services, guide associations and handlers. It is now in commercial production by Newmarket Transistors, Ltd. of Newmarket, Suffolk.

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