

Center in San Francisco conducted experiments to see if the SV40 virus, harmless to human cells, contained a gene that would code for a missing enzyme in an inherited disease called xeroderma pigmentosum. The condition, associated with a sometimes lethal sensitivity to sunlight, emerges because of the absence of an endonuclease, a gene that repairs DNA damaged by ultraviolet light (SN: 10/18, p. 348). "The SV40, regretfully, does not work," Dr. Cleaver reports. "Most of the genetic information it introduces appears to be characteristically viral." It is not useful to mammalian cells. Dr. Cleaver adds that while there may be a safe, natural virus capable of inducing endonuclease synthesis in defective human cells, the search would be monumental and is not on the drawing board.

The alternative to employing the genes of innocuous natural viruses is to tailor-make synthetic genes that can be incorporated into Shope, SV40 or other passenger viruses, which will then carry them into human cells. To this end, Nobel laureate Dr. Gobind Khorana of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has made some advances with his first synthesis of a yeast gene (SN: 6/6, p. 547). However, the transition from such work to human medicine is complex and does not loom in the immediate future. □

AMENDMENT BOUND

Feminism moves on

As militant women gathered last week across the nation to celebrate the 50th anniversary of female suffrage, there was little mood of self congratulation. Rather, the demonstrations and the publicity served to make the people, males and females alike, conscious of the incipient changes in woman's role in society.

A major focus of the events was the proposed equal rights amendment to the United States Constitution. At present, the extent to which women may invoke the Constitution against laws that discriminate on the basis of sex is unclear. Many state laws place special restrictions on women with respect to hours of work, working in certain occupations and equal admissions to institutions of higher learning. Some legal observers maintain that women are relegated to second-class citizenship because they cannot invoke the Constitution against discriminatory treatment.

Although resolutions proposing an equal rights amendment to the Constitution have been introduced in every Congress since 1923, they have been killed. But revival of a modern feminist movement in the past four years, par-



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Women's role: A new consciousness.

ticularly among young women, has brought new life to the issue.

Two major forces in the feminist movement are the liberal National Organization for Women (NOW), and the radical Women's Liberation. NOW, which has been described as the NAACP of women, receives its main thrust from the efforts of Betty Friedan, a critic of woman's traditional role of housewife and subordinate to her husband. "Support for Friedan's organization comes largely from women over 30 who are quite often following a professional career," says Dr. Laurel Walum, a sociologist from Ohio State University.

"Whereas the more radical women want a total restructuring of society, NOW simply wants a bigger piece of the action," she says.

Women's Liberation has its roots in the civil rights and radical student movements. "Women who were fighting to liberate blacks quickly discovered that they themselves were not liberated," explains Dr. Walum. "Radical women went to make revolution and found themselves as secretaries and coffee makers. The same happened to hippies who joined communes. The women were dishwashers."

These radical advocates seek to change women's role in society, particularly regarding child-rearing.

"Women have absorbed a second-class self-concept," says Theo Wells, an activist for women's rights in Beverly Hills, Calif. "From early childhood they are always asking permission, seeking approval. The woman is relating as the other person, not the primary person. She becomes a function of others."

That this is an important psychological barrier has been shown in a number of studies. For example, the 1966 Cole-

man report on equal opportunity in education, directed by Dr. James Coleman of Johns Hopkins University, indicated that self-concept is one of the areas that is directly related to achievement. Yet competent women find that their sense of achievement is undermined when they are relegated to low skilled, low paying jobs.

From early childhood they are told to play in Henrik Ibsen's *Doll's House* while males are encouraged to engage in problem solving, achievement-oriented behavior. Females are counseled into secondary roles such as being a nurse to a doctor, a secretary to an executive. "If a girl is interested in male subjects she is channeled elsewhere. She's told 'be a sex object, don't develop your head,'" says Wells. "But in the feminist movement she is joined by other women who feel the same and serve to reinforce the new concepts of womanhood." □

ALASKA EARTHQUAKE

Living on the edge



Army

Anchorage's Fourth Avenue dropped.

"Once bitten, twice shy" is a proverb that may run true in human-canine relations, but evidence from a recently completed survey of human behavior during and after the Alaska earthquake of 1964 shows that it does not apply to where people build their houses. Having had houses knocked down by earth movements during the quake, Alaskans went back and rebuilt on the same sites.

The citizens had been warned even before the quake. Four years earlier, the U.S. Geological Survey had said that much of Anchorage was built over layers of unstable clay. When the quake came the clay slipped and did great damage to structures that stood above it.

In Fourth Avenue in downtown Anchorage the land dropped 11 feet and slid horizontally 14 feet. In the L Street area 30 blocks suffered similar