

# behavioral sciences notes

## ANTHROPOLOGY

### War Leaves Genes Unchanged

Wars of the past 100 years could not have had much effect on population growth or human genes, according to Dr. Frank B. Livingstone, a University of Michigan physical anthropologist.

Dr. Livingstone challenges the belief that modern war selects for bad genes by sending the healthiest and most intelligent men into combat.

He says only a small percentage of a country's population has been killed in any one war, too small to affect its genetic pool.

During World War II, Russia lost nine percent of its population; Germany, five percent; England and France, one percent each; and the United States, 0.2 percent.

Genetic selection takes a very long time and could not have occurred at these levels of involvement, says Dr. Livingstone. Similarly, population growth would remain basically unchanged.

Dr. Livingstone believes, however, that past tribal wars with death rates up to 50 percent of the adult males could have influenced man's genetic pool. There may have been a breeding for fighting ability.

## MENTAL ILLNESS

### Cancer Drug Causes Mania

A new drug for treating Hodgkin's disease has caused an acute case of manic psychosis, two Canadian doctors report.

They warn that the drug, procarbazine hydrochloride, should be placed under the same restrictions that control other drugs of its class.

Procarbazine is one of the monoamine-oxidase inhibitors—well-known for their action as antidepressants. But several years ago, there were reports of death when patients on one of the MAO inhibitors ate certain foods, such as cheese.

Drs. Alan M. Mann and J. L. Hutchison of McGill University now caution that any patient on procarbazine should be kept away from nose drops, cough medicines, tea, coffee, cola, cheese, cigarettes, alcohol and local anesthetics.

In the latest case, a 38-year-old man, had a local anesthesia for dental work. He was already abnormally excited and talkative, apparently from procarbazine therapy, but became frankly psychotic after the anesthesia.

He landed in the hospital grossly agitated, aggressive, demanding and talking to the point of exhaustion, report the doctors. Previous to therapy he had been calm, level-headed and not easily upset though he was suffering from a rapidly progressing malignancy.

The procarbazine, however, caused a significant remission in the tumor, the doctors report in the *CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION JOURNAL*, Nov. 25.

## EPIDEMIOLOGY

### U.S. Twin Register in Use

The United States' first Twin Registry—a roster of 16,000 male twins—is being used to verify the links between smoking or air pollution and disease.

Until last spring, this country, unlike European nations,

had no central register of twins that could be used in medical-genetic or social studies.

The register, completed in the spring by the National Research Council after 12 years of work, was compiled from the records of World War II veterans born between 1917 and 1927.

Two Swedish scientists, the first to use the register, have selected half the twins for their smoking-pollution study. Currently at the University of Cincinnati, the Swedes have experience with twin studies in Sweden.

The importance of a register lies in providing a ready supply of identical twins. Born with exactly the same genes, identical twins are needed to control for heredity in any large medical or behavioral study.

## PSYCHOLOGY

### Early Experience Not so Crucial

Psychologists have exaggerated the emotional importance of a child's early life, says a British specialist in mental deficiency.

In a recent lecture to the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, Dr. A. D. B. Clarke suggested that experiences during the first few months of life will have no long-term effects unless they are continually repeated over years.

In humans, the formative years probably last much longer than anyone has supposed, says Dr. Clarke, a psychologist at the University of Hull, England. Children aged 10-14, for example, have been shown to be most vulnerable to depressive illness stemming from bereavement.

Even in animal studies, the modifying effect of later experience has been overlooked, says Dr. Clarke. Rhesus monkeys, for instance, raised in isolation, make very poor mothers at first. But they improve with successive pregnancies.

It seems likely, says Dr. Clarke, in the Nov. 25 issue of *THE LANCET*, a British medical journal, that "behavior in a slowly maturing species such as ours should remain plastic for a long time. William James once said that behavior remains flexible until the age of 30; after that it is immutable. Perhaps he had greater insight than we imagine."

## INDIAN AFFAIRS

### Computers Move Onto the Reservation

The Navajo tribe has installed a computer to manage its million-dollar-a-month income.

The money comes from royalties on oil, gas and uranium leases and belongs to the tribe, not individual Navajos.

Most of the 118,000 Navajos living on the 15-million-acre reservation in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah make their living by farming or working in local industries, and per capita income is quite low.

Tribal funds, on the other hand, are used for public improvements: to develop resources, dig water wells, operate courts and police and improve housing and roads. The IBM system 360 keeps financial tabs on the oil leases and prepares utility bills, among its 125 separate functions on the reservation.

Navajos also plan to use the computing system in laying out new communities. The tribe is growing five times faster than the U.S. national population.