

STATISTICS

Census Swamped by Requests For Records of Old Age

Old Folks Seeking Pensions Appeal to Bureau By Thousands for Data Establishing Eligibility

THE CENSUS Bureau is fairly swamped these days by letters from worried elderly folks anxiously seeking proof that they are old enough for pensions or social security.

"I've told the Census man my age every 10 years," they write. "Please help me prove how old I am."

Rolling in at the rate of 3,000 to 4,000 a week, these letters are expected to total 200,000 before this year is out. It is a steadily rising stream. Even aided by a new short cut for finding an individual's age record, and even with increased personnel and WPA helpers besides, the Census is hard put to keep up with this new American concern over ages.

By Census limitations, an individual may obtain his own age record from the government—his own, but no one else's. There is no exception to this rule. In one instance, rival heirs besieged the Census Bureau for ages of opponents for use in court. They besieged in vain.

When old age pensions, social security and other provisions for elderly people began to gain nation-wide interest, the Census Bureau foresaw the present situation. Back in 1929, they got only about 4,000 letters in the year from people wanting an official census notification of age, for insurance, getting a job, settling an inheritance, or such purposes. It cost the government two or three dollars to look up a record, but it was the right of the inquirer to ask, and get the answer. Some states started birth registration much later than others. Records from the states were not always available. The family Bible, mainstay of many an age controversy, was sometimes lost or the ink faded. The Census in such cases was the final resort, when people thought of writing there for a record.

To meet the rising tide of inquiries, within the past few years, the Census Bureau arranged for a tremendous WPA project in St. Louis to alphabetize the population of 1900 and work out a cheap and fast method of finding age records. Before that was done, by 5,000 white collar WPA workers in St. Louis, the record had to be hunted according to

city blocks. Now, a similar project is undertaken in New York, with the 1920 census, to make the research on age inquiries go as fast as possible. It costs only a few cents now to look up an individual's age.

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PHYSIOLOGY

Potassium Thiocyanate Lowers Blood Pressure

HIGH blood pressure, which "kills more people in the United States today than any single disease factor with one or two exceptions," is no longer as hopeless as it has been believed to be, Dr. Paul F. Dickens, George Washington University medical professor, declared at the Post Graduate Clinic.

He based his statement on recent work with a new medicine for reducing high blood pressure which can be used to treat patients in their own homes and will not only keep the blood pressure down but keep the patients free of symptoms for several years to come. This medicine is potassium thiocyanate. Although the medicine has been used for several years, physicians are getting bet-

ter results with it now because they have learned to base the size of the dose on frequent measurements of the amount of cyanate in the patient's blood.

Papaverine hydrochloride, another relatively new drug, derived from opium, is giving good results in cases of disease of the blood vessels of the heart, brain, arms and legs. There is good hope, Dr. Dickens said, that if this drug is used early, patients with cerebral thrombosis, with paralysis on one side, can be saved from death and their paralysis overcome.

High blood pressure is the greatest killer except cancer and tuberculosis, Dr. Dickens believes, even though mortality records do not show many deaths directly attributed to high blood pressure. The reason, Dr. Dickens explained, is that the deaths are attributed to diseases of the heart, kidneys, thyroid gland, or apoplexy.

Those who, like Dr. Dickens, have spent years studying the problem of high blood pressure are chagrined at the medical profession for calling it a symptom, he declared.

"Anyone with high blood pressure has a race going on in his body between whether he will die of apoplexy, kidney disease or heart failure. The race is usually won by heart failure," Dr. Dickens said.

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An airplane has been chartered by Moslem pilgrims in East Africa, to cross the Red Sea en route to Mecca.

Describing amber as "German gold," Germany is popularizing amber jewelry and novelties to stimulate the industry.

