

MEDICINE

Better Protection From Flu Foreseen in New Discovery

Find That Two Different Viruses Act To Cause Epidemics in Independently Recurring Cycles

BETTER protection against influenza, predicted by many authorities to occur in a widespread epidemic this winter, seems possible because of a discovery announced by Dr. Thomas Francis, Jr., of New York University College of Medicine. (*Science*, Nov. 1.)

Dr. Francis has discovered a second virus that causes influenza. This second virus, to be known as Influenza B virus, was the cause of the flu epidemic in North Carolina early this year. It also caused the extensive flu epidemic of early 1936. It was not the cause of the epidemic of late 1936 and 1937, nor of the 1938-1939 epidemic. The latter epidemics were caused by Influenza A virus.

The two different viruses seem to cause epidemics in independent cycles. For protection against Influenza A, a promising vaccine has been made by Dr. Frank L. Horsfall, Jr., and Dr. Edwin H. Lennette, of the Rockefeller Foundation. If this vaccine lives up to its prom-

ise when tried in the fire of an Influenza A epidemic, and if another vaccine can be made for Influenza B, as seems likely, protection against many if not all influenza epidemics will be possible.

Large-scale production of Influenza A vaccine is now under way and it is being given as rapidly as possible to many thousands of persons in carefully controlled situations to provide a crucial test of the vaccine's protective power if an epidemic of this influenza comes this winter. Large quantities of the vaccine, it is understood, are also being produced for use in England, where war conditions make an outbreak even more probable.

The new B virus was discovered in the throat washings of children convalescing from rheumatic heart disease at Irvington House near New York City. Last February and March an epidemic of what appeared to be influenza broke out there. Tests of the material from

these children's throats showed that the cause of the epidemic was not the A virus previously identified as a cause of influenza in some epidemics.

The Irvington House epidemic occurred at the same time as the influenza epidemic in North Carolina. Material from throats or blood of North Carolina flu patients turned out to contain the same virus as caused the Irvington House epidemic. Stored away in his laboratory, Dr. Francis had some blood serum from two patients who had flu during the early season 1936 epidemic. He got this out, tested it and found that these patients, like the Irvington House and North Carolina patients in 1940, had influenza B, but not Influenza A.

Science News Letter, November 9, 1940

ZOOLOGY

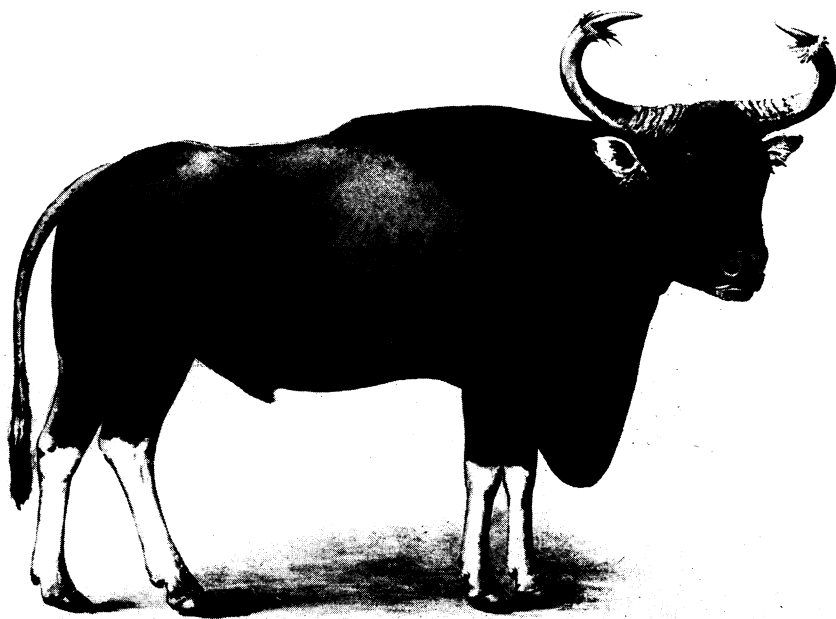
War Stops Study of Kouprey, Newly Discovered Wild Ox

WAR, cutting off both France and the French colonies from world contacts, has put zoologists interested in certain of the larger wild animal species into a most tantalizing position. Just when details of one of the most astonishing discoveries of the present generation become generally available, the war clouds shut the animal off from further study—and may even threaten its very survival as a species.

The animal pictured at left is the kouprey, or wild forest ox of Indo-China, the first really large mammal to be discovered since the sensational finding of the okapi in Africa early in the present century. In a world considered fairly thoroughly explored, the presence of an animal as big as an ox, escaping all notice until now, is something really to be exclaimed about.

Although white men have known of the existence of the kouprey for about ten years, and a French zoologist, Dr. Achille Urbain, first briefly described it in 1937, it is only recently that the skeleton has been studied and a full scientific description has become available, with the publication of a monograph on the animal by Harold J. Coolidge, Jr., of the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology.

Mr. Coolidge's description is based principally on the hide and skull and skeleton of a full-grown bull kouprey, shot in 1939 at Samrong in Cambodia, about 150 miles north of Saigon, capital of French Indo-China, by a member of a Franco-American scientific expedition. There is (or was, at the beginning of



THE KOUPREY

Newest find in Asia's forests as painted by Eugene N. Fischer.