



LARGEST LIGHT BULB—Original test lighting of the giant light bulb, designed and assembled by General Electric engineers in honor of Edison's 107th birthday, is shown here. Scientists were required to use heavy glasses when studying its performance at close range.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Rabies Control Program

Congressional action is expected on a national program to control outbreaks of rabies, a situation termed a "national disgrace" by health and veterinary authorities.

► HOPE FOR a national program to control rabies is considerably strengthened by Congressional action.

While Chicago, the nation's second largest city, is currently harassed by a rabies outbreak, Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia and other regions have experienced the same difficulty in recent years.

Health and veterinary authorities have called the situation a "national disgrace" and have long held that this killer of man, dogs and other animals can best be controlled or wiped out by a nation-wide attack.

Rep. Timothy Patrick Sheehan (R-Ill.) has now asked the Public Health Service to think in terms of drawing up a National Rabies Control Program. Dr. James Steele, chief veterinarian of the Public Health Service, told SCIENCE SERVICE that he sees such a program as covering the following points:

1. Inauguration of new research and expansion of some already under way, particularly with regard to rabies in wild animals.

2. Continuation of immunization studies, especially to learn how young a dog can

be protected by anti-rabies vaccination and how long such protection will last.

3. Assistance to the states through consultation, with educational material and by regional demonstrations showing how to clean up a large area threatened by rabies.

4. Investigation of methods of treating humans after they have been bitten by a rabid dog, including treatment of the wound.

5. Training local, state and federal personnel in diagnosis, control procedures and immunization of man and animals.

The Public Health Service has sent some of its experts to Chicago to help local authorities straighten out the vaccination situation and to give assurance of the safety of it for dogs.

During 1953, there were 8,453 cases of rabies in animals and humans reported to the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal Industry. Also during 1953, 13 cases in humans were reported to the Public Health Service.

While reports do not show a large increase in recent years, the disease continues to flare up in new areas as it burns itself out in others. Chicago, for example, had

TECHNOLOGY

Giant Light Bulb Created To Honor Thomas Edison

► THE WORLD'S largest light bulb, assembled at Nela Park, Cleveland, was switched on Feb. 12 at Rockefeller Center, New York, to mark Edison's 107th birthday.

One and a half times larger than the present record-sized incandescent lamp, the 75,000-watt General Electric creation produces as much light as would 2,874 60-watt household bulbs burning at once. It uses enough electricity to light 83 average American houses.

Its 12.5-foot-long filament weighs 2.7 pounds, is 3/16 of an inch in diameter and holds enough tungsten to make the coiled filaments of 67,500 60-watt light bulbs. Despite its giant size, the bulb is said to be one of the most efficient incandescent light sources yet produced.

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not had any rabies trouble in the 18 years prior to the present outbreak.

An actual increase of the disease in wild life has occurred, however. This complicates the problem greatly, Dr. Steele pointed out. It is tied to our conservation and farm program, the retiring of marginal farm land and the great decrease in demand for fur from foxes, skunks, raccoons and similar animals. In Minnesota alone, the annual market for such animals for fur has dropped from some 400,000 animals to about 20,000.

Bats are now known to be infected with the rabies virus which has "spilled over" to them from the other wild life, Dr. Steele said.

Birds may also have become infected with rabies, some authorities suggest.

In some southern communities, children going to school carry clubs to fend off foxes or other wild animals which, instead of running from humans as formerly, now run to and attack them.

Efforts to control rabies by eradicating the wild animals that now make up a reservoir of the disease need ecological studies, Dr. Steele said, to find the weak link in the chain.

Rabies, once it develops in an animal or human, always kills. But Pasteur treatment, taken immediately after the virus has gotten into the body from a bite, will prevent the disease. There is hope of an easier, quicker and equally effective treatment, but research on this is still in the experimental stage.

Dogs can be protected from rabies by vaccination. A new vaccine for dogs is reported to give protection for two years, and there is hope that it will protect for the dog's lifetime. This, however, has not yet been proved.

In some areas where rabies is extensive among the wild animals, farmers are giving vaccinations to their stock as well as to their pet dogs.

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