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PSYCHOLOGY

New Method Tried for Handling Delinquents

AS AN EXPERIMENT, a new way of handling serious juvenile delinquents is to be tried out in Provo, Utah.

When a boy gets into trouble with the law, it is a mistake to pack him off to a reformatory or other "correctional" institution, David Hunter of the Ford Foundation indicated.

Authorities are coming to recognize that such punishment does not cure delinquency, he said. In fact, some reformatories serve as training centers for penitentiaries.

In this new experiment, the youthful offenders will be kept at home and kept in school. But for two hours daily, five days a week, they will meet as a group in rehabilitation sessions. There an attempt will be made to change the delinquent's standards and his attitudes. In addition, he will be helped with athletics, vocational training and, where necessary, remedial school work. An effort will be made to help the boy overcome the pressures that fostered his trouble with the law in the first place.

As part of the research financed by the Ford Foundation, a follow-up comparison will be made of the behavior of boys who participated in the program and those who had instead traditional probation or correctional procedures.

Science News Letter, October 3, 1959

MEDICINE

Brain May Be Sensitive to Radiation

THE BRAIN, once thought to be resistant to radiation, now appears to be radiation sensitive, report Drs. Thomas J. Haley and H. Gangloff of the nuclear medicine department of the University of California Medical School, Los Angeles.

They exposed experimental animals to radiation at dose levels of 200 and 400 roentgens. The 400 r level can lead to a 50% death rate, but the 200 r level is not normally fatal and usually results only in some radiation sickness.

Electroencephalograph recordings and other observations were made immediately following radiation exposure. Marked spontaneous abnormal electrical activity was

ENGINEERING-How long could strontium-90 be used as a source of electrical power? p. 215.

PHYSIOLOGY—What chemical is stored in large amounts by pregnant women? p. 217.

SEISMOLOGY-What is the estimated size of the rock slide occurring in the Montana earthquake? p. 211.

Photographs: Cover, National Bureau of Standards; p. 211, Convair-General Dynamics Corporation; p. 213, Information Office, Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi; p. 215, Indiana University; p. 218, A. Scholes, p. 224, The Herbert Mart.

noted in certain brain areas at both dose levels. Transistory inability to sleep occurred shortly after radiation exposure.

It had been thought previously that brain cells were among the most resistant type of cells to radiation effects. The UCLA observations are among the first in this country indicating such marked sensitivity of brain cells to radiation. Some Russian scientists had previously suggested it.

These results suggest that even relatively low level radiation belts, such as 200 r, may pose a problem to space crews and troops under tactical nuclear weapons fire. Spontaneous brain electrical discharges and insomnia resulting from radiation effects might make such persons temporarily incapable of performing their duties.

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