

PUBLIC HEALTH

New Institute Founded

► THE LIVES of normal human beings are at long last going to be studied under Government sponsorship, although it took an act of Congress to make it possible.

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development—the first new Institute since 1955—is devoted to understanding how the normal individual grows, develops and adjusts.

Research will focus on reproduction, the life span and the process of aging. Dr. Robert A. Aldrich, on leave from the University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle, is director of the new Institute.

He explained that work on reproduction includes everything from before the baby is conceived to after its birth—the health of the parents, the development of the embryo and adaptations after birth.

Studies of the life span relate to growth and development of mental as well as physical processes, not just how much a baby weighs and how many inches long his body measures. There will be research on muscle, bone and fat in the body, on the development of speech and of intellect.

The Institute plans to give “as much

emphasis to intellectual excellence as to intellectual deficiency,” Dr. Aldrich said. However, he said that funds will be earmarked for the area of mental retardation.

The “Human Development” end of the Institute's title takes in studies of aging processes. The processes, still inadequately understood, are different from the diseases of the aging, study of which is well covered by other Institutes such as Heart, or Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases.

Approval of the new Institute had to come through Congressional channels because the Institute will emphasize normal growth and development. Under existing law, the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service may authorize new Institutes only for studies of specific diseases.

Funds are transferred from the other Institutes. Budget for the first year is \$34 million, mostly allocated to grants and training programs. All research will be conducted through grants. Within two years, however, the Institute plans to develop its own internal program.

• Science News Letter, 84:93 Aug. 10, 1963

ARCHAEOLOGY

Two Ancient Cities Found

► IN THEIR SEARCH for the ancient Greek city of Sybaris, archaeologists have found two cities of the right age in the right spot.

But they cannot tell which—if either—of these is Sybaris.

The trouble, said Dr. Froelich G. Rainey, director of the museum of the University of Pennsylvania and supervisor of the expedition, is that the finds are not “impressive” enough.

Sybaris was famed for its rich and luxurious way of life. From this reputation as well as from historical knowledge, archaeologists expect to find massive ruins.

But all they have dug up so far are tantalizing tidbits—fine pottery and bronze art and a few fragments of crumbled buildings.

The archaeologists are looking for something impressive to prove which city is Sybaris. Big public buildings, the remains of their foundations or inscriptions with information about the city would be conclusive.

Part of the problem, Dr. Rainey explained, is that the team has not done much digging. It has been leaving this chore up to electronic devices. Like legendary divining rods, these instruments tell the location and depth of underground remains.

Now that the two, unnamed cities have been located, the team can make thorough excavations. Dr. Rainey, who will be returning to the Plains of Sybaris this fall, is optimistic about locating the city of Sybaris and has predicted that one of the two cities might be it.

The two cities are located in southern Italy about 11 miles apart, one near the mouth of the Crati River, the other at the summit of Torre Mardillo.

If neither city turns out to be Sybaris, the team may resort to the theory that the sites were native Italian cities trading in Greek objects and built under Greek influence, or that the sites were Sybarite attempts to restore their city in Roman times.

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CHEMISTRY

Shorthand Saves Time In Chemical Translations

► A FORM of chemical “shorthand” that would save time in both reading and writing instructions for chemical procedures has been proposed by Dr. Evan Baltazzi at the IIT Research Institute in Chicago.

The shorthand, reported in *Frontier*, 24: 14, 1963, an IITRI publication, consists of about 100 symbols representing common equipment and procedures used by chemists. The system would reduce time and space needed to write out instructions by 75%, and would help eliminate difficulties in translation to and from foreign languages, Dr. Baltazzi believes.

He also claims that it would benefit students and other amateurs, since many of the symbols are self-explanatory or pictorial in nature.

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