



MODEL CAPE COD CANAL

Housed in the hydraulic laboratories at Massachusetts Institute of Technology is the 115-foot engineering model of the Cape Cod ship canal. A tide machine raises and lowers the water level and creates tide currents through the canal, which engineers study.

EUGENICS

Normal Population Will Not Be Swamped by Feeble-minded

THE idea that the normal population will be swamped by the feeble-minded unless immediate steps are taken to check the numbers of the latter is a myth, declares Dr. Abraham Myerson of Boston, in reporting the investigation of the sterilization problem made by a committee of the American Neurological Association.

Society should go slowly in adopting sterilization as a means of combatting mental diseases, epilepsy, feeble-mindedness and criminality, is the advice to be found in the committee's report.

Present knowledge of human heredity is neither exact enough nor wide enough, the report states, to "warrant the sterilization of people *who themselves are normal* in order to prevent the appearance in their descendants of manic-depressive psychosis, dementia precox, feeble-mindedness, epilepsy, criminal conduct" or certain other conditions studied by the committee. Manic-depressive psychosis and dementia precox are two leading forms of mental disease.

Other members of the committee besides Dr. Myerson, who is chairman, are: Drs. James B. Ayer of Boston, Tracy J. Putnam of Boston, Clyde E. Keeler, Consultant in Genetics, and Leo Alexander, Research Associate.

Recommendations of the committee with Dr. Myerson's interpretation appear in the current issue of the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. (December, 1935)

Eugenic measures such as sterilization, cannot possibly succeed in lessening the amount of crime, the committee found. The type of character which leads to criminal behavior is rarely inborn or inherited, if at all, and cannot be predicted. Sterilization in such cases is therefore characterized by the committee as "cruel and unusual punishment."

The idea that epilepsy is inherited has never been conclusively established and consequently sterilization is not recommended as a general measure for all epileptics.

The problem of mental disease and feeble-mindedness is huge but there is "nothing new or increasingly alarming

about it." Consequently there is no need for haste in adopting eugenic measures to control the problem or reduce its size, in the committee's opinion.

The study of heredity is still in the experimental stage, the committee finds. The laws of heredity so far known cannot yet be applied in any thorough-going fashion to human life and especially to the mental and personality diseases. The committee finds fault with the various studies already made on the inheritance of mental diseases and feeble-mindedness and recommends further research on this problem.

Heredity is definitely a factor in feeble-mindedness, the report states, and sterilization can be recommended for this condition unless it is a type definitely due to environment rather than heredity. The committee points out, however, that "in a world which has much low grade work to be done there is still room for people of low grade mentality of good character."

The factor of heredity or inheritance is less definite in the two mental diseases, dementia precox and manic-depressive psychosis. The environment is important, as well as the inherited factor, in producing either of these diseases.

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SEISMOLOGY

Deep-Seated Earthquake In Northern Argentina

AN UNUSUALLY deep-seated earthquake shook the northern part of Argentina on Tuesday, Jan. 14. The center of disturbance was at least 500 kilometers, or 270 miles, underground, seismologists of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey stated after examining data transmitted by eight earthquake observatories, through Science Service.

The approximate location of the epicenter was in 28 degrees south latitude, 60 degrees west longitude. This spot lies in the province of Santiago del Estero, northern Argentina. The quake began at 9:12.4 a. m., Eastern Standard Time.

Stations reporting were those of the University of Virginia, the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania State College, the University of California, the observatories of the Jesuit Seismological Association at Georgetown University, Canisius College, and St. Louis University, and the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey at Honolulu.

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