Endocrine Control of Prostatic Cancer: DR. CHARLES HUGGINS

Obituary: Walter Beal Ellett: H. H. HILL. Recent Deaths 546

Scientific Events:

Field Training in Health Education at Cleveland Health Museum; The American Foundation for Tropical Medicine; Rationing and Experimental Laboratories; Training for Women in Aeronautical Engineering at the University of Cincinnati; Convention of Psychologists; Copernicus Celebration at the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America; In Honor of Dr. Treat B. Johnson

Scientific Notes and News

Discussion:

Scientific Books:

Text-Books of Physics: Professor Thomas D. COPE. Man and His Physical World: Dr. Karl K. DARBOW

Societies and Meetings:
The Kansas Academy of Science: Dr. John C. Frazier. The Pennsylvania Academy of Science: Dr. Bradford Willard

Special Articles:
The Cultivation from Granuloma Inguinale of a Microorganism having the Characteristics of Donovan Bodies: DR. KATHERINE ANDERSON. Effectiveness of Vitamin A in the Treatment of Defective Color Vision: DR. J. H. ELDER. Vitamins in Dehydrated Seeds and Sprouts: Dr. Paul R. BURKHOLDER

Scientific Apparatus and Laboratory Methods:
The Construction of Tissue Electrophoresis Cells: Dr. George G. Wright and Dr. Stanley M. SWINGLE

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ENDOCRINE CONTROL OF PROSTATIC CANCER

By Dr. CHARLES HUGGINS

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There is a high incidence of abnormal growth processes—of tumors, in the prostate gland of certain species in senescence. These species are man, the dog and the lion. For technical reasons, observations can be carried out with greater facility on the first two types than on the king of the beasts.

The most common neoplasia involving the prostate gland are benign nodular hypertrophy and carcinoma. The benign hypertrophy has been found to involve the prostate gland in 45 per cent. of men over forty years in otherwise unselected autopsy material. Cancer of the prostate occurs in at least 9 to 17 per cent. of men over fifty years; while many of these tumors are microscopic in size and, remaining latent, seldom are factors in morbidity or mortality, others invade and spread and become the cause of death of about 5 per cent. of men older than fifty years in the United States. Plainly, neoplastic processes are usually present in the human prostate gland after the fifth decade, while a normal prostate is less common in old white men. Barringer, an eminent student of prostatic cancer, recently stated: "The control of prostatic carcinoma presents one of the most difficult problems in the field of cancer. Many urologists believe seriously that its control is impossible.”

1 Address delivered on the occasion of the first award of the Charles L. Mayer Prize administered by the National Science Fund of the National Academy of Sciences, May 19, 1943.

2 This investigation was aided by a grant from the Committee for Research in Problems of Sex, the National Research Council.
