

SURGERY

Fit Babies With Artificial Limbs

► THE CASE of a 32-month-old baby who expertly uses an artificial leg and a small hook for a hand and who "vociferously resented" having them taken off was reported at the International College of Surgeons meeting in Chicago.

The little boy was born with several deformities. At the age of 10 months he was provided with a jointless pylon, or peg leg, and a passive hand. When he was 23 months, he was given a fully jointed artificial leg and the small hook.

His case was reported with other similar cases by Drs. Robert Mazet Jr. and Milo B. Brooks of the University of California School of Medicine, Los Angeles.

These and other cases show that rehabilitation can be started at an early age, and that many more children can now be fitted with artificial arms and legs than formerly was possible.

"Children commence standing and walking about the end of their first year," they said. "They should be given something to stand on. Initially, this may be a jointless pylon. When good balance is attained, an ankle can be added and, at about three, they can probably operate a knee joint.

"In the upper extremity, children under a year can push and pull only, so the infant passive hand is used. The mother can preset a passive elbow.

"At about two and one-half, children will have developed sufficiently to operate a small hook. Two-handed activities away from the body are thus provided. Not until he approaches four is the child able to understand the mechanics of and actively use a fully functioning prosthesis."

Science News Letter, September 22, 1956

PHYSIOLOGY

Danger in Pre-Birth Sex Determinations

► AN UNBORN BABY faces a "definite risk" if a needle is stuck into the sac around it to get fluid for learning months before birth whether the baby will be a boy or a girl.

The risk is that of killing the unborn infant or damaging it so that it will be born with cleft palate or other abnormality. This risk is especially great if the attempt to get the amniotic fluid surrounding the baby in the womb is made early in pregnancy.

Tests with mice showing that this risk is real are reported by Drs. Daphne G. Trasler, B. E. Walker and F. C. Fraser of McGill University, Montreal, in *Science* (Sept. 7).

Of 14 expectant mother mice, six lost their litters. In the remaining eight litters, 10 out of 17 embryos that survived had cleft palates, whereas the palates of the 15 control embryos were closed.

Science News Letter, September 22, 1956



RUSSIANS ATTEND CONFERENCE—Three delegates from the U.S.S.R. Institute of Ethnography are shown here photographed when they attended the recent Fifth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Philadelphia. Examining an African tribal mask are, from left to right, Drs. G. F. Debets, D. A. Oldergge and I. I. Potekhin.

ANTHROPOLOGY

Neanderthaloid Man

► NEANDERTHALOID MAN lived on earth much more recently than scientists have previously known, Father J. Franklin Ewing, S.J., Fordham University anthropologist, reported at the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Philadelphia.

He announced the finding of an upper jaw bone fragment 15 yards under the soil surface in Ksar 'Akil on the outskirts of Beirut, Lebanon. The bone is distinctly Neanderthaloid, Father Ewing concludes.

"There can be no question," he said, "that the Ksar 'Akil fragment is later than the skeletal material from Mt. Carmel."

Above the Neanderthaloid remains at a depth of about 12 yards, Father Ewing found human remains of a young boy of Aurignacian period.

Father Ewing has given this long-dead boy the name Egbert.

Egbert lived about 20,000 years ago and his remains are the oldest completely modern human bones ever found in that Near East country.

Egbert's bones were found with manufactures in a direct line of descent from the similar industry associated with the Neanderthaloid jaw bone fragment. This, in turn, seems to be derived from the kind of activity of the Mt. Carmel Man.

Father Ewing was working at the Ksar 'Akil site when he was interrupted by the

outbreak of World War II. He was returning to the United States by way of the Philippine Islands when he was captured by the Japanese and spent almost five years in a concentration camp.

After being released in 1945 and then returning to Fordham University, Father Ewing went back to complete his anthropological work at Ksar 'Akil.

Science News Letter, September 22, 1956

ANIMAL PHYSIOLOGY

Frightened Bunnies Smell Fainter Odors

► A FRIGHTENED RABBIT may be able to detect strange odors at lower concentrations than the animal would if not frightened.

This possible self-preservation mechanism was detected by electronic equipment that picked up messages transmitted by smell nerves before the messages reached the brain.

Stimulating the nervous system to the nose, as fright would, increased the sensitivity of the receptor nerves, Drs. Don Tucker and Lloyd M. Baidler of Florida State University, Tallahassee, reported at the American Psychological Society meeting in Rochester, N. Y.

Science News Letter, September 22, 1956