

THE annual review of the Christian names of the "top children" whose birth are announced in the London *Times* appeared as usual in the New Year. For the boys, James, Thomas and Nicholas headed the list, with, for girls, Sarah, Emma and Alexandra in the corresponding positions. This year the list has stimulated an interesting correspondence on the sociological problems relating to the choice of what are perhaps more accurately described by the American term "given" names. No *Times* reader apparently calls his child Tracy or Charlene, though there is a growing tendency to saddle girls with classical names like Corinna, Flavia, Gratia and Xanthe. One writer, from the Savage Club, calling the list "astonishingly class distinctive", recommended the introduction of a Christian Name Discrimination Act, banning socially-divisive names and having, like the French, an approved list from which names must be drawn. This last course has given difficulties to Breton nationalists who wish to use names of folk heroes who were not recognised by Napoleon.

Names may be as interesting to the parasitologist as to the sociologist. In 1939 I became involved in the problem of lousiness in English children. Before the war official statistics suggested that the head louse was almost extinct, for only one or two per cent of children were detected with the parasites by the officials of the School Medical Service in their routine school inspections. However, when town children were evacuated to the country to escape the risk of bombing in September 1939, far more than had been expected were found to be verminous. The Board of Education, as it then was, defended its statistics, and suggested that the children had become infested during the long summer holiday. Political arguments arose. Socialist education committees in towns accused Tory reception areas of exaggeration. No one seemed able to produce the facts

which had led to what was rapidly becoming an ugly situation, particularly as there was as yet no enemy bombing to distract people's attention.

As no one else seemed to be trying to find out the facts, I approached

Names to remember



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the Board of Education with a plan. To the Board's credit, I was given every encouragement and £200 to investigate. I found that, in our cities, over half the girls between 5 and 12 years old were lousy, and that a third of the boys were similarly affected. There was no evidence that the rate of infestation rose during the holidays. It was clear that most infestations were not being detected at routine inspections.

These results were all published with the approval of the Board of Education and the Ministry of Health, though they were clearly critical of work of those government bodies. My paper was censored only

in very minor ways. I was asked to omit a section where I identified the incidence of infection in children who were registered as belonging to different religions and different Christian denominations. I agreed that this information might exacerbate inter-sectarian quarrels. But I was also asked to cut out a section on Christian names, which was thought to be too frivolous for wartime publication, and I think that the information may now be revealed.

In one city which had a particularly high rate of lousiness (70 per cent of all ten year old girls) I noticed that children named after film stars, children with saints' names and children with the names of the Royal Family were the most likely to be lousy. Marlene (often spelt Marleen), Shirley, Bernadette, Margaret, Rose, Marina—they always warned me in advance what to expect.

This, of course, brings us back to the sociological field. Lousiness tended to be highest in large families, where reinfestation from siblings even after successful treatment was common, and where individual attention by the mother was less effective than when she had fewer children to care for. It has been suggested that children named after film stars or royalty come from families with less of a tradition than those where the same few names are used generation after generation, and where parental care may be greater. This may be the explanation. But I suggest that anyone studying sociological problems relating to names bears these observations in mind. During the war I found them useful. Although the results had to be confirmed by individual examinations, I could make a good estimate of the lousiness of a class of school children simply by reading through the register. As the head louse is now staging a comeback in some British towns, it will be interesting to see whether it still prefers to infest the holders of any particular names.

coils themselves. The insulation system itself then became a conductor.

Every one of the 300 or so magnets already assembled was examined, and dismantled, repaired or rebuilt where necessary. As an extra precaution, further insulation in the form of two layers of kapton foil was wrapped round each coil, and it was found possible to do this with those magnets which had not deteriorated, but had already been installed. Every one of the 744 magnets in the ring has been treated in this fashion.

The fact that nearly 300 of these big

magnets were rebuilt within the SPS Assembly Halls, without delaying the very strict construction schedule and using CERN's own staff and facilities, is an indication of the efficiency and skill with which the whole project is being handled. Tested under conditions with peak fields equivalent to the 400-GeV energy level for which they are intended, the magnets have shown no further failing, nor do there seem to be any serious problems with any of the other components.

Apart from some delays in delivery of magnets for the beam transfer lines

to the experimental areas, the rest of the construction is well on target, and the accelerator is expected to be operational in the latter part of 1976. This is perhaps no more than was to be expected from an establishment that runs as sweetly as CERN. To many it is an object lesson not only in international scientific and technical cooperation but in the noticeably pleasant atmosphere and evidently high staff morale as well. It could well be studied by certain international agencies of the UN family a few miles away in Geneva itself. □