

seemed to emerge. An epidemic strain, more virulent than a so-called "endemic strain" would flare up in spotty outbreaks every 7 to 10 years and take as long as a year or two to burn itself out in a given locale. "It's almost as if we're dealing with two different diseases, one endemic, the other epidemic," Michael Gregg, the deputy chief of epidemiology at the CDC, commented.

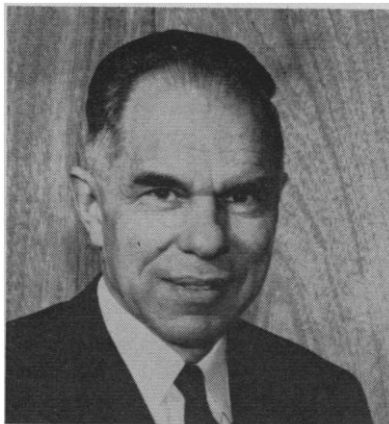
The best-known human epidemic swept through Venezuela between 1962 and 1964, reportedly causing 32,000 human illnesses and 190 deaths, mostly among children. By 1964, a handful of virologists had begun to predict that VEE might someday pose a threat to human and animal health in the United States. "In 1969 we were predicting it would get here in a couple of years," CDC's Heath says. "The only unknowns were the precise time of arrival and the circumstances. In fact, it arrived a few weeks sooner than we'd expected."

But beyond the fact of its arrival, the course of VEE in North America is difficult to predict. Since mosquitos that are known to transmit the virus range as far north as New England, "It could go a fair ways farther than Texas," Gregg speculates. Moreover, the virus infects a great variety of warm-blooded animals, ranging from mice to cattle, which survive the disease and can serve as reservoirs for it.

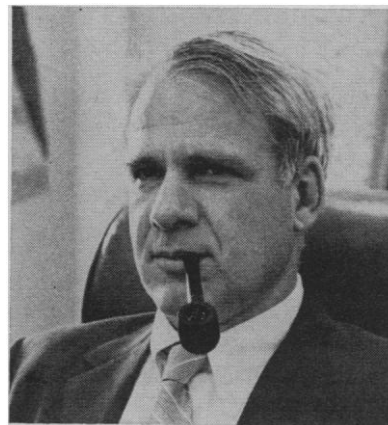
Whereas birds serve as a principal reservoir for its viral cousins, rodents are believed to be the chief place of residence for VEE. Thus, Gregg believes, it is less likely to leap great distances and "pop up out of the blue" than are other forms of encephalitis.

And yet the vicissitudes of VEE's behavior are strange indeed, for it has "popped out of the blue" in the past in a most unlikely locale—western Utah. Although the Everglades are widely thought to have been the northernmost beachhead of this tropical disease before the current outbreak, three University of Utah microbiologists reported in 1965 that they had found evidence of prior infection by VEE in 58 animal specimens from Utah's western desert. Among the animals were rabbits, foxes, birds, mice, kangaroo rats, and squirrels. A year later, four range cattle in the same area were found to have VEE antibodies in their blood. It was suggested that migratory birds at a distant wildlife refuge had imported the virus, but no infected birds were found there. The data were not

## Seaborg Will Leave AEC



Glenn T. Seaborg



James R. Schlesinger

Glenn T. Seaborg, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission since 1961, has announced his intention to step down from his post this fall. President Nixon has nominated James R. Schlesinger, a professional economist and assistant director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), to succeed Seaborg.

Seaborg, 59, has presided over a turbulent era for the AEC. During the last decade nuclear power plants have become a commercial reality, and the AEC has been subjected to intense public scrutiny as well as to an increasing number of challenges from environmentalists.

Seaborg told the White House about his departure plans a year ago. In his letter of resignation to the President, he expressed his intention to return to the University of California at Berkeley where he wants to teach and resume research on transuranium elements—work which won him a Nobel prize in chemistry in 1951.

Schlesinger, a 42-year-old native of New York City, joined the OMB (then the Bureau of the Budget) under Nixon's first budget director, Robert P. Mayo. There he has established a reputation as one of the sharpest economic analysts in government—in scientific and environmental matters as well as in the area of security and the national defense.

After obtaining a Ph.D. degree in economics from Harvard University, Schlesinger taught at the University of Virginia, where he wrote a book entitled *The Political Economy of National Security*, published in 1960. He abandoned academic life to head a study at the Rand Corporation in Santa Monica, California, on nuclear proliferation. Later, as director of strategic studies at Rand, he got involved in systems analyses and their relation to political decision-making.

Schlesinger, who has steeped himself in the intricacies of planning, programming, and budgeting, is described by people who have worked with him as extremely capable, brilliant, profound, perceptive, tough, hard-nosed, and self-disciplined. He is a man who is not afraid to "do his own thing," says a friend, and one of his things is bird-watching. He is described as an "apolitical" type, although privately he is known as a staunchly conservative Republican.

Seaborg describes his proposed successor as "very capable" and "a very satisfactory choice."

Seaborg will remain in office until his successor has been confirmed by the Senate. He plans to lead a U.S. delegation touring peaceful nuclear energy facilities in the Soviet Union in August, and will go on to attend meetings in Vienna and Geneva in September.

Along with the Schlesinger nomination, the President has chosen William O. Doub, the 39-year-old chairman of the Maryland Public Service Commission, to succeed Theos J. Thompson, the AEC commissioner who died in a plane crash last year.—C.H.