

THE ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH,
Sixty-sixth Street and Avenue A, New York, N.Y.

ANTI-MENINGITIS SERUM.

The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, in accordance with an announcement made last summer, now gives notice that it has discontinued the general distribution of anti-meningitis serum which it has undertaken without charge ever since the discovery of this remedy for cerebro-spinal meningitis. The effectiveness of this remedy in that form of meningitis which is caused by the *Diplococcus intracellularis* (Weichselbaum) having been generally accepted by medical authorities throughout the world, it has seemed appropriate that the Rockefeller Institute should devote to other lines of investigation the funds hitherto needed for the gratuitous distribution of the serum, handing over to the public health authorities of municipalities and states, and to commercial establishments, the routine preparation of the serum for general use. The anti-meningitis serum will thus take its place with vaccine and diphtheria anti-toxin as an approved agency for the protection of public health.

The Board of Health of the City of New York is the first of American boards of health to undertake the regular production of anti-meningitis serum. It will provide for the free distribution of serum to all hospitals in the city, and, at the outset, to all physicians who apply for it. Later the gratuitous distribution other than to hospitals will be limited to those cases in which the physician certifies to the hardship that would be caused by a money charge. All others will be required to pay for the serum at a price covering its estimated cost. Pending the production of the serum in other localities, the New York Board of Health will, as a matter of humanity, supply such urgent requests as may come to it from outside the state, but this provision will probably be necessary for only a short time. Within the City of New York the Board of Health will designate a few stations where serum will be kept on hand.

The statistics show that the death rate from cerebro-spinal meningitis has been reduced to less than a third of its former amount by the early use of anti-meningitis serum. That statistics may be reliable, however, it is important that all distributing agencies should provide means for controlling the bacteriological diagnosis. Otherwise the serum will undoubtedly be applied in some cases of meningitis due to causes which are not subject to the action of this serum, and not a few cases of epidemic meningitis will be deprived of the benefit of its use.

The serum is administered by being injected into the spinal canal by means of lumbar puncture, an operation which is also required to secure the fluid for bacteriological diagnosis; and several separate injections of the serum are required in treating a given case. The effective employment of the serum is likely, therefore, to be restricted on account of the