

## **PROFESSOR HOPES FOR DOWN'S "CURE".**

Professor Jerome Lejeune believes he is only seven years away from "curing" Down's children.

In 1959, Professor Lejeune led the team of French scientists which discovered the extra chromosome 21 in Down's syndrome.

Now he hopes to produce a treatment which will demonstrably improve their IQ.

And he is critical of other scientists who have given up research into mental retardation in the last 10 years.

"The reason for this is purely a matter of psychology, not a lack of the power of investigation", he said.

"There is an acceptance by many people that these children should be discarded. This has caused researchers to believe that if you discard these children there is no problem.

"But this is the biggest mistake possible: the affected children are already there".

His present research is based on the theory that certain enzymes controlled by the extra chromosome 21 have a more harmful effect on brain function than others.

His theory, which he admits is not shared by other scientists in the field, is that an over-production of these enzymes is causing retardation in Down's children. He is looking for a way of chemically neutralizing this over-production.

Down's children are believed to start off with a normal IQ, which falls until the age of about seven when it levels off.

Professor Lejeune said at a lecture to members of the Down's Children's Association that his research could not confirm an American theory that "megadoses" of vitamins could improve IQ in Down's children.

But he said other conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, which is 20 times more prevalent among Down's children, could be improved with the use of folic acid and monocarbon derivatives.