

situation. The patients are getting good care, Dr. Armstrong said, and the fact that hospital care is being made available to all of them is enabling many to get attention much earlier than they otherwise might, especially with doctors scarce. Because of the physician shortage, the U. S. Public Health Service has arranged for its emergency health and sanitation service doctor and nurses to assist state authorities if needed.

Next largest number of infantile paralysis cases were reported from New York State, which had 34 the week ending July 8, compared with 25 the previous week. Cases increased from six to 26 in Pennsylvania, from 6 to 14 in Virginia, and decreased from 29 to 28 in Kentucky.

Science News Letter, July 22, 1944

BACTERIOLOGY

Nervous System Diseases May Get Serum Treatment

► HOPE that serum treatment for nervous system diseases caused by viruses, such as infantile paralysis, might become effective appeared in studies reported by Dr. Charles A. Evans, of the University of Minnesota, Dr. Howard B. Slavin and Dr. George P. Berry, of the University of Rochester.

Failure of serum treatment against infantile paralysis in the past has been explained as due to the blood-brain barrier. The antibodies which might fight the virus may develop or be injected into the blood but are ineffective because they cannot pass this barrier to get at the virus in the brain and nervous system, is the theory.

Working with a different kind of virus, the herpetic virus that attacks the nervous system of mice, Dr. Evans and associates found that anti-herpetic serum did retard the progress of the virus through the nervous system and in some cases arrested it altogether.

Science News Letter, July 22, 1944



Perennial Calumny

► GOLDENROD is in bloom again, and over wide stretches of the American landscape resound the agonized sneezes of hay-fever sufferers. Because the two things happen at approximately the same time and often in the same places, it is widely assumed that the goldenrod is responsible for the sneezes.

That too-easy assumption of a causal connection works a gross injustice on a group of our most beautiful late-summer wildflowers. For the real villains in the piece, responsible for easily nine-tenths of summer and fall hay fever, are the ragweeds. Ragweed pollen is hundreds of times as abundant in the air as goldenrod pollen, and grain for grain is much more irritating to most sensitive noses.

The case is complicated by the fact that the goldenrod is not utterly innocent. Allergists have found that its pollen does cause some hay fever cases. However, their number is quite insignificant as compared with the huge army of sufferers from the effects of ragweed pollen.

Moreover, it is possible for a victim of the ragweed dust to bring on an

attack of sneezes and smarting, watery eyes by walking through a patch of goldenrod. The pollen that sets him off will be of the genuine ragweed variety, that has fallen on the foliage and flowers of the goldenrod, and is then stirred into the air again by the disturbance. How is the poor, unsuspecting hay-fever victim to know that the goldenrod also is a victim, with incriminating evidence "planted" on it?

Goldenrod has the further disadvantage of being frequently found in bad company. Unfortunately, the same fertile, well-drained soils, with open, sunny exposure that the most abundant goldenrod species prefer are favorable also for the growth of the ragweeds. So it is nothing uncommon to find bright masses of goldenrod and the dark, rank phalanxes of the ragweeds standing side by side.

A final misfortune of the goldenrod lies in the very beauty of its bloom. Most of us think of flowers in terms of bright, conspicuous corollas. Goldenrod flowers have them; ragweed flowers do not. So we see the brightly clad innocent bystander and give it the blame, while the green-camouflaged poisoner of the air escapes detection.

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INVENTION

Ships Unloaded Faster by Cargo Handling Apparatus

► QUICKER unloading of ships in war ports is promised by a newly patented apparatus, the invention of an officer in the U. S. Army, Col. James A. Dorst, on which U. S. patent 2,353,135 has been assigned, royalty-free, to the government.

The device consists of an endless belt mounted on a frame with suitable rollers or pulleys at either end. This can be lowered through the hatchway of a ship by means of a derrick. At intervals, the belt carries transverse rows of well-braced arms or rods, each series forming a kind of slotted shelf. From the edges of the decks adjacent to the hatchway, similar slotted shelves are thrust, so that the moving shelves pass through them. Any box or other package pushed out on one of these shelves will thus be picked up and lifted clear of the upper deck, and when it passes over the top of the apparatus it will be dumped onto a skid-way or roller conveyor.

Run in reverse, the apparatus can of course be used for rapid loading of the ship.

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