

Do You Know?

Moose are powerful swimmers; so are mice.

Bed sheets made of paper may become common some day.

A rat may have six litters of young each year, with from six to 22 in each litter.

The iris is the source of *irone*, one of the most odoriferous substances for perfumes provided by nature.

The *gas-turbine* is particularly suitable for locomotives because it combines good thermal efficiency with freedom of water requirements.

Fire-fighting benefits by the use of *organic chemicals* which, mixed with the water used, give an increased extinguishing action of 200% to 400%.

A South American native plant known as *naranjilla*, botanically *Solanum quitense*, yields a delicious and refreshing fruit juice; in shape, color and acidity the fruit is similar to the orange.

Highly concentrated *hydrogen peroxide*, used with calcium permanganate to launch Nazi V-1 bombs, may some day be used to operate small power plants where the factors of space and weight per horsepower are important.

Doorbell that automatically gives different signals when the front door or rear door button is pushed lets the housewife know immediately at which door her visitor is.

number is twice that. Good feeding and sanitation and selective breeding have made this record. A breeder mates birds that have superior egg-laying ability and can pass it on to their offspring.

Getting all-white meat in chickens is not worrying scientists, but producing more meat for every dollar spent on food is a problem of both scientists and of the farmers. It has been found that cross-breeds usually produce more meat for the amount of food than the purebred parents. Crossbred pullets and hens tend

to be broody oftener than purebreds.

The Beltsville Small White turkey, already on the market, is the answer to family needs. It is a relatively small bird, with lots of white meat. Several thousand have been produced and hatching eggs have been distributed to commercial breeders. The toms weigh 12 to 17 pounds alive at market age, and young hens weigh 7½ to 10 pounds, roughly about two-thirds the weight of mature standard-size birds.

Science News Letter, January 17, 1948

MEDICINE

Drugs Endanger Infant

Pain-relieving methidon, given during childbirth, has a depressing effect on the new-born baby's breathing. It is more powerful than morphine.

➤ DANGER to the new-born baby when its mother is given one of the new drugs for relieving pains during its birth is reported by Drs. Allan C. Barnes, Fred B. Hapke and John H. Holzaepfel of the College of Medicine at Ohio State University.

The drug, known variously as methidon, amidone, dolophine and 10820, was synthesized in Germany in 1939 and kept secret during the war. It is two to four times as powerful as morphine in relieving pain, but like morphine can probably cause addiction.

The danger of methidon for new-born babies comes through its depressing effect on breathing. When a certain size dose of methidon was given to the mother two hours or less before the baby's birth, there was a significant delay before the baby started to breathe and gave its first lusty cry. When a smaller dose, two-thirds the amount, of methidon was given, regardless of how short or long a time before the baby was born it had no significant effect on the baby's breathing.

Methidon, like other pain-relieving drugs, may not be the only drug given to a mother in childbirth. Combinations of drugs are often used to ease labor pains. The possibility that using methidon with other drugs may increase its harmful effect on the baby must be considered, the Ohio State doctors point out, though their studies give no information on this.

Almost equally important with the finding of methidon's danger, they think, is the method they devised for studying it. Each of the 25 women given methi-

don, and each of 30 not given it and studied as controls, was given either caudal or saddle block spinal anesthesia for the last few hours before the baby's birth.

This method makes possible the study of the effects of a single drug, such as methidon, on the baby's breathing because no other pain-relieving drug need be given the mother. No other study of the effects of a single drug on the new-born baby's breathing has been made, so far as reports going back to the year 1904 show.

Details of the current study are reported in the first issue of the *Health Center Journal*, (Dec.) new medical journal issued by Ohio State's College of Medicine and Dentistry.

Science News Letter, January 17, 1948

GENERAL SCIENCE

Books Pay Subscriptions To Polish Science Journal

➤ TO keep up with science in Poland you can receive *Zycie Nauki* (Life of Science), a monthly publication, which appears in Polish with a summary section in English. To the editors of this journal, books from abroad are more to be desired than cash for subscriptions. A recent issue (July-Aug., 1947) carries the message:

"We beg foreign subscribers not to send us cash but only their addresses, as it would be more convenient for us to receive foreign books in exchange. Their titles would be agreed to by later correspondence."

Science News Letter, January 17, 1948

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