

Dr. Roger Adams, head of the Chemistry Department at the University of Illinois, was elected foreign secretary. Dr. Walter S. Hunter, Brown University psychologist, and

Dr. Oliver E. Buckley, president of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, were elected to the Academy's council.

Science News Letter, May 6, 1950

#### MEDICINE

## Predict '50 Polio Surge

➤ MORE cases of polio will be reported this year than last, but this does not mean that the 1950 epidemic will be worse than last year's record outbreak. The diagnosing and reporting of many more mild cases and the reporting as polio of cases which are something else will bring the total up, according to Dr. Justin M. Andrews, deputy officer in charge of the federal government's Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta.

However, some medical men who work with epidemic diseases—epidemiologists—are predicting that 1950 will see a surge of polio actually greater than last year's 42,000 cases. They base this opinion on a comparison of the number of cases so far this year with the number during the same period last year.

Actually, the entire history of polio is so erratic that it makes predictions almost impossible. Many workers in the field believe that not enough knowledge about the disease has been accumulated to make predictions possible.

Indeed, some epidemiologists believe that because so many persons, having had the disease last year, are now immunized against it, the 1950 polio outbreak might thereby be held down.

Arguing against the prediction of more polio this year, these experts point out that as some diseases receive publicity they become "fashionable" among doctors. General practitioners are prone to look for the symptoms of diseases in the public eye.

Many other virus diseases produce clinical illness simulating polio. A form of mumps, two forms of equine encephalomyelitis and

the St. Louis type of encephalitis are among these diseases.

Science News Letter, May 6, 1950

#### MEDICINE

## Electric Eye Gives Safer Hypo Injections

➤ THE hypodermic injections of penicillin, vitamins and anesthetics your doctor or dentist gives can be even safer in future, thanks to a new electric eye machine for inspecting them.

The machine, developed by RCA Victor, is an adaptation of a similar machine for inspecting beverage bottles to see that there is no dirt or other gross contamination in them.

A very much more sensitive machine was needed, however, for inspecting ampules, the small glass containers in which medicines for hypodermic injections are sealed and sterilized. Heretofore this inspection has been done by girls and women in drug manufacturing plants. Because even trained, experienced inspectors did not always agree on whether there was a tiny speck of lint, glass or other contaminant in an ampule, it was impossible to have standards which could be enforced by the Food and Drug Administration.

To solve this problem and make ampules even safer, 16 members of the American Drug Manufacturers Association had the RCA Victor engineers devise the electronic ampule inspecting machine.

Science News Letter, May 6, 1950

#### CHEMISTRY

## Water, Oysters Take to Plastic Packaging

➤ THE modern, plastic way is to fetch a bag of water—not a pail. It is done with pliable synthetic materials—polyethylene, polyvinyl or cellulose films or coatings.

Plastic bags of water are souvenirs of the National Packaging Exposition in Chicago, Ill.

Oysters in their own juice are one of the foods shipped now in transparent plastic packages.

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