

PUBLIC HEALTH

Sixth Quarantinable Ill

Relapsing fever added to list of quarantinable diseases. Cholera, bubonic plague, typhus fever, yellow fever and smallpox now included.

► **RELAPSING FEVER** is being added to the U. S. Public Health Service's list of five quarantinable diseases. These are the diseases for which special quarantine regulations exist to prevent the disease being introduced into the United States.

The five already on the list are: cholera, bubonic plague, typhus fever, yellow fever and smallpox.

Relapsing fever is being added to bring United States quarantine regulations into line with the World Health Organization's sanitary code. Last May WHO included relapsing fever in its list of diseases member nations should watch out for.

The disease is spread by lice. It is not considered a real threat to this country. It is endemic, meaning there are always some cases of it, in North Central Africa. So any ship or plane from there will in future have to go through quarantine before entering a United States port. Passengers, crew and the ship or plane itself will be searched for lice and the crew and passengers will be looked over to see whether any are sick with the disease or may be about to come down with it.

Those who have symptoms or who, without symptoms, have come from the relaps-

ing fever area without proper papers will be held in quarantine for eight days. This is the incubation period of the disease, or time it takes to develop after the germs have entered the patient's body.

Details for working out the regulations were one of the major points under discussion at the yearly meeting, held in Washington, of U. S. Public Health Service officers from 14 major American ports.

To speed entry of oil tankers from the Caribbean islands of Curacao and Aruba, the quarantine officers are also working on a proposal to lift quarantine regulations for such ships. Danger of importation of infectious diseases from these two islands is considered very slight.

Relapsing fever is caused by germs called *Borrelia*. Different members of this germ family cause the disease in different parts of the world. In North Africa the germ is *Borrelia berbera*. The disease begins abruptly with chill, headache, nerve and muscle pains, fever and sometimes vomiting. Five- to seven-day periods of fever alternate with periods of no fever. During the fever periods, the liver and spleen are enlarged.

Science News Letter, December 15, 1951

X-rays in non-cancerous and non-fatal conditions, Dr. Hawley stated.

About 30 non-cancerous and non-skin diseases can be successfully treated by X-rays, he said. Among them, besides corns and warts, he listed acne, keloids which are skin tumors that often come in scars, adenoids, bursitis, excessive perspiration, shingles, blood tumors such as strawberry marks, and arthritis. In arthritis, he stated, X-rays often relieve pain for several months, though they are not curative.

Science News Letter, December 15, 1951

INVENTION

Ultrasonic Waves Aid Spray Drying

► **SOUND WAVES** too high in pitch to be audible to the human ear now may be used in the industrial process known as spray drying to make the process more effective. More thorough and more rapid evaporation is the result.

Inventors are Caperton B. Horsley, Stamford, Conn., and Harold W. Danser, Jr., Belmont, Mass. Patent 2,576,297 was their award. Rights are assigned to Ultrasonic Corporation, Cambridge, Mass.

Science News Letter, December 15, 1951

MEDICINE

X-Ray Treatment for Corns

► **CORNS CAN** be successfully treated with X-rays, Dr. Sydney J. Hawley of Seattle, Wash., declared at the meeting of the Radiological Society of North America in Chicago.

Treating corns may seem "beneath the dignity" of a serious X-ray specialist, he admitted. But corns, he pointed out, are

"probably second only to the common cold as a source of human misery."

Irradiation will remove the corns, usually in only one treatment. Normal surrounding skin of course must be carefully shielded from the X-rays. The pain of the corn is usually relieved at once. Mild reaction with mild pain may come in two to three weeks. In four to six weeks the corn peels off.

Immediate failures are rare and are more apt to come in old and debilitated patients.

"Part of the treatment," Dr. Hawley said, "is to advise that ill-fitting shoes be discarded, but as this advice is seldom followed, it probably can be dispensed with. Even with misfitting footwear, recurrence is rare under a year."

Warts on the hands and feet are another common condition which respond to X-ray treatment.

The use of X-ray treatments for cancer has been emphasized so much in medical reports that many doctors as well as laymen are not familiar with the many uses of

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