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SURGERY

Insurance Survey Shows Surgery Much Safer

THE MORE than 10,000,000 persons undergoing surgery this year stand a much better chance of surviving than did patients 25 years ago.

In one large hospital the surgical mortality during 1945-54 was 43% below that of the period 1925-34, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company reports.

The risk of operation has decreased markedly, the Insurance Company statistics show, even while the scope of surgery has broadened. New and improved surgical techniques as well as better diagnosis and selection of patients eligible for surgery, advances in anesthesiology and the control of infections are said to be responsible for the reduced number of surgery deaths.

Striking reductions in mortality associated with some specific operations include gall bladder, thyroid, duodenal ulcer operations and esophagectomy in cancer.

Science News Letter, October 17, 1959

BIOCHEMISTRY

Fluorescent Pigments Trace Calf Disease

FLUORESCENT pigments, such as used for brilliant poster printing, could be used to trace coccidiosis, a common disease in calves, U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists have found.

Radioactive isotopes have often been used to trace chemicals, but the pigments which glow in ultraviolet light are said to be easier and safer to use, even in large amounts. The brilliantly colored pigments adhere to coccidia cysts that show up when lighted with ultraviolet radiation, L. R. Davis and W. N. Smith, protozoologists of the USDA regional animal disease research laboratory, Auburn, Ala., found in tests on rats, calves and lambs.

They propose the new method be used practically to detect the disease in animals and to locate contaminated soil. Their report appears in *Agricultural Research* (Oct.).

Science News Letter, October 17, 1959

GENERAL SCIENCE

Russia Outpaces U. S. Use of New Science Data

RUSSIA IS OUTPACING the United States in putting new scientific findings to work.

In the U. S., the flow of new scientific findings to industry "now runs like molasses," Fenton B. Turck, consulting engineer, New York City, said in inaugurating a special American Society of Mechanical Engineers program pledged to move new-found laboratory facts quickly "to the factory floor."

"Half the billions we pour into scientific research are wasted until we discover how to shorten the science pipe-line to the American people," Mr. Turck said.

Among things now awaiting exploitation, he said, are the "wonder metals" of cad-

mium, magnesium, barium, titanium and beryllium.

In the past, the U. S. industrial lead over Europe stemmed from the comparatively free interchange of scientific and technological information, Mr. Turck said, whereas now, "the controlled-economy countries are doing us one better."

To reduce the time-lag between discovery and application, Mr. Turck will call upon the industry, education, engineering and research foundations for suggestions.

Science News Letter, October 17, 1959

Forest insects in the U. S. last year killed one-fourth as much pulpwood as consumed in the manufacture of the nation's newsprint.

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