

PHARMACEUTICS

"Ersatz" Cod Liver Oil For Youngsters Next Winter

Conditions in Europe Have Abruptly Cut Off Source Of 70% of Oil Used to Keep Growing Children Well

AMERICAN youngsters will probably have to take an "Ersatz" cod liver oil next winter as a result of the war in Norway, Robert William Rodman, of *Druggist's Circular*, predicted at the meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association in Richmond, Va.

"When Germany invaded Norway early last month and the Scandinavian area became the present locale of World War II, the source of supply of 70% of the cod liver oil used in the United States was immediately cut off and this nation faces a real shortage in this important medicinal product," Mr. Rodman said. "The hostilities came at a bad time for the cod liver oil industry as spring is the big cod fishing season and stocks of oil in this country are at their low point of the year following heavy winter sales when vitamin products are in the greatest demand.

"Norway's chief fishing ground for cod is around the Lofoten Islands near Narvik which has borne the brunt of intensive air, sea, and land fighting and the two principal refining centers are Bergen and Aalesund, both of which are or were in the hands of the German army and have, therefore, been the target for aerial warfare.

"It is doubtful, even if the war should end tomorrow, that fishing and refining activities could be sufficiently re-established during the current season to afford much relief from the shortage which is imminent and which will be felt even more next fall and winter when cod liver oil will again be in great demand as a vitamin tonic."

Cod liver oil is valuable for its content of vitamins A and D, the latter being the rickets-preventing vitamin. Both of these vitamins can be prepared from other sources and Mr. Rodman predicted that the cod liver oil shortage resulting from war will speed up research in the production of substitute fish liver oils and the manufacture of synthetic vitamins A and D. Iceland and Japan have been supplying 30% of U. S. cod liver oil imports in recent years.

The United States is in much better position with regard to medicinal chemi-

cals than it was at the outbreak of the World War in 1914, but the market for botanical drugs has been disrupted for months by the present conflict. Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia, Poland and Russia supplied the bulk of these imported by the United States. The future supply depends largely on what Italy may do, Mr. Rodman said. If she joins Germany it will be "virtually impossible to obtain any botanical drugs from Europe."

These drugs include ergot, lavender flowers, orange peel, cascara, cantharides, camomile, malva flowers, buchu, henna, peppermint, gentian, arnica flowers, senega, anise, juniper berries, poppy, fennel, and arabic, asafetida, myrrh and benzoin gums.

Japan's recent suggestion of interest in the Dutch East Indies has worried the drug trade because the Indies are the source of the world's supply of cinchona bark from which quinine is made. Mr. Rodman pointed out that not only the world's quinine supply but through it world trade in other commodities might be upset if Japan should seize the Indies.

Science News Letter, May 18, 1940

Remedy for Ivy Poisoning

SUCCESSFUL remedy for ivy poisoning has been discovered in alkaline peroxide, Ole Gisvold, of the University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy, announced at the meeting.

Trial of the remedy with himself as guinea pig, after chemical studies suggested it would work, convinced Mr. Gisvold that the alkaline peroxide "proved quite effective in the treatment of ivy poisoning."

The alkali was sponged over the affected areas of the skin, and this was followed by sponging with peroxide. After a few minutes a weak solution of acetic acid was applied to neutralize the alkali. Two or three such treatments, once daily, Mr. Gisvold reported, were enough to destroy the "ivy phenol" that was not too deep seated and prevented it from spreading. Where the sores were quite deep, the treatment was somewhat

painful, but only for a short time.

Back of the treatment were chemical studies of the reactions between the phenolic substance in poison ivy, which causes the damage to sensitive persons, and other chemicals such as lead acetate, ferric chloride, calamine and magnesium oxide. Some of these chemicals precipitated the "ivy phenol" but the precipitates were themselves irritating.

"The only successful method of rendering the active phenols inactive," Mr. Gisvold stated, "involved their oxidation with alkaline peroxide."

Science News Letter, May 18, 1940

Druggist Aids Hosiery Mill

ASPECIAL ointment to protect the hands of hosiery mill workers without damaging the silk hose they work on was devised by a druggist called in consultation on this industrial health problem, Max N. Lemberger, Milwaukee, Wis., told the meeting as an example of the pharmacist's role as consultant.

Ordinary ointments or lotions protected the skin of the girls' hands from the strong alkaline solutions with which the raw silks were treated. The fats or oils of these ointments, however, damaged the silk, causing serious losses. The pharmacist, called in consultation by a skin specialist, made up a protective ointment of the vanishing cream type, containing no oil, but with enough acid to neutralize the strong alkaline base used in treating the silk.

Science News Letter, May 18, 1940

Jell for X-Ray Burns

HOPE that third degree X-ray burns may be cured by treatment with a jell from fresh *Aloe vera* leaves appears in studies announced by Tom D. Rowe, assistant professor of pharmacy in the Medical College of Virginia.

No proven curative treatment for these severe X-ray burns is known.

Successful use of the Aloe leaf in treatment of such burns in individual cases has been reported by physicians in recent years, but lack of experimental work under controlled conditions made it difficult to evaluate the treatment. Mr. Rowe, working with rats exposed to X-rays, found that the *Aloe vera* jell increased the rate of healing of the burns in 50% of those treated. His studies have not gone far enough yet, he said, for final conclusions, but he stated that "fresh *Aloe vera* jell shows some promise of being of value in the treatment of X-ray reactions."

Science News Letter, May 18, 1940