

## MEDICINE

# Relieve Stings and Bites

► BEE STINGS and insect bites can be successfully treated with an ointment containing one of the anti-allergy drugs, Dr. William Theodore Strauss of Upper Montclair, N. J., reported in the *JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION* (June 18).

The anti-allergy drug in the ointment he used is called thephorin. Technically, it is an anti-histamine drug. Most modern anti-allergy drugs are anti-histamines, because the symptoms of hayfever and other allergies are believed due to overproduction of histamine in the body.

Dr. Strauss believes that too much histamine is the cause of the pain, swelling and other symptoms following bee stings and some insect bites.

"One particularly interesting case" Dr. Strauss reports is that of T. S., a five-year-old boy who accidentally walked into a swarm of bees.

He got seven bee stings, four on the right leg just above the ankle and three around the left ankle. Within a few minutes the doctor had put thephorin ointment on the stings and surrounding skin. The little boy stopped crying within a minute and said all the pain had disappeared. A little later, playing in the same area, he got

another sting on his right thigh. This also was quickly relieved by the ointment. There was no swelling and the only signs of the stings were pinpoint spots where a drop of blood had been drawn at the actual site of the sting.

In each of seven other cases, including several of ant bites, the intense pain and stinging sensation was relieved within one or two minutes after the ointment was put on. One patient said the pain seemed to

"melt away."

The intense pain from "bites" of hornets, wasps, mosquitoes and ants can also be relieved by thephorin ointment, other doctors have told Dr. Strauss.

An allergic reaction to the protein of the bee venom, rather than inflammation from the acid, is the cause of the pain, swelling and occasionally more severe symptoms from bee stings in Dr. Strauss' opinion. There is no longer any place, he says, for such old-fashioned treatment of bee stings and insect bites as ammonia, soda or mud packs.

Science News Letter, July 9, 1949

## NUCLEAR PHYSICS

# Cut Atomic Casualties

► A TEN-MINUTE warning that an atomic bomb will drop can reduce the casualties of a normal city ready for atomic attack from 100,000 to 10,000, Dr. R. E. Lapp, ONR physicist and author of *MUST WE HIDE?*, told the Western Safety Conference in Portland, Ore.

But no government agency is actively educating the public on atomic warfare, Dr. Lapp warned. Unless the public is convinced that we can deal with atomic attack, which he estimates may come within five years of 1960, we may have a disastrous, Orson Welles exodus from cities threatened with atomic destruction.

Underground shelters can protect against an atomic explosion, Dr. Lapp declared. He feels that the terrors of radiation have been vastly overemphasized. Radioactive remains of an atomic bomb detonated in the air, as at Hiroshima, are swept up into the stratosphere where they are dispersed harmlessly. The ground beneath is not made uninhabitable, and contrary to common fears, people can reoccupy the area. Dr. Lapp also discounted the dangers of underwater atomic explosions spraying lethal doses of irradiated water, because deep water in which to drop the bomb is lacking at most cities.

Cities should be planned so that they are not the ideal atomic bomb targets that they are today, he told the safety meeting. The cluster of tall buildings in the center of about 20 American cities, each of more than half a million population, is the vulnerable heart of such populations.

One bomb dropped on Manhattan and properly detonated over one of the two clusters of skyscrapers could kill 200,000 and injure a like number, he estimated.

Nevertheless, if we undertake to defend our cities, Dr. Lapp said, an enemy could not cause the capitulation of this country even though our principal cities were bombed with 200 bombs and 10,000,000 people killed if no precautions were taken.

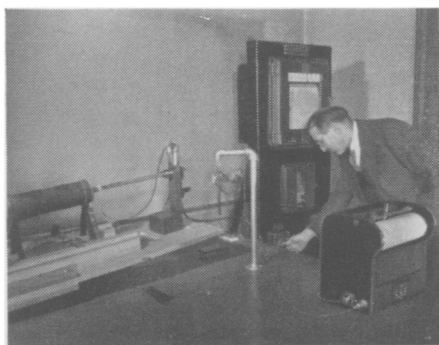
To be successful, an enemy must destroy America's ability to fight back, Dr. Lapp declared. An aggressor nation with atomic

bombs would not attack cities indiscriminately, in Dr. Lapp's opinion, but the bombs would be concentrated on American industries that would allow us to strike back immediately. Bombs would not be wasted upon the huge American steel industry, the critical Soo locks vital to transporting iron ore or even the atomic energy installations, such as Oak Ridge. Instead, Dr. Lapp believes that if the enemy knows its stuff it would be concerned about the atomic bombs we have stockpiled and not those which we could make in the next year. The enemy would attempt to destroy the factories making items essential to our striking back, or the depots and transportation bottlenecks that would be sorely needed in our own atomic counteroffensive.

No critical industry should be concentrated at any one location where it could be knocked out by one atomic bomb, Dr. Lapp warned.

"No magic defense against the atomic bomb will be invented," Dr. Lapp declared. "No reputable scientist believes that an instrument or machine will be invented which will explode atomic bombs prior to their intended time of detonation."

Science News Letter, July 9, 1949



## "Program" Control Speeds Up This Research Program

Geologists at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute are relieved of much routine data-taking and temperature-controlling work in research on thermal expansion of minerals, through the use of Micro-max Program Control for laboratory furnace. Once test is set up, it can run virtually unattended. Write for information applicable to your problem.



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