

MEDICINE

Cancer from Glasses

Rimless glasses are believed cancer-producing because they conduct heat or chemical rays to the face. Lacquering the lens edge may prevent the danger.

► **CANCER** may be caused by wearing rimless spectacles. This discovery, plus a way to avoid the danger, is reported by four physicians of Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in the *ARCHIVES OF DERMATOLOGY AND SYPHILOLOGY*.

The danger can be avoided by putting a lacquer, known as rim black, on either upper or lower lens edge of the rimless spectacles.

The physicians making these discoveries are Drs. Edward F. Corson, George M. Knoll, Herbert A. Luscombe and Henry B. Decker.

They report 12 cases of skin conditions near the eyes which they believe were caused by heat or chemical rays conducted to the face by the rimless spectacles. In nine of these the condition was diagnosed as cancer and in another case as keratoses, a precancerous condition. The other two were considered cases of chronic actinic dermatitis, meaning a skin disturbance caused by light rays.

Certain types of spectacle frames, and above all the rimless ones with round or oval lenses, were found especially responsible for transmission of light and for focusing it on the skin below the lower

edge of the lens.

The character of the lens, whether thick, thin, sphere, cylinder or prism, was responsible for a certain difference, but the doctors found the same principle existed in all cases in which a wholly or partially unobstructed rim of the lens was present.

The route followed by the light beam could be blocked readily at either edge by use of the lacquer, they reported. When carefully applied this lacquer was hardly noticeable but it did cut off entirely the rays the doctors believe responsible for the damage to the skin.

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ENTOMOLOGY

Airborne 'Hopper Fight

► **THE** grasshopper war in the West this year is almost entirely airborne. This is the first time man has met the enemy in the latter's own element, and there is good reason to hope that the change in tactics will be to man's advantage—if only his ammunition holds out.

The latter point is a matter of some seriousness, stated Dr. W. L. Popham, in charge of field operations for the U. S. Department of Agriculture, who has just returned to base in Washington for conference. In the area of greatest menace,

covering some 50,000,000 acres in 16 counties in northeastern Wyoming and southeastern Montana, pre-seasonal campaign plans called for combat over about 1,500,000 acres, with only moderately heavy infestation expected. However, deep snow last winter protected the 'hoppers' eggs, and there has been a heavy hatch and high survival. Upshot is that the infested area is four times as large as anticipated, with more insects per square yard.

Federal and state field forces are now concentrating on the original area because infestation is worst there, and they have speeded up operations to the point where they expect to have all the poison-bran bait now on hand distributed by mid-July.

There are three government-owned planes at work, and 30 additional ones under contract. Biggest plane is a C47, which can lay down the poison barrage over 20,000 acres a day, working with two shifts of pilots. It carries three and one-half tons of poisoned bran per load, and with mechanical loading can fly a maximum number of sorties per day.

Thus far the grasshopper outbreak has been confined wholly to rangeland, with about 20 species of the insects involved. The worst of them, constituting about one-fourth of the enemy forces, is the same species that caused vast trouble in the thirties, for it is an active migrant. Dr. Popham is not too much worried about its getting into crop raising areas this year, since the great wheat areas of the Plains, next in line for attack, are already being harvested. However, surviving hordes that get a chance to lay their eggs next fall could leave a heritage of trouble for 1950. This is one of the reasons why Dr. Popham is hoping that funds for more ammunition may be forthcoming in the next few days.

The Nevada outbreak is a peculiar one, Dr. Popham stated. Only one species is concerned. It has the peculiar habit of laying its eggs in a few extremely concentrated areas, and of migrating in dense hordes from the very beginning of the season. Starting in the southern part of Ne-



IMPRISONED LIGHT—The cone-shaped beam inside the bottle, called resonance radiation, is produced by atoms of sodium vapor that catch the incoming light from the left and toss it out of the bottle scattering it in all directions so that it can be seen. Dr. Daniel Alpert of the Westinghouse Research Laboratories, one of the scientists studying what goes on in fluorescent lamps, electronic tubes, and other gas-discharge devices, demonstrates how light can be imprisoned inside a bottle.