

The average reading rate for the 120 officers when they entered the class was 292 words per minute with 83.2% comprehension of what they read. On completion of the course, their reading rate had gone up to 488 words per minute in spite of the fact that the test used was more difficult. But their comprehension had dropped slightly to 79.3%. The next class will be cautioned to take it a little easier so as not to sacrifice any of their comprehension.

The slowest reader on entering was an officer who painstakingly read every word and back-tracked frequently to make sure of getting everything. His speed was only

106 words per minute but his comprehension was perfect—100%. On "graduating", this officer read at the rate of 226 words per minute, more than a 100% improvement in speed, and he did not lose anything in understanding. His comprehension score was still 100%.

Fastest reader in the group on entering was a Colonel who read 456 words per minute with 80% comprehension. On completion of the course, the Colonel scored 810 words per minute with 70% comprehension.

Training in the Reading Improvement Laboratory is under the direction of Maj. B. E. Prater. (See SNL, July 16 p. 39).

Science News Letter, July 23, 1949

benadryl seems to have a sedative effect on the central nervous system, and in certain cases infants who have been unable to sleep owing to restlessness or colic repose quietly after a few doses."

Science News Letter, July 23, 1949

● RADIO

Saturday, July 30, 3:15 p. m., EDST
"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. Kenneth E. Appel, professor of psychiatry, Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, will talk about "Rules for Successful Living."

MEDICINE

Infant Diarrhea Relieved

► COMBINING an anti-allergy drug, benadryl, with a sulfa drug brought rapid improvement in 40 babies suffering from infant diarrhea, Dr. C. Zahra Neumann of the Royal Malta University reports in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* (July 16).

Infant diarrhea, known medically also as infantile gastroenteritis, is the serious disease which has many times swept through hospital nurseries, often killing large numbers of babies. It is believed to be an infection but scientists in years of search have been unable to pin the cause to a single germ. Many different remedies have been tried, but no one has been universally successful.

Dr. Neumann believes that the symptoms of the disease can be explained, at least in part, as a sign of histamine poisoning. Histamine is a chemical normally formed in the body. Among other actions, it stimulates stomach secretion. Given experimentally in large enough doses it can bring on vomiting and diarrhea, often with strong colicky pains.

Release of too much histamine in the body is believed to play a part in allergies such as hayfever, hives, and asthma. Many modern anti-allergy drugs, such as benadryl, are really anti-histamine chemicals.

When benadryl and a sulfa drug, sulfamezathine, were given in combination to 40 babies, the diarrhea stopped in five days, Dr. Neumann reports. There was only one death, compared to three in 42 babies treated with the sulfa drug alone, and four out of 24 babies treated by a short period of starvation except for salt and sugar solutions given by mouth or vein.

Other favorable effects from the combination of drugs were, Dr. Neumann reports, "the very quick disappearance of toxemic (poisoning) symptoms."

Vomiting stopped in a very short time. Prostration, difficult or labored breathing and rapid pulse subsided in most cases in a few hours.

"The continuous and irritating whine," Dr. Neumann states, "is replaced by a more peaceful cry. This is not surprising, as

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