MEDICINE

ACTH Conquers Child Ill

Hormone chemical, famous for good effects in arthritis and rheumatic fever now has stopped symptoms of acute rheumatic heart disease in eleven patients.

➤ CONQUEST of the greatest disease killer of children and young people, rheumatic heart disease, is now likely, thanks to ACTH.

This hormone chemical, famous for its good effects in arthritis and rheumatic fever, stopped the symptoms and signs of progressive acute rheumatic heart disease in every one of 11 consecutive patients, two New York physicians report. (JOURNAL, AMERIQAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, Jan. 20.)

The good results were obtained within three to seven days. The patients were able to be up and out of bed and walking about within two to four weeks. In five of the patients there was no further sign of increased heart damage when the patients were examined four to 12 months after treatment. In six patients treated during what was presumed to be their first attack, there was no sign of heart damage in two and doubtful sign of it in three at the examination four to 12 months after treatment.

The fact that these patients were treated early in the attack of acute heart trouble is considered significant. Heretofore the effects of ACTH in rheumatic fever have been observed in patients who had been sick for several weeks before ACTH treatment was started. The effects of the hormone chemical in stopping the heart damage therefore could not be determined too well.

Early treatment of acute rheumatic heart disease with adequate amounts of ACTH should, the doctors state, shorten the course of the disease, reduce heart damage to a minimum and prevent death due to progressive heart damage.

The two doctors reporting these results are Drs. May G. Wilson and Helen N. Helper of the New York Hospital and Cornell University Medical Center.

Science News Letter, January 27, 1951

MEDICINE

Vitamin C Relieves Prickly Heat

➤ HERE'S a tip for those lucky enough to get a winter vacation in a warm climate and for the rest of us next summer: Prickly heat in babies and grown-ups can be relieved by large daily doses of synthetic vitamin C.

Given to troops on South Pacific islands during World War II, the synthetic vitamin brought relief from prickly heat in half an hour. The relief lasted six to 24 hours, Dr. Robert L. Stern of Beverly Hills, Calif., reports (JOURNAL, AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, Jan. 20).

Similar good results were obtained last summer in Coachella, Calif., a community bordering on the desert, in tests by Drs. Ralph E. Pawley and Charles A. Berry of that town.

Science News Letter, January 27, 1951

ENTOMOLOGY

Return to Flyswatter Is Now Foreseen

➤ A RETURN to the flyswatter will be our fate, for flies may become resistant to all sprays.

This was foreseen by Dr. R. I. Metcalf after he found that flies retained their DDT-resistance even though 30 generations had been bred without being exposed to the insecticide.

He tested the resistance of both flies and mosquitoes to DDT and other sprays. He also tested the ability of other pests to withstand heavy doses of chemicals deadly to them. Many kinds of insects develop resistance, Dr. Metcalf told the Hawaiian Academy of Sciences.

In most spraying operations, some strong flies get away before they get a killing dose. These are the ones that produce the resistant offspring, he concluded.

Science News Letter, January 27, 1951

ENGINEERING

Light-Weight Switcher Moves Railroad Cars

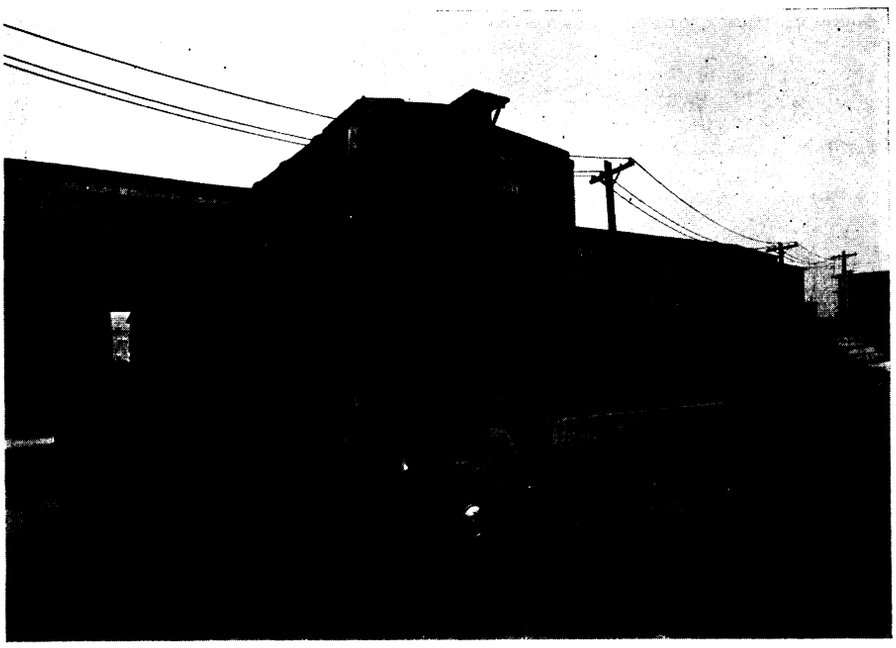
➤ A THREE-TON switcher recently tested moves railroad cars about in the freight yard as easily as the big locomotive switchers now used. Also it can cross sidewise from one track to another, saving the time consumed by standard switchers in running back to a switch to make a cross-over.

The new railroad yard tractor was developed by the Whiting Corporation in Harvey, Ill., and has been dubbed the trackmobile. It has four standard railway wheels for traveling on the track and four rubber-tired wheels by which it runs crosswise from track to track or anywhere on the ground. These rubber-tired wheels are retracted by hydraulic power when not in use.

The secret of its ability to handle a heavily loaded freight car is a device by means of which it carries part of the weight of the car, thus acquiring more traction on the rails. The trackmobile couples to any standard railway car.

When coupled, a hydraulic jack in the trackmobile raises a special coupler, thus forcing the tractor down on the track. When a portion of the car's weight is thus transferred to the trackmobile, it has a draw-bar pull up to a maximum of 7,350 pounds.

Science News Letter, January 27, 1951



TRACKMOBILE SWITCHER—Although it weighs only 6,000 pounds, this convenient little switcher is powerful enough to pull fully loaded box cars.