

SURGERY

Man Lives Minus Pituitary

Daring attack on cancer launched by doctor's removal of pituitary gland of 72-year-old patient who now walks, "maintained" on small daily doses of cortisone.

► WALKING ABOUT in "fine" condition today is a 72-year-old patient who is helping doctors with a daring attack on cancer through the pituitary, "master gland" of the body.

Last November the patient was brought to the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, bedridden and in extreme pain from far-advanced cancer in his prostate gland which had spread to his bones. Instead of trying to control the cancer by castration, or by treatment with female sex hormone which is a kind of chemical castration, or by the still newer method of removing both adrenal glands, the doctors decided to remove the pituitary because this gland influences all other glands in the body.

The operation was performed by Dr. A. Earl Walker, a neurosurgeon. The story of this master gland attack on cancer was told by Dr. W. W. Scott of the Hospital's Brady Urological Institute to surgeons celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the birth of William Stewart Halstead, first professor of surgery at Hopkins and one of America's most distinguished surgeons.

Since the operation, the patient has been "maintained" on small daily doses of corti-

none, adrenal gland hormone famous as an arthritis remedy. He is completely rid of pain, sleeps soundly, has a good appetite, has gained 17 pounds and shows return of strength. Five doctors who examine him regularly report that the large, hard prostate gland had softened and shrunk substantially.

Many other attempts have been made elsewhere to remove the pituitary gland, but the patients usually died on the operating table or a short time after. A patient treated by this operation in San Francisco a year ago survived for almost two months, but during this period he literally slept his life away.

Dr. Scott stressed that the pituitary operation is not a cancer cure or even the preferred treatment for patients who can be helped by other methods. The pituitary operation is considered purely experimental but the results in this case encourage him and his colleagues to try it in a few more far-advanced prostate cancer cases. Apart from their value as treatment, which cannot yet be assessed, these operations give doctors a chance to learn more about the way the pituitary and other glands act.

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The distribution of some of the tools they found is interesting, according to the scientists. There was a similarity, they said, between the tiny prismatic blades and the cores from which they were struck which they discovered in the Shakawk Valley, and those found in Fairbanks, in the middle of Alaska, on the shores of the Bering Sea, and also westward into Siberia at least as far as Lake Baikal. The significance of these distributions, they said, is as yet in doubt.

Mr. Johnson is curator of the Peabody Foundation for Archaeology, Andover, Mass. Dr. Raup is a botanist with the Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University. Their work was supported by the Viking Fund, Harvard, the Peabody Foundation, the American Philosophical Society and the Arctic Institute.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

London Tries Lights At Pedestrian Crossings

► TO PROTECT Londoners crossing streets at night, scientists are trying out various methods of lighting where pedestrians should cross the road.

One method will be to put steady or flashing amber lights in the distinctive globes that for years have been used to mark pedestrian crossings. At other points the crossings will be lighted by mercury and sodium floodlights from above. In another case amber lights will flash on an island in the middle of the street.

Borrowing from airport runway methods, another crossing will be marked with slight projections that will give a steady or flashing light. In another place, the zebra stripes of the crossing will be arranged to reflect overhead light so as to be seen by an approaching motorist.

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MARINE BIOLOGY

Whale Scars Blamed On Lamprey "Kisses"

► THE CURIOUS oval-shaped scars often found on whales all over the world can be caused by parasitic lampreys, Dr. Gordon C. Pike of the Pacific Biological Station on Vancouver Island, B. C., reports.

He examined 237 whales snagged off Canada's western coast, finding on them the same whitish or gray-colored scars that have been observed on species of whales from many parts of the world. Barnacles and biting fish have been suggested as the cause. Previously the idea that the scars were caused by "sucking fish" was rejected because no teeth marks were found. Dr. Pike has pinned the blame on the lamprey from the marks on the skin caused by the horny cusps and mouth parts of the sucking fish, calling such evidence "unmistakable."

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Ancients Used Alcan Route

Alaskan Highway route may have been used 9,000 years ago by immigrating Asian ancestors of Indians, evidence dug up along the military road shows.

► THE ROUTE of the Alaska Highway may, 9000 years ago, have been one of the roads down which Asian ancestors of American Indians traveled into North America.

Dr. Hugh Raup, botanist, and Frederick Johnson, anthropologist, think they have found evidence that this might have been the case at various places along the modern military road.

The two scientists figured that early North American man would have looked for the easiest route from Alaska south. This is just what engineers, faced with the same problem in the early days of World War II, did. So the team dug for evidence along the Alaskan Highway.

The two scientists discovered a human culture in the Shakawk valley of southwestern Yukon—through which the Alas-

kan Highway runs—which gives every evidence of having spread in time throughout most of the period since the retreat of glaciers from the valley into the surrounding mountains.

This retreat, it has been determined, took place about the year 7000 B.C.

Most of the sites they found were buried in wind blown silts. From the nature of the silts, their depth and other geological facts, they were able to determine the times during which the tools were dropped or left there by those who made them.

Dr. Raup and Mr. Johnson found evidence of occupation at some 20 locations. Excavations were made at 11 of these. They uncovered hearths, some of which contained charcoal and scraps of burned bone. Tools were found in some instances, but in all cases they were extremely scarce.