

BIOCHEMISTRY

Drug for Palsy Victims

► A DRUG that promises to help victims of cerebral palsy, infantile paralysis and other nerve-muscle diseases by relieving muscle spasm is announced by Dr. Virgil C. Boekelheide of the University of Rochester, Rochester, N. Y.

The new drug is called apo-beta-erythroidine. It is derived from the curare-like drug, beta-erythroidine. Dr. Boekelheide and associates have also succeeded in determining the chemical structure of beta-erythroidine, a feat hailed by fellow scientists as "an intellectual accomplishment of great value" in addition to its potential practical value in medicine.

The erythroidine bean, found principally in Guatemala and South America, is the natural source of the drug. With the chemical structure of the drug known, scientists

may be able to develop other compounds that will advance the treatment of disabilities resulting from accidental or disease injury of the nerve and muscle systems.

The new drug developed by the Rochester group, apo-beta-erythroidine has a longer-lasting action in relieving muscle spasm than other drugs used for this purpose, tests on laboratory animals show.

Collaborating with Dr. Boekelheide in the chemical research and testing of the drug were Dr. R. Plato Schwartz of the School of Medicine and Dentistry and Drs. George Sauvage, Michael Grundon, Joseph Weinstock and Eugene Agnello. The chemical research is reported by the scientists in the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY.

Science News Letter, June 28, 1952

AERONAUTICS

Near 89,000 Planes

► AMERICA TODAY has nearly 89,000 aircraft registered with the Civil Aeronautics Administration according to a recent survey.

On Jan. 1, 1952, there were 54,039 active and 34,506 inactive aircraft on record with the CAA, which has administrative control of public and private flying in the United States.

Large transports may seem most plentiful to the general public, but actually more than 50,000 of the registered civil craft are one-engine types. Approximately 2,700 are twin-engine, 540 four-engine and 12 tri-motored aircraft.

Of the total of recorded civil aircraft, 1,253 are owned by the scheduled airlines.

Even counting planes used commercially by non-scheduled companies, private flying by individuals and business organizations seems to use the majority of American aircraft.

A hopeful note in private flying is the notable decrease in accidents due to stall-spin during the last quarter of 1951. Statistics compiled by the CAA show that for this period, there were 39 stall-spin accidents, compared with 113 for the same three months of 1950.

Two years ago approximately half the fatal accidents in general aviation were caused by stall-spins. Because of this high rate the CAA sent out a specially equipped plane to tour the country demonstrating improved stall recovery techniques. The de-

crease in accidents from this cause is probably due to the success of these demonstrations.

A report just issued by the CAA shows flying into bad weather or into darkness on cross-country flights replaced stalls and spins as the primary cause of serious accidents during the last quarter of 1951. These causes account for 6.5% of the total accidents and 40% of the fatal accidents.

Science News Letter, June 28, 1952

Copper is the only *metal* with a red color.

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

VOL. 61 JUNE 28, 1952 No. 26

The Weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc. 1719 N. St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C., North 2255. Edited by WATSON DAVIS.

Subscription rates: 1 yr., \$5.50; 2 yrs. \$10.00; 3 yrs., \$14.50; single copy, 15 cents, more than six months old, 25 cents. No charge for foreign postage.

Change of address: Three weeks notice is required. When ordering a change please state exactly how magazine is now addressed. Your new address should include postal zone number if you have one.

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Printed in U. S. A. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Washington, D. C. under the act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage provided for by Sec. 34.40, P. L. and R., 1948 Edition, paragraph (d) (act of February 28, 1925; 39 U. S. Code 283), authorized February 28, 1950. Established in mimeographed form March 18, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide to periodical literature, Abridged Guide, and the Engineering Index.

Member Audit Bureau of Circulation. Advertising Representatives: Howland and Howland, Inc., 393 7th Ave., N.Y.C., Pennsylvania 6-5566 and 360 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago. STAt 2-4822.

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