

PUBLIC HEALTH

Household Hazards

Chemicals used in everyday jobs such as cleaning, heating and insect killing carry threats of death as serious as the poisons of plague bacilli and other disease germs.

► **CHEMICALS USED** in many households for such everyday tasks as cleaning, heating and insect killing are just as deadly as the poisons produced by plague bacilli and other disease germs, Dr. Edward Press of the University of Chicago and Dr. Robert B. Mellins of the U. S. Public Health Service Communicable Disease Center charged in Buffalo. Dr. Mellins is "on loan" to the Chicago Board of Health.

These and other causes of accidental deaths and injuries should be fought by health and medical authorities in the same way that epidemics of disease are fought, Drs. Press and Mellins and other scientists declared at the meeting of the American Public Health Association.

"The major threats to early death formerly made by epidemics of smallpox, cholera, and plague are now being replaced by accidental injury and poisoning; and by the traumatic and radiation hazards of nuclear energy," Drs. Press and Mellins declared. "The same machine age responsible through its advances in sanitation, immunization, chemotherapy and antibiotics for controlling the damage done by the toxins and toxic products generated by the germs that caused the above epidemics has by similar advances, posed new threats to life and health. Toxins and toxic products with results just as lethal as those elaborated by the bacteria causing plague and similar scourges are now synthesized by modern industry for household uses that result in making them available for use and for deadly misuse in almost every home. The same modern industry responsible for manufacturing millions of doses of vaccine in a short period is now making millions of automobiles as well as airplanes, atom bombs and other wholesale hazards to life and limb."

To fight the poisoning hazard, a poisoning control program has been set up by hospitals in Chicago and the Chicago Board of Health. Medical societies and the Illinois State Toxicological Laboratory are cooperating. The hospitals have been furnished a specially prepared outline guide for treating poisoning victims. Careful records and follow-up visits to patients' homes through the board of health are other features of the educational, treatment and prevention program.

Boston, Cincinnati, Dallas, New York City, Phoenix and Washington, D. C., have now begun operating or are about to start operating similar poisoning control programs.

In New York City the Bureau of Child Health is, in addition, following up all accidents to children under six years. From

records being accumulated it is hoped that better preventive measures can be developed. Meanwhile, health department nurses carry the accident prevention lesson to all homes where a small child has suffered an accident. This program was reported by Dr. Harold Jacobziner, assistant commissioner, Miss Patricia I. Heely, director of the bureau of public health nursing, and senior statistician Herbert Rich, all of the New York City Department of Health.

A "What's Your Answer" quiz distributed to PTA members throughout the state has been a "powerful" tool in New Jersey's accident prevention program, Dr. Renee Zindwer of the state's Department of Health reported.

The quiz gives typical home situations involving potential danger to a small child and four possible solutions of each problem. In the course of picking the right solution, those taking the quiz get involved emotionally and therefore take part more eagerly and effectively in the push to prevent accidents.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

WHO Costs Americans Two Cents Each per Year

► **EACH AMERICAN** citizen pays slightly over two cents a year for the world-wide fight to improve health through the World Health Organization, its director-general, Dr. M. G. Candau, reported to the National Citizens Committee for WHO at its meeting in Buffalo.

The two cents apiece pays, Dr. Candau said, for a year's work by doctors, sanitarians, nurses, malariologists, entomologists, by the hundreds of people in many scattered fields of activities, for a year's work at Geneva Headquarters and six Regional Offices in various parts of the world.

On the humanitarian side, Dr. Candau pointed out, this work is "helping to bring back smiles to the faces of children, who once suffered from the vicious effects of crippling diseases and malnutrition; it is aiding mothers in childbirth and teaches them how to raise and keep their child in good health; it is bringing new strength to the farmer, who once saw his crops rot while he lay shivering and sweating from malaria. All this and much more it is doing."

On the economic side, WHO is paying dividends in actual cash. For an example of this, Dr. Candau cited an estimate that malaria control for the 200,000,000 people in the malarious parts of India would have

an economic value of around five billion dollars. The sum represents, on the 1949 level, about one quarter of the national income of India.

What it represents to the business man here in the U. S., Dr. Candau said, is money made available for spending on the goods and services which he can provide.

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GENERAL SCIENCE

Science Group to Survey U. S. Industrial Research

► **TO CREATE** sound national policies to strengthen the scientific research program in the United States, a National Science Foundation questionnaire is being sent to 12,000 industrial concerns.

Dr. Alan T. Waterman, director of the foundation, said 4,000 firms employing at least 1,000 persons each will be asked to describe their research and development activities. The other companies were carefully chosen from about 3,000,000 businesses to keep results in proper balance.

Intensive interviews are planned with representatives of 200 selected large corporations. They are designed to find specific bottlenecks faced by industry in planning its research.

Information also will be obtained on the use of technical manpower in industrial research and development.

Dr. Waterman predicted that the survey's findings may be valuable to companies planning research, or that are appraising their research activities. The results also will lead to a formulation of national policies for the strengthening of scientific research.

Plans for the survey were developed by the National Science Foundation with cooperation of the National Association of Manufacturers, the Industrial Research Institute and representatives of industry.

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MEDICINE

Anti-Cancer Action in Sheep Disease Virus

► **DISCOVERY OF** an anti-cancer action of the virus of Rift Valley fever is announced by Dr. N. Takemori and associates of the Japanese National Institute of Health, Minatoku, Tokyo, in *Nature* (Oct. 9).

The virus had a "marked destructive action" on one kind of rat cancer cells growing in tissue culture outside the animal body. Further study showed it could destroy cells of a non-fatal tumor growing in mice.

Rift Valley fever is a disease of sheep which also can spread to man, causing an influenza-like illness. Work with it as an anti-cancer agent seems so far to have been limited to laboratory studies.

Dr. Takemori's associates in the research were Drs. M. Nakano, M. Hemmi, H. Ikeda, S. Yanagida and M. Kitaoka.

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