

PLANT PHYSIOLOGY

Antibiotic Controls Vegetable Diseases

► **STREPTOMYCIN** can cure vegetable disease too.

Downy mildew of lima beans and late blight of tomatoes, two fungus diseases, were controlled experimentally with the antibiotic by U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists, W. J. Zaumeyer, R. E. Wester and S. P. Doolittle at the Plant Industry Station, Beltsville, Md.

Antibiotics have been found effective also against bacterial vegetable diseases. Commercial preparations have proved most successful.

Science News Letter, April 7, 1956

PSYCHOLOGY

Religion Powerful In Soviet Russia

► **RELIGION** is a powerful influence in Soviet Russia, despite popular opinion in this country, the Eastern Psychological Association meeting in Atlantic City, N. J., was told.

Religion has always had a strong hold on the Soviet people, Dr. Ivan D. London of Brooklyn College and Dr. Oleg Anisimov of Inwood Institute, Upper Montclair, N. J., reported. This hold is particularly strong in the rural areas.

Among present-day Soviet young people, religious sentiment is not only strong, it is on the increase.

The psychologists base this conclusion on interviews with wartime and postwar Soviet defectors in America, and from questionnaires and correspondence from defectors now in Germany and Chile. Altogether 500 Russians were contacted over a period of three years.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Whoever Wins Election Will Be More Popular

► **WHICHEVER CANDIDATE** wins in the coming presidential election will get a big boost in popularity following the election. The increase in popularity will be greatest among those who voted against him.

This is shown by a study of students' attitudes reported to the Eastern Psychological Association meeting in Atlantic City, N. J., by Dr. I. H. Paul of the Austen Riggs Center at Stockbridge, Mass.

Dr. Paul asked 80 students to give ratings to the two candidates in the 1952 election. The poll was taken twice, one a week before the election and the other two to three weeks after it.

The change in sentiment after the election was due mainly, Dr. Paul concludes, to the individual's inner needs and his attitude toward leadership.

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HEART EXHIBIT—Doctors at the eighth annual meeting of the American Academy of General Practice explain an exhibit illustrating the mechanisms and relief of heart pain. Left to right are Dr. Joseph T. Roberts, Buffalo, N. Y.; Richard S. Ries, representative of Darwin Laboratories, Los Angeles, Calif.; and Dr. William M. Routon, Kilgore, Texas.

MEDICINE

Cancer Self-Cures Rare

► **ONLY 88 CASES** of complete arrest or disappearance of cancer for no known cause have occurred in the past half century or more.

The final count, when scientists have finished examining all the evidence, may be only 58 or 68. The tally comes from Drs. Warren H. Cole and Tilden C. Everson of the University of Illinois College of Medicine, Chicago.

They have checked records going back to 1890. Of numerous cases of spontaneous cures reported, some had not been diagnosed by biopsy, the only sure way of diagnosing cancer. Others had been lost track of, so the doctors could not be sure whether the disappearance of the cancer was true and complete. Still others could be attributed to treatment.

The findings are announced by the American Cancer Society with the following warning:

Patients with cancer should not rely on spontaneous regression. According to present estimates, necessarily vague, this happens only once in from 14,000 to 100,000 patients. Reputable doctors, by surgery and radiation, are now curing from 25% to 30% of all human cancers.

Medical agencies and doctors are asked to send Dr. Cole clinical data on bona fide cases of spontaneous regression that have come to their attention.

Spontaneous regression is not a matter of miracles. Some can be explained with current knowledge of cancer. The rest, the scientists believe, are due to unusual causes that now escape scientific detection.

Among the known causes of spontaneous regression are:

1. Removal of the entire cancer by biopsy. Some of the cancers are no larger than a pinhead, and the examining physician removes it all in taking a tiny bit of tissue for microscopic study.

2. Removal of the cancer by surgery but leaving large masses of apparently cancerous tissue because they cannot be cut away from vital organs. The suspect tissue left by the surgeon before closing up the patient may be merely inflammatory tissue which looks like cancer but is not. And, again, incomplete surgery may cut off the blood supply, thus starving the tumor.

3. The adequacy of apparently inadequate radiation. Sometimes X-rays and radium may have a delayed effect which cures the cancer after the doctor has given up the case as hopeless.

These circumstances have been verified as occurring with fair frequency. Notorious quacks have taken such patients, treated them with secret salves and ointments and paraded them as evidence of their so-called cancer cures.

Science News Letter, April 7, 1956