

## Do You Know?

The average American family uses 888 cans of *food* in a year.

A quarter of a million tons of *ragweed pollen* is distributed in the air during the fall season.

*Starling* flocks sometimes consist of as many as 60,000 birds.

Insects from the land make up 95% of the food of baby *shad*.

The Caribbean Monk Seal is one of 26 *mammals* recently listed by the International Union for Conservation as threatened with extinction.

Rainbow, brown, cutthroat and brook *trout* provide much of the sport fishing in the United States.

Increasing popularity of the paste-type *tomato*, rich in solids and in red color, has led to development by the U. S. Department of Agriculture of a new, high-yielding, fusarium-wilt-resistant variety called *Roma*.

## CHEMISTRY

# Poisoning Increases

➤ ADVANCES in chemical technology have been blamed as responsible in part for the increasing death rate from accidental poisoning of children.

The blame came in a report by Sidney Nobel of the newly established poison control center of Monmouth Memorial Hospital, Long Branch, N. J., at the First International Congress of Clinical Chemistry meeting in New York.

The increasing number and variety of poisoning problems confronting the hospital laboratory may be due in some degree to the advances in chemical technology that have introduced a wide range of noxious chemicals into the home area, Mr. Nobel said. He also pointed to the rapid development of new compounds that sometimes result in exposing workers to industrial toxic hazards despite precautions taken.

In an exhibit at the meeting, Mr. Nobel showed an integrated preventive program, which includes public education and close liaison between the hospital emergency room and a well equipped and competently staffed hospital laboratory.

Included is an odor reference shelf to aid

in rapid identification of those poisons possessing characteristic odors, and a master chart indicating the wide variety of colors, color combinations, shapes and sizes of proprietary and ethical pills and capsules.

Extreme caution is urged in dealing with unknown compounds. For example, an unmarked paper bag filled with grayish granules was found near a corpse. At the Monmouth Memorial Hospital poison control center, the granules were later identified as calcium cyanide.

Poisonous substances are found in such common household products as throat lozenges, shoe polish, bleach, detergents, depilatories, furniture polish, suntan lotion, and the fluid found in Christmas tree lights.

All of these have been related to children treated for poisoning at Monmouth Memorial Hospital.

The poison control center of Monmouth Memorial Hospital under the direction of Martin L. Rush, director of laboratories, is the only such center in any private hospital in New Jersey.

Working in cooperation with the United States Public Health Service, the New Jersey Department of Health, Rutgers University, and several private foundations and firms, the center provides analyses of poisons and treatment of poison victims throughout Monmouth County and information to physicians and others in the area.

Science News Letter, September 29, 1956

## MEDICINE

# Blames Heavy Smoking For Throat Ailments

➤ SMOKING EXCESSIVELY over a long period of time was blamed for chronic irritation of the breathing tract, degeneration of the vocal cords and leukoplakia, a disease marked by small white bumps on the lining of mouth and throat.

The blame came in a report by Dr. Linden J. Wallner of Rush Medical School, at the meeting of the International College of Surgeons in Chicago.

"Since the serious diseases do not occur in a high percentage of smokers, it may be argued that we are not justified in urging universal curtailment of smoking, a habit which seems to bring satisfaction to millions," Dr. Wallner said.

"We do have strong evidence that smoking may cause the symptoms and diseases described. When a patient complains of cough, hoarseness, burning or post nasal discharge, or presents evidence of chronic inflammation, or leukoplakia, we should urge curtailment of smoking rather than rely on gargles, sprays or antibiotics."

Science News Letter, September 29, 1956

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