

PUBLIC HEALTH

Colored Dyes Cathartic

► FEAR that a coal tar dye used to color food, drugs and cosmetics might cause cancer is unfounded, Drs. Jack L. Radomski and Wm. B. Deichmann, University of Miami School of Medicine, Coral Gables, Fla., report in the *Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics*.

Earlier studies with Food, Drug, and Cosmetic (FD&C) dyes Yellow No. 3 and No. 4 had shown that, when these dyes are decomposed by acid, one of the products is beta-naphthylamine, a coal tar compound known to produce cancer.

Experiments showed this did not happen in the stomach of rabbits, the scientists report. A small amount of the Yellow No. 4 dye was decomposed by the stomach's acid, they state, but the result was an unknown substance. It was not the dangerous beta-naphthylamine.

They also found that several of the dyes caused cathartic action in animals and man. These were the FD&C Orange Nos. 1 and 2, Yellow Nos. 3 and 4, and Red No. 32. Only the Orange No. 1 was cathartic in man, however.

The two orange colors and the red one have recently been taken off the list of dye colors certified safe for use in food by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration. They are still permitted in drugs and cosmetics for external applications, however, and the Red No. 32 is allowable on oranges only for a three-year period, or until a satisfactory substitute can be found.

The other two, Yellow Nos. 3 and 4,

are still on the certified list. Manufacturers and users of the colors were called recently to meet with the Food and Drug Administration. They were told of the Government's intention to hold a hearing on the dye colors, concerning their de-listing. This was a result of other studies showing the two colors are not literally "harmless" as the law requires, but actually cause blood system changes.

Science News Letter, December 29, 1956

GENERAL SCIENCE

Vos Pote Apprender Un Nove Lingua

► VOS POTE apprender un nove lingua, the magazine, *Pageant* (Jan., 1957), assures its readers. Then, by presenting an explanation and examples, the article written in Interlingua proves to its readers that they can understand the simple, natural, international language without study.

Interlingua formulated and introduced recently is now used for abstracts in more than a score of medical and other journals and congresses.

The article says, in part: Le majoritate del linguas europeae, le anglese incluse, ha multe factores in commun. In consequentia logic del difficultates e del similaritates del linguas, un medio vermente international de communication ha essite disveloppate sub le direction de Dr. Alexander Gode del institution pro le popularisation del scientias que es cognoscite como SCIENCE SERVICE.

Science News Letter, December 29, 1956

PUBLIC HEALTH

Get Polio Shots Now, Warns Surgeon General

► "PROCRASTINATION" is one of the main reasons why too many Americans still have not received polio shots to protect themselves from the disease, Dr. Leroy E. Burney, Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, told SCIENCE SERVICE.

Since no one hears much about polio during the winter months, many people just forget about it now, he said. But when the polio season starts up again next spring, it will be too late to get all three of the necessary shots, the Surgeon General warned.

"I do not believe that the cost of the shots is the problem," Dr. Burney said, "since only six states have used up all the money appropriated by the Congress."

This money is being used to supply free shots to pregnant women and to persons 19 and younger who cannot afford them.

"An excellent job" has been done by the press in alerting the general public to the situation, Dr. Burney said. However, it is now time for the press to be backed up by community efforts, he said.

The job of encouraging people to get shots should be put on a "township to township basis," so that every single American would be urged to take advantage of the poliomyelitis vaccine, the Surgeon General stated.

Dr. Burney suggested that federated clubs throughout the country could do a valuable job in this community approach. The PTA, American Legion, Junior Chambers of Commerce, 4-H clubs and the like, he said, would make excellent groups for this kind of activity.

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