

PUBLIC HEALTH

Yellow Fever May Play Role In Present African Campaign

More Than 800 Cases Reported in Kardofan Province, Close To Where British Troops Are Pushing Through

WHAT part will yellow fever play in the great African campaign now opening? Will the Yellow Jack whose very name struck blinding terror into the hearts of our grandparents be the war plague of the present conflict?

Africa is called, by one authority, the original home of yellow fever, although others state it was first seen in the West Indies. Certainly for many years the west coast of Africa was considered one of the few remaining strongholds of yellow fever throughout the world.

During the month of November, 1940, however, more than 800 cases of yellow fever were reported on the other side of Africa, in Kardofan Province, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. These are the latest figures available at the U. S. Public Health Service in Washington, and there may by now be more or fewer cases of the disease in that region of Africa. Kardofan Province, however, appears uncomfortably close, as the possible center

of a yellow fever outbreak, to the regions through which British troops are driving toward Eritrea and Ethiopia.

To the south of this region at Entebbe in Uganda, the Rockefeller Foundation's International Health Division maintains a Yellow Fever Research Laboratory. No yellow fever exists in this region, it is stated, but the latest Rockefeller Foundation report of yellow fever surveys in Africa states that tests showed "yellow fever had recently existed and was probably still present in Africa from Senegal to the Upper Nile, although the disease had not previously been identified in Central Africa."

Scientists who thought yellow fever had been almost completely driven out of the Western Hemisphere, only to discover new and probably numerous centers of the disease in the South American hinterland, would not be surprised to find other, previously unsuspected strongholds of yellow fever in Africa.

If yellow fever and the mosquitoes that carry it are lurking in the regions through which troops must travel and fight, the outcome of the present African campaign may well depend more on medical scientists than on military strategists.

The bright spot in the yellow fever picture, regardless of war, is the existence of a vaccine that gives protection against it. Since the Spanish-American War and the discovery that yellow fever is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito, protection against the disease, for civilians and soldiers alike, has depended on guarding against these mosquitoes.

The vaccine was developed in the laboratories of the Rockefeller Foundation and has been used to vaccinate more than 1,000,000 persons in Brazil. The Rockefeller Foundation and other laboratories in this country have been collaborating on large scale production of this vaccine so as to have available a sufficient supply for vaccination of American troops in case they should have to be sent to Central or South America on hemisphere defense.

While no information is available, it is logical to suppose that nations with military interests in Africa would endeavor to obtain some of this vaccine, or to develop a similar one themselves, for protection of their troops if the campaign reached known or suspected yellow fever regions.

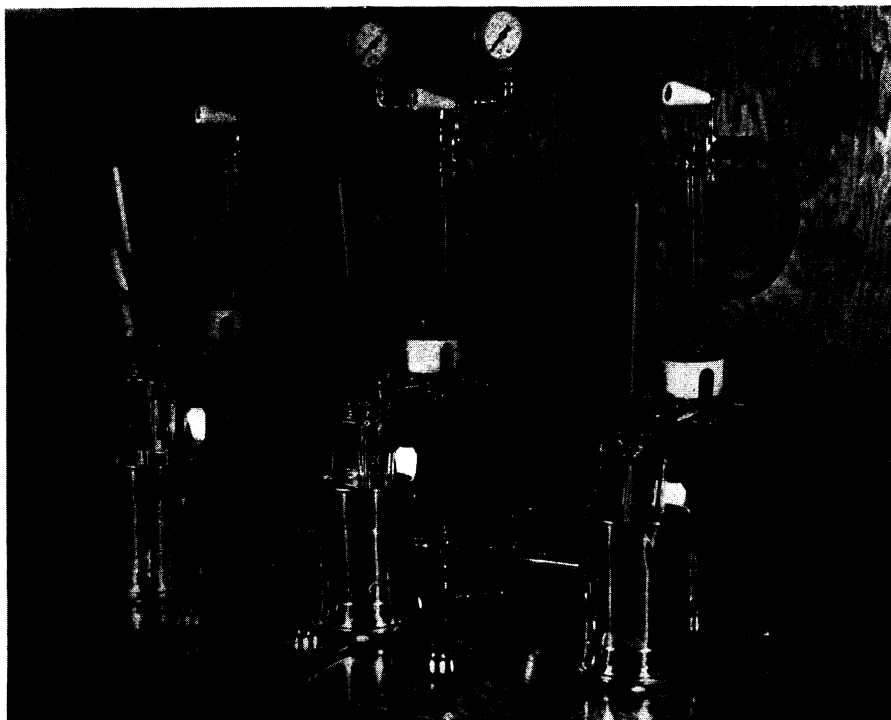
Science News Letter, February 15, 1941

MICROLOGY

Household Gear Used in Laboratory Apparatus

QUANTITY laboratory apparatus need not be expensive. A little ingenuity can be substituted for much cost. Prof. Robert T. Hance, Duquesne University zoologist, needed some apparatus in which material to be sectioned for microscopic examination could be impregnated with melted paraffin under vacuum. Ordinarily, that would have cost a good deal of money. Prof. Hance cogitated for a while, then visited a "five-and-ten," a hardware shop, and the junk-box in his own basement. Result: a set-up that "looks like a million dollars."

The electrically heated water-baths, that shine so resplendently, are ordinary coffee percolators with the "perking" part discarded. The glass flasks in which the tissues are steeped in melted paraffin are babies' nursing bottles of Pyrex, with large rubber stoppers in



HOME-MADE APPARATUS