

MEDICINE—PUBLIC HEALTH

Infantile Paralysis Carried By Flies, Study Indicates

Coupled With Recent Finding That Disease May Enter Through Digestive Tract, Points to Contaminated Food

FLIES were indicted as the villains that may be responsible for the spread of infantile paralysis in a report by Dr. John R. Paul and Dr. James D. Trask, of Yale University, at the meeting of the American Public Health Association in Atlantic City.

The case against flies has not yet been proved but the virus that causes infantile paralysis has been found on two occasions recently in flies caught in the open during infantile paralysis epidemics. In both instances the flies had the opportunity of feeding both inside and outside of privies on human excreta which may have contained the polio virus.

The virus has been found in sewage and in excreta from both infantile paralysis patients and healthy persons believed to be carriers of the disease. These findings plus the recent discoveries showing that the infantile paralysis virus may get into the body through the mouth and digestive tract have suggested that patients may get the disease from contaminated food or water. If flies can spread it, the way in which food becomes contaminated is easy to see.

The possible carrying of the virus by these insects would explain much about the baffling nature of this disease, the Yale investigators declared.

This is a problem which, in the opinion of the medical men, deserves grave consideration by sanitary engineers.

Science News Letter, October 25, 1941

Cancer Checked by Diet

CONTROL of cancer by diet may be possible in the future, Dr. Carl Voegtlin, chief of the National Cancer Institute, announced.

The growth rate of certain cancers in animals can be strikingly slowed by keeping the animals on special diets, National Cancer Institute researchers have found. The diets in these studies were partly deficient in such essential compounds as vitamins or another group of chemicals, the amino acids which are building blocks of proteins. No specific diet for cancer patients has yet been

recommended by this group of cancer experts, but Dr. Voegtlin declared that "the time may come when it will be possible to devise diets which will control the cancerous growth in patients."

Cancer research, he said, is on the verge of discoveries comparable to the discoveries that started thirty-five years ago of the vitamins as cures and preventives of nutritional diseases, such as pellagra, beriberi and rickets.

Science News Letter, October 25, 1941

Test Toluene Drunkenness

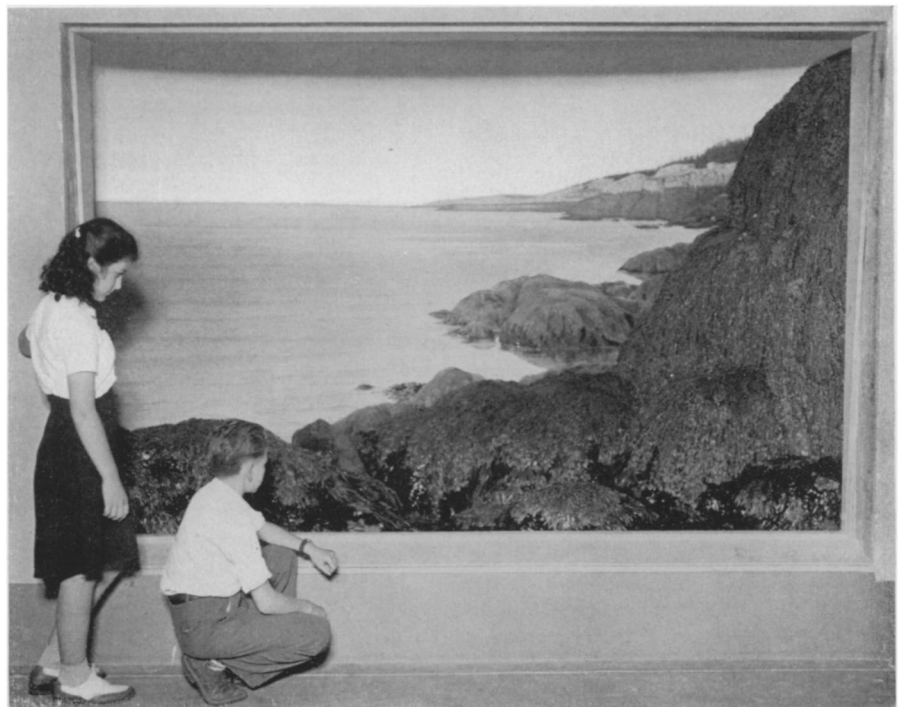
DANGER of defense industry workers getting toluene drunk from inhaling the fumes in their work and causing accidents costly both in manpower and materials may be prevented by a new test announced by Dr. Wolfgang F. Von Oettingen, Dr. Paul A. Neal and Dr.

Dennis D. Donahue, of the U. S. National Institute of Health, to the American Public Health Association.

Toluene poisoning, like alcoholic intoxication, reduces a man's powers of coordination and reaction time and even gives an exhilaration similar to that felt after taking two or three cocktails on an empty stomach, and finally puts him to sleep. The early stages of incoordination and slowed reaction time, which might be fatally dangerous for a man working in a TNT factory, are not recognized by the victim of the poisoning.

A chemical test which gives advance warning of the danger by showing how much toluene the worker is getting into his system has now been worked out by the federal health scientists. It consists in determining the amount of another chemical, hippuric acid, which is excreted. Along with this test the doctor can make a simple test of the worker's coordination, such as asking him to pick up and thread a needle. The victim of insidious toluene poisoning, though he may not appear to be an accident-prone worker, would have trouble even picking up the needle.

Exposure for eight hours to as little as two hundred parts per million of toluene produces definite impairment of coordination and reaction time, the federal scientists reported. Higher con-



MAINE IN MIDWEST

This little slice of the rocky North Atlantic shore near Lubec, Maine, has been transported in replica to Chicago by a new exhibit in the Field Museum of Natural History.