

startling. Night deaths from the factors that cause daylight accidents would have been one-third of 13,800, or 4,600. The actual number of night deaths is four times this figure.

Inadequate visibility was the cause of 9,918 of last year's 18,400 night deaths, Mr. Powers emphasized. Inadequate visibility, however, contributed to the deaths from other factors, in his opinion. It increases the dangers of operating with defective lights, increases fog blindness, and it makes

the use of alcohol more apt to be fatal. The answer is better street lighting, and figures were presented to show that greater safety followed adequate lighting in various American cities.

Science News Letter, June 18, 1949

Scientists are attempting to develop a *dwarf sunflower* that will produce a seed high in oil content to add to the supply of edible oils; the dwarf plant is desirable as an aid to mechanical harvesting.

MEDICINE

Synthetic Sex Hormone Prevents Miscarriages

► A SYNTHETIC female sex hormone can save women from miscarriage in 84 out of 100 cases if the miscarriage threatens between the tenth week and the fifth month of pregnancy. This means of saving lives of unborn offspring was announced by Dr. A. B. Abarbanel of Los Angeles at the meeting of the Association for the Study of Internal Secretions in Atlantic City.

Among patients in the same period of pregnancy who did not get the hormone, the saving of the unborn was achieved at the rate of only 40 out of 100 cases.

Even in the earlier period, up to the tenth week of pregnancy, the hormone treatment made a difference. In the untreated group the salvage rate was 20% compared to 35% for the treated.

The salvage is poor in the early miscarriages, Dr. Abarbanel thinks, because these are caused by blighted egg cells and disturbances in the tissues attaching the egg cell to the uterus as well as to a break in the continuity of blood vessels between mother and unborn baby.

After the tenth week the break in blood vessel continuity is the most common cause of threatened abortion, or miscarriage. Since the natural female hormone is the prime factor in maintaining this blood vessel continuity, Dr. Abarbanel thinks large doses of the synthetic hormone will "repair the break in the dike" and so prevent the loss of the baby.

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MEDICINE

New Medical Awards Go to Typhus Martyr's Associates

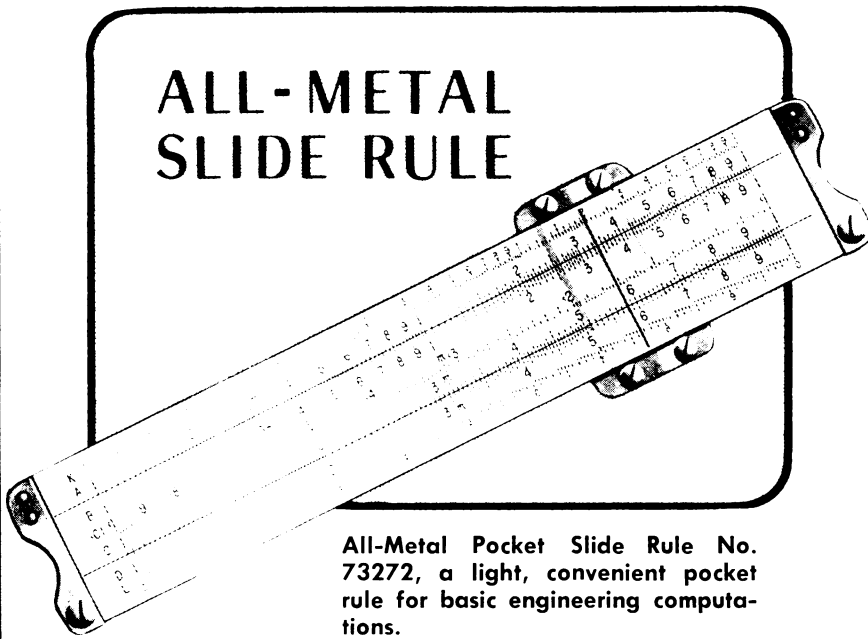
► THE first medals of a newly established national medical award were presented to the teacher and a co-worker of one of America's medical martyrs, Dr. Howard Taylor Ricketts.

Dr. Ludvig Hektoen, first chairman of the department of pathology at the University of Chicago, and Dr. Ricketts' teacher, received the first medal. Second of the medals, formally presented at the same time, went to Dr. Russell Wilder, head of the division of medicine at the Mayo Clinic. Dr. Wilder was working with Dr. Ricketts on typhus fever and after the latter's death remained in Mexico City to complete the work.

The Howard Taylor Ricketts award has been established by Mrs. Ricketts, widow of the man who was first to see the germs of Rocky Mountain spotted fever and of typhus fever and who died of typhus while studying the disease in Mexico in 1910. These and related germs are now called Rickettsia.

Science News Letter, June 18, 1949

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