

New Cancer Research Still Experiment

Medicine

Investigators Will Tell Senate Committee Results

DOCTORS W. B. Coffey and J. D. Humber of San Francisco, who are working experimentally upon cancer, have wired Senator Hiram Johnson that they will gladly appear before the Senate Commerce Committee to explain their work and cooperate with the subcommittee which is investigating possibilities of governmental aid for cancer research. The telegram reads:

"We deeply appreciate your invitation to appear before your committee which is considering the resolution of Senator Harris and we will gladly do so with the object of lending our best efforts in cooperating with your committee in accomplishing its commendable aims. The increased demands upon our time in administering to the care of the many patients who are seeking our aid and the work involved in devising a practicable means whereby we may insure early and efficient cooperation of institutions and others qualified by ability and experience to conduct research work, will prevent us from at once attending upon your committee. However, either one or both of us will make an effort to appear at the earliest possible date and we will inform you promptly and at an early date when we are able to appear. At that time we will inquire whether the day suggested will meet the convenience of your committee."

For the second time within a month, the Journal of the American Medical Association has warned physicians and the public not to place undue faith in new methods of treating cancer by glandular extracts, such as that recently announced by Drs. Coffey and Humber.

Drs. Coffey and Humber themselves have insisted that their work is still in the experimental stage.

"We do not claim to treat or cure cancer," they stated in a telegram to the American Medical Association.

Dr. Boris Sokoloff, who has developed a method which uses a combination of extract from the cortex of the suprarenal glands and iron salt,

has confined himself to laboratory investigations so far.

"My personal activity was and is limited strictly to experimental investigation carried out in the laboratory and so far I have not treated patients and do not intend to do so in the future," Dr. Sokoloff has reported to the American Medical Association.

Two other investigators have reported to the American Medical Association experiments with methods of treating cancer. Dr. C. F. Charlton of Pasadena, Calif., has found a way to destroy cancer cells with administration of extract from the omentum, a membrane which goes from the stomach to adjacent organs. Dr. Adolph M. Hanson of Faribault, Minn., announced similar results using an extract from the thymus gland. Many other manuscripts describing the use of glandular extracts or tissues in the treatment of cancer have been received by the American Medical Association since the Coffey-Humber method has been made public.

Without criticizing the work of any of these investigators, the editors of the association's journal point out that "modern discoveries are the results of the accumulation of investigations over a series of years pointing toward a definite end." But until that end has been reached and the success of the newly-discovered method established beyond doubt, the public should not seek immediate practical applications of the method.

"When thousands of sufferers from cancer are led to false hopes, when husbands mortgage homes in order to carry wives with incurable cancer across the continent for experimentation with unestablished methods, the Journal must continue to caution physicians and the public," the editorial concludes.

Science News-Letter, March 15, 1930

Largest Boiler

ONE of the three largest boilers in the world is shown on the front cover. They were recently installed in the East River station of the New York Edison Company to run the largest single-unit electric generator in the world.

If this 215,000 horse-power turbo-generator had been developed in 1906, it could have supplied all current used for lighting in the United States.

The picture, taken before the boiler was bricked in, shows a part of the 23 miles of tubing each contains. There are 3,786 separate tubes and 10 drums. The boilers are as tall as an eight story building. With their auxiliaries, the three cost \$5,500,000.

A thousand tons of coal are required each day to operate one at full capacity. A unit in a recent test changed 156,250 gallons of water per hour into steam at 425 pounds pressure and 750 degrees Fahrenheit.

Engineering

Science News-Letter, March 15, 1930

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