MEDICINE

Nearly 100 Per Cent Cure of Lip Cancer May be Possible

Medical Association Hears of New Treatment For Meningitis; Racial Resistance to Tuberculosis

NEARLY 100 per cent of cases of lip cancers could be cured if treatment were started in the early stages of the disease and the cancer were completely destroyed, Drs. Udo J. Wile and Eugene A. Hand, of the University of Michigan, told members of the American Medical Association at their meeting in Kansas City.

This optimistic figure for possibility of cure of lip cancer was based on study of 425 cases. In moderately advanced cases, from 70 to 80 per cent can be cured, but the outlook in advanced cases is hopeless.

Of the cases studied by the Michigan physicians, 410 were in men and 15 in women. Greater prevalence of smoking, especially pipe smoking, among men than women may account for this large difference. In many cases the cancer definitely appeared on the spot where the pipe had rested for many years. On the other hand, 15 per cent of the patients had never used tobacco in any form. About one-third had used it moderately or excessively.

The younger patients fared better than the older ones in recovering after treatment. This is interesting, Dr. Wile said, because it is generally believed that cancer in young persons is more malignant with less hope of cure than in older persons.

No Safe Childbirth Drug

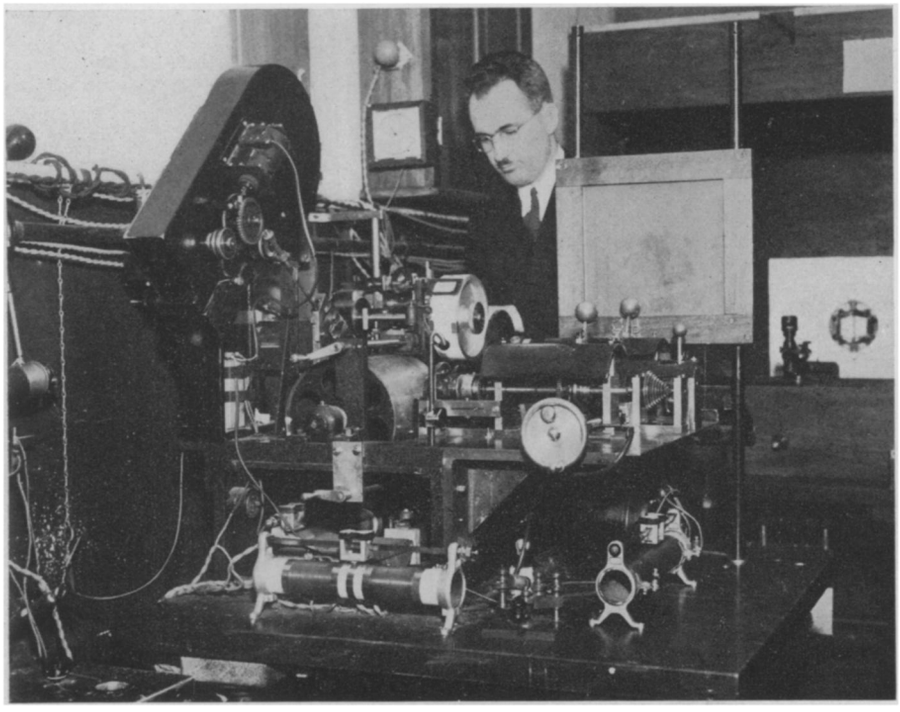
No childbirth anesthetic that is perfectly safe for both mother and child has yet been discovered, Dr. Gertrude Nielson of Oklahoma City declared at the same meeting.

The much discussed high maternal death rate in the United States is in large part a result of the great increase of the use of analgesics in childbirth, Dr. Nielson said in a vigorous protest against this practice.

"Childbearing is so essential an experience for a woman that the thwarting of its normal course by the excessive use of analgesics may cause great damage to her personality," Dr. Nielson asserted. "If she is carried through delivery in an unconscious state, she is deprived of the experience of giving birth to her child and in some cases will pay for this escape from reality by nervous disorders.

"In my observation no woman—whether intelligent or unintelligent, modern or old-fashioned—wants the birth of her baby to be a blank in her memory," Dr. Nielson concluded. "Certainly, none will wish to be relieved of pain at the risk of harm to her baby."

At the same session experience with three childbirth anesthetics was reported by various groups of physicians. Four thousand cases in which twilight sleep, a combination of two drugs, scopolamine and morphine, (*Turn to next page*)



"FINGERPRINTING" ELEMENTS

Dr. George R. Harrison, Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor, is shown here with a "robot scientist"—automatic wavelength measuring, computing and recording machine.

CHEMISTRY

Million "Fingerprints" Of Elements Measured

MORE than a million lines on photographs, each of which is a sort of "fingerprint" of a chemical element, are being measured with unequaled accuracy and speed by scientists and WPA workers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. George R. Harrison, M.I.T. professor, described for the National Academy of Sciences this gigantic systematic determination of wavelengths and intensities of the spectral lines of the chemical elements.

Several million measurements, accurate to one part in 5,000,000 or better, are being made.

A "robot scientist," which is a recently developed automatic wavelength measuring, computing and recording machine, makes the obtaining of data from 20 to 200 times faster.

Precise information on spectra is needed both for the development of chemical analysis by means of light given off by very hot substances and for studies to determine how the atoms of various chemical elements are built.

After the robot machine reads the wavelength and intensities from spectrograms and records them directly on motion picture film, a staff of 60 WPA workers tabulate, correlate and average the output of the machine.