

## From Page 151

the routine diagnosis and treatment of cancer, but has allocated funds for the conduct of scientific research. A Cancer Research Unit was established at the Hines Facility a number of years ago and is now in operation. The personnel of this unit has been conducting scientific investigation to ascertain the cause, the best means for early diagnosis, and the best type of treatment of cancer.

At the present time clinical research studies are being conducted by the research subdivision of central office, and the personnel of the tumor research unit on gastric cancer and intrathoracic tumors. Studies are also being conducted at the Research Unit, Hines, Ill., on cancer of the skin and the larynx.

In addition to the clinical studies, research work is being done to show the relationship of certain of the endocrine secretions to the cause of cancer. Assay methods are used to determine the quantity of the endocrine secretions as an early diagnostic test and also for the purpose of ascertaining the effect of treatment on certain types of cancer.

### Studying Causes

Then, too, experimental work is being conducted on animals in the production of cancer by the external application of carcinogenic (cancer-producing) substances, and methods are being applied for facilitating the production of cancer and for inhibiting cancer growth, in the hope that the nature of cancer production and ways of inhibiting cancer growth may be discovered.

Cancer specialists tell us that the treatment of cancer varies, depending upon the type and site of the tumor. Whether deep X-ray therapy, radium, or surgery is the treatment of choice depends upon the kind of cancer, its location, the duration of the disease, and other considerations. Then, too, cancer is best treated in special hospitals in which the necessary equipment and highly trained specialists are available.

Finally, the matter of cancer education is receiving attention by the professional and technical personnel, and the administrative officers of the Veterans' Administration. The physicians of the Veterans' Administration are being instructed in the manner of, as well as the necessity for, the early diagnosis of malignant disease, the necessity for the eradication of precancerous conditions, the importance of referring suspicious cases of malignancy to a Veterans' Administration cancer clinic, etc.

The administrative officers as well as the physicians of the Veterans' Administration are disseminating information to veterans on the importance of the early diagnosis of cancer; the need for periodic health examinations to discover the disease in the early stages; and the necessity for consulting a physician and undergoing appropriate treatment.

It is believed that all of the activities just enumerated have resulted in an efficient cancer organization which is leading to a more effective control of the malignant disease in the veterans' group and is resulting in the prolonging and saving of many lives.

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### BOTANY—MEDICINE

## Common Fungus Spores Among Allergy Causes

**H**AY FEVER, asthma, and other allergic diseases may be traceable to the spores, or propagating cells, of common fungi that cause plant diseases, as well as to their present known causes such as ragweed and other pollens, dusts or feathers, hair, and other protein substances. This possibility has been investigated by O. C. Durham, botanist of the Abbott Laboratories.

Mr. Durham has used the same technique and apparatus for collecting airborne spores that is commonly used in the study of air-borne pollens. There are many kinds of fungus spores in the air: wheat rust, corn smut, molds, mildews, etc.; but for convenience he has started with a study of only one kind of plant-disease spore, that of the fungus known as *Alternaria*.

The spores of this fungus have been found as numerous as the pollen grains of the ragweeds, or even more so. However, they are much smaller than ragweed pollen grains.

Skin tests with fungus spores have shown that some of them are capable of causing irritation in sensitive persons. *Alternaria* spores appear to be most active among all the fungal dusts. Spore extracts of a number of species are now being prepared for therapeutic use, as pollen extracts have been used for some time.

Numerous other plants below the rank of seed-plants are known to be quantity producers of spores. Especially prominent are mosses, ferns, and horsetail or scouring-rush. However, it has not been learned as yet whether or not these spores are capable of producing hay fever or any of the other allergies.

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### AVIATION

## Story of the Zeppelin Told By Capt. Lehmann

**T**HE recent disaster of the Hindenburg by the burning of its own hydrogen and the discussions over the advisability of leasing, to Germany, the helium necessary to inflate the new Zeppelin now nearing completion in Germany, make most timely the new book "Zeppelin" by Captain Ernst A. Lehmann (Longmans Green & Company).

"Zeppelin" was almost completed when Capt. Lehmann staggered from the Hindenburg's blazing hulk at Lakehurst to die shortly from his serious burns. His book is a chat with a dead hero about the origins, history and future of lighter-than-air craft.

Capt. Lehmann commanded zeppelins in the days just before the world war and in all made nearly 1,100 flights in dirigibles. He had bombed London, using maps with great red circles on them which represented forbidden bombing territory; forbidden by order of the Kaiser because of the presence in these areas of the British royal family.

### Hovering Over Revolutions

He made flights to South America on which his craft had to hover aloft waiting for a minor revolution to end on the ground below, before new supplies of hydrogen could be obtained for the return trip.

For those people who think of the dirigible as a "fair weather" form of air transport the World War flights will be illuminating. Germany had no weather forecaster west of Belgium and nearly a third of the flights over England were made in the face of unknown weather.

Commander Charles E. Rosendahl, U. S. N., close friend of Capt. Lehmann and American observer on some of the Graf Zeppelin's most noted flights, writes the preface and the last chapter which tell the story of the Hindenburg's tragic end. Sabotage as a possible cause for the disaster cannot yet be ruled out, concludes the American expert.

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