



NICE MIRROR

*But this is not a giant vanity case. It is a testing mirror in Warner and Swasey Co.'s optical shop where great telescopes are made. Engineer visitors seen reflected are Charles Deeds, Pratt and Whitney Aircraft Co.; Dr. James S. Thomas, Chrysler Engineering Institute; J. C. Ward, Jr., Pratt and Whitney, and Clifford S. Stilwell, vice president of Warner and Swasey.*

## PUBLIC HEALTH

## New Health Danger Seen In Horse "Sleeping Sickness"

**Disease, Spread by Mosquitoes, Is Enough Like Polio So That New Attack on That Ill May Result**

**A** NEW danger threatens the health of the nation, particularly the health of its children. This is the danger of "sleeping sickness" acquired from horses, which is now known to have killed at least 7 children in Massachusetts and one in California this fall. How many others it may have killed is not known.

Latest reports indicate that Minnesota as well as Massachusetts and California had human cases of this horse-acquired illness last summer and fall. Drs. C. M. Eklund and Alex Blumstein of Minneapolis reported to the American Medical Association six cases of encephalitis among Minnesota farmers in localities where the horse "sleeping sick-

ness," encephalomyelitis, was prevalent. Three types of mosquitoes that transmit this western type of the horse sickness experimentally are found in Minnesota.

The children who died of the horse-acquired encephalitis or "sleeping sickness," however, may not have died in vain, since through their deaths may come a new line of attack on this and other types of "sleeping sickness," and even possibly on that childhood threat, infantile paralysis.

Public health officials believe that the danger of the horse-acquired ailment is not what they call "numerically" great—that is, not many children, proportionately speaking, will be affected.

Meanwhile, however, they and scientists at laboratories in other parts of the country are hard at work, hoping to solve the problem before next July, when the next outbreak of the sickness in horses is expected.

This horse ailment is of two types: Eastern and Western. Epidemics of it attack horses every summer. The symptoms are the same in the east and the west, but the causative viruses or germs are quite distinct. They are also distinct from any types of encephalitis or sleeping sickness which have hitherto afflicted humans. Human sleeping sickness also occurs in many types. The epidemic that swept the world just at the close of the World War is due to a different germ than that which caused an epidemic in St. Louis in 1933 and which still causes many cases in the nation each year.

### All Caused by Virus

All these kinds of sleeping sickness have three things in common with each other and with infantile paralysis: They are caused by a virus. They attack the brain and central nervous system. They are still among the unconquered plagues of the world.

Hope of conquering them seems a little brighter since the discovery that the horse ailment could afflict humans, because the horse ailment is carried from horse to horse by mosquitoes.

Maybe mosquitoes spread the disease to the children who died of it this fall. If so, they may also be spreading other forms of sleeping sickness, or encephalitis, and even possibly infantile paralysis. There is no evidence yet that mosquitoes do carry these germs or viruses to humans, but there is more than a little suspicion now.

Determining the part mosquitoes may play in spreading such ills is one of the jobs scientists have before them this winter. Learning more about the virus of the horse ailment that killed the children, and comparing it with viruses from other persons who have died of unidentified types of encephalitis-like sickness is another.

For horses, there is a vaccine that protects against the ailment—two vaccines, in fact, one for the western and one for the eastern type. Public health officials hesitate to say whether the vaccine would protect children against the horse ailment. They point out that the children may be just as effectively and more practically protected if efforts are concentrated on vaccinating the horses.

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